



In Praise of Nepotism

Adam Bellow

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Nepotism is one of those social habits we all claim to deplore in America; it offends our sense of fair play and our pride in living in a meritocracy. But somehow nepotism prevails; we all want to help our own and a quick glance around reveals any number of successful families whose sons and daughters have gone on to accomplish objectively great things, even if they got a little help from their parents.

In this wide-ranging, surprising, and eloquently argued book, Adam Bellow takes a pragmatic and erudite look at the innate human inclination toward nepotism. From ancient Chinese clans to the papal lineages of the Renaissance, to American families like the Gores, Kennedys, and Bushes, Bellow explores how nepotism has produced both positive and negative effects throughout history. As he argues, nepotism practiced badly or haphazardly is an embarrassment to all (including the incompetent beneficiary), but nepotism practiced well can satisfy a deep biological urge to provide for our children and even benefit society as a whole. **In Praise of Nepotism** is a judicious look at a controversial but timeless subject that has never been explored with such depth or candor, and a fascinating natural history of how families work.

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