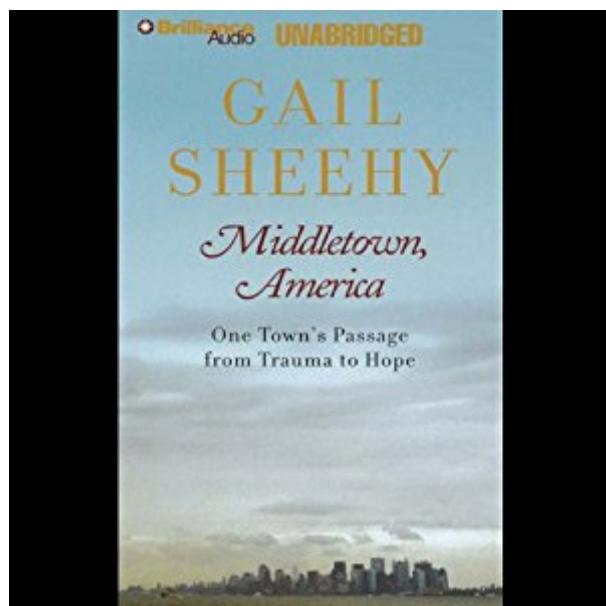


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# Middletown, America: One Town's Passage From Trauma To Hope



## **Synopsis**

Fifty people never came home to Middletown, New Jersey after September 11th. Wall Street fathers, young Port Authority police, single working moms, the beloved coach of the championship girls traveling basketball team. Three toddlers in one church pre-school lost their daddies. Dozens of widows, young and beautiful girls in their 20s and 30s, some still nursing newborns, watched their dreams literally go up in smoke in that amphitheater of death across the river. Gail Sheehy traveled to Middletown shortly after the disaster and began in-depth interviews with many of the bereaved. Middletown, America was written as the year progressed, following parallel and intertwining stories of selected individuals and their families. A mother who was doubly bereft when she lost her only son as he tried to fill the shoes of her absentee husband; the sole survivor in an office of 67 people who escaped the 88th floor of Tower 2 seconds before the floor was decimated. Here are the fire-fighters, rescue workers and front-line public health volunteers, now training to be soldiers in this new war. Of equal importance, however, is the way these very real individuals dealt with this disaster and the trauma that followed. Middletown, America is also a story of recovery and of the ways people finally learn to deal with seemingly insurmountable grief and an incomprehensible physical and financial disaster. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

I will never forget listening to the news on my way to work on September 11th, 2001 unable to

believe that what I was hearing could possibly be true. Following were weeks of confusion, fear, and sorrow. I could not watch the videos of the towers crumbling, the bodies falling through the sky, the photos of bereaved families. Now, 16 years later, I want to know more about what happened to the families of the survivors, the emergency crews, the people living in other parts of the country not directly affected, but wounded by this atrocity. Gail Sheehy's account of the impact of this disaster is personal; you feel the pain and the courage of the widows, and they were largely widows, and families of those closely affected through their associations or their efforts to support and help the victims. This is not fiction, but a well researched account of one of the worst disasters in modern day history. I would also suggest reading Julia Frey's "Balconey View - a 9/11 Diary" that chronicles the experiences of a woman living within blocks of the Twin Towers on that fateful day. Her account, intertwined with the difficulty of caring for a seriously ill spouse, is riviting. Julia's, like Gail's book, lends hope and support for anyone dealing with life's losses and the need to move on.

A moving book, clearly written and informative. Helped me to remember that this type of disaster is never really "over" for those personally involved and that others should not forget that.

I stumbled across this book 14 years after publication. It gives so much insight into what occurred and we should all be grateful to the author for bringing forth the truths of this sad event. The bravery and strength of the survivors is especially meaningful as I recently experienced loss of a spouse. This book will be suggested to friends/ family/ book club.

I couldn't put the book down. At first I was concerned that reading the book might be a depressing experience. While the book definitiely reflects the sadness experienced by 9/11 victims and their survivors in the one town outside of NYC that was most affected by the 9/11 tragedy, it also is uplifting as it details the struggles and how each person uniquely found a way to overcome their struggles. I was truly surprised at how much the survivors had to go through in order to get their just due.

For me this was not just the stories of the people directly affected by the attack on the World Trade Center. Rather it is a journey into and through the depths of grief. The people highlighted in this book, widows, siblings, survivors, witnesses, rescue-workers, take on the horror of 9/11 in different ways. Their recovery too must be as unique as they themselves. This is a hope-filled story, illuminating the fact that as much as a group may share a tragic event, their internalizing and their

movement to recovery is theirs alone. Others may help by walking near us, but only we can heal ourselves.

An important book about 911 that details the lives of some strong women and their ability to cope with the tragedy of an event that should never be forgotten. Gail Sheehy uses her amazing writing skills to make important aspects of human behavior understandable.

I liked the idea of the book, following a few people/families affected by the tragic events of 9/1, curious bc it referenced my hometown area. But there were some mistakes about the area itself, and some unfounded generalizations about the local residents. I read the whole book and took the good from it, but the comments by the author that seemed judgemental, almost gossip-like to me, I had to try to disregard.

After reading "Passages in Caregiving" by Gail Sheehy, I wanted to read other books she'd written. I was intrigued to find "Middletown America", where I spent formative years growing up. Ms. Sheehy has a way of writing that is concise and easy to understand, which is invaluable in a book like "Caregiving". "Middletown" on the other hand, was poignantly written and respectful to the families written about. The emotions were raw, uncensored. The reader is left in awe of the residents of Middletown NJ and surrounding communities. Despite the loss and the fact that their lives were shattered, they never stopped working toward answers, bucking up against the government we all expect protects us. Inspirational indeed.

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