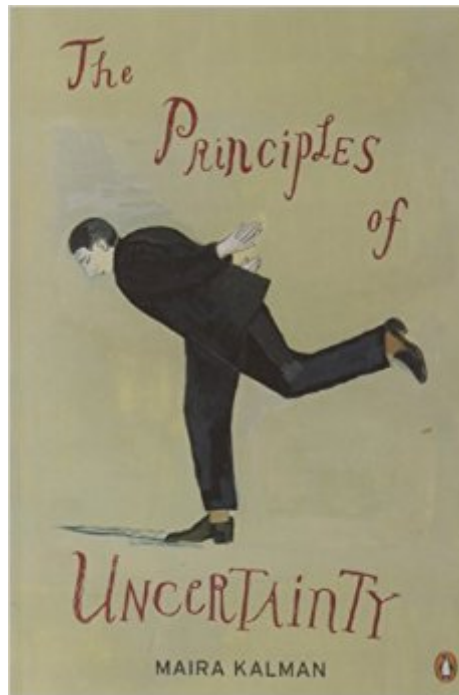


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# The Principles Of Uncertainty



## Synopsis

Maira Kalman paints her highly personal worldview in this inimitable combination of image and text. An irresistible invitation to experience life through a beloved artist's psyche, *The Principles of Uncertainty* is a compilation of Maira Kalman's New York Times columns. Part personal narrative, part documentary, part travelogue, part chapbook, and all Kalman, these brilliant, whimsical paintings, ideas, and images—which initially appear random—ultimately form an intricately interconnected worldview, an idiosyncratic inner monologue.

## Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars — See all reviews (81 customer reviews)

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## Customer Reviews

This is such an unusual book: a pictorial monologue about a year in author/illustrator Maira Kalman's life, in which she tackles issues like life, death, family, history, travel, food and all the big philosophical questions of existence. It has more than 300 pages, almost all of them with quirky Magritte-style illustrations that are often as humorous and charming as the text. Maira Kalman's Jewish family fled Russia after the revolution and went to Palestine before settling in America. As I imagine many of those do whose families have endured lives fractured by the events of history, and so closely touched by atrocities like the Holocaust, Kalman seems never to take life for granted -- she often expresses her concern about the point of it all, and the mess so many people make of it. But for all that, this book is imbued with Kalman's overriding and utter joy in being alive. Joy shines out of every page. For example, while she's in Israel she writes of her despair about the embattled state of the Middle East, but once back home in New York she finds immediate reassurance and an antidote to her distress simply by observing the life on the streets -- the colours,

the people, the eccentricities, the humanity of it all. On other pages she'll share her delight in wonderful hats, bravely-dressed women, old people, the collections of weird objects she keeps at home, and many of the amazing sights she observes and records on her travels at home and abroad. I'd love to meet her: from my reading I imagine a strong New York humour and an infectious fascination for the cities she loves. Recommended.

I can't believe that there have only been two reviews of this book! It is a Maira Kalman book for grownups - for anyone who loves her children's books - the wit, the art, the words - finally there is a picture book for us! And, for a short period of time, the original paintings are on view at Julie Saul Gallery on 22nd St. in NYC. What a bonus! In *Principles of Uncertainty*, Kalman touches on nearly every human emotion - yielding a book that is tender, tough, ironic, big-picture, "God is in the details", mellow, poignant, funny - you name it. In her deceptively naive paintings, she captures the essence of things - relationships, beauty, life cycles. I went to see the exhibition at Julie Saul two times - and I would have gone 200 times. This will be one of those books that we will return to over and over again.

Kalman's illustrations accentuate her pithy prose. Her pictures seem derived from some other time, perhaps the Impressionist era in France? They have a 19th century vibe. Think Van Gogh. Imagine Monet. Her thoughts spring from the page as she passes through her days. Each thought evokes a picture. In her observation of a life that is mostly "normal" (if there is such a thing) Kalman connects readers with the deep reservoirs of personal feeling that we frequently fail to recognize. This is a lovely, one-of-a-kind volume that will delight as it subtly conjures up the emotions that lie just below the surface in every one of us. Bravo!

This book just arrived, I read it and am now ordering copies for many friends. This is a case of "less is more"--drawings and words are minimal, but the impact of whimsy and profoundness is great. It goes straight to the heart.

I loved this when it ran in the NY Times. I couldn't wait to have the wonderful drawings and subtle text in my possession. And then the book arrived. I was dumbfounded. Whoever designed it can't possibly have done a book of art before. Images spilling into gutters, no white space. Why? To save money? This should be reprinted by a publisher who can see what damage has been done to this wonderful work. It kills me to say it because the artist, Maira Kalman, deserves every bit of attention

she can get and every nickel they pay her. But this book design is a travesty.

Having read each of the pieces in *The Principles of Uncertainty* as they were published in *Times Select*, I initially ordered three copies of this book--one for me, two for gifts. Now I've ordered a fourth--I want to give one to everyone I love. And I want to spend a day with Maira Kalman--of course with this book I can spend part of every day with her. I love this book!

This is such a sweet book. I have given it to everyone... friends, family - all ages. I am getting through one of those years, many deaths in my family, and this book really helped me remember how grand life can be. Exquisite!

This is an irresistibly charming book. The quirky art & the naked perplexity of the author as she confronts lifeâ "its tragedies & its mitigating, if bittersweet pleasures--is honest and down-to-earth. Kalman reminds me a lot of Lynda Barry. Neither artist is concerned about looking or sounding profound or sophisticated. They both respond to the world the way we all do when we strip away our pretensions and our intellectualism and admit our ignorance, our fallibility, our wonder, and our fear. Approach this book in the same spirit and it will work its magic on you, too.

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