

The Piercing Bible

Review by Lara Foldvari



introduces the piercee to basic piercing procedures and jewelry.

The Holes is the aptly titled Part 4. Angel gently guides us from the lower ear, nose and facial piercings to tongue and oral piercings, nipple and navel piercings, and finally to genital piercings for both males and females.

In this section, Ms. Angel starts to pepper the pages with personal anecdotes, making *The Piercing Bible* not only a reference book, but also an inside glimpse of the piercing world.

At this point, I want to give the book to the step-daughter. We're at Part 5: Healing and Aftercare. Both standard and alternative aftercare guidelines are given, but should a piercing turn ugly, there's also a troubleshooting guide. This would have come in handy when my step-daughter's conch piercing became infected. Not only would she have had the proper aftercare advice, but she would have also had some wisdom to dispense to the ER doctor who wanted her to remove the jewelry from the piercing immediately.

Fun stuff for the piercee is addressed in Part 6. We learn about the upkeep and stretching (also referred to as "gauging up" or "gauging") of piercings and the retiring of them. Play piercing, pulling and suspensions are given a brief nod, and then special situations, such as fitness, weight changes, medical and dental procedures, and traveling with piercings are lit upon. And that... *Sau!*

The *Piercing Bible* winds down with Part 7: Piercing in Modern Culture, which ends with the future of body piercing. The book, however, does not end here. Four appendices cover A Piercer's Bill of Rights, a chart to keep track of one's piercings and jewelry, and gauge conversion and minimum healing times charts. I'd love to see these as tear-out, quick reference sheets for all piercers, piercees, parents and professionals. Those and the Glossary are invaluable.

While *The Piercing Bible* is not a piercing how-to instruction manual, piercers will find the entire work to be indispensable. Ms. Angel's longtime intimacy with piercing will give less-seasoned professionals inside tips and hints. Each piercing's placement in relation to anatomy is described in detail, techniques are given, and, having a copy of the book to cite to customers would certainly prove to be beneficial. Shops may even want to offer it for sale with their sea salt, emu oil and high-quality stainless steel jewelry.

I should also note that the illustrations are detailed, so you know what you're looking at, without being too graphic, for those who may be squeamish.

Since Elaine Angel is no longer piercing on a regular basis, her tone is the unsurpassed way to obtain piercing know-how. I plan to refer to it, and the complementary website, www.piercingbible.com, often. ■

Many people know Elaine Angel through her monthly columns in *Pain* magazine. Now, her thirty-something years of experience is brought together in one place, *The Piercing Bible*.

As the mildly pierced (navel, earlobes, tragus [one performed by Ms. Angel herself] and retired tooth) step-mom of a more heavily pierced (stretched earlobes, tragus, multi-needle, nipples, nape, tongue) college student, I've been reading the bible from two points of view. As a piercee, I read each chapter and want to run out and get my navel re-pierced, give the VCH a try, or maybe just throw another hole or two into my ears. But that might not be a good example of the responsible piercing for which Ms. Angel is known, and which she advocates in *The Piercing Bible*.

As uber-cool step-mom, I'm reading the Bible looking for reasons why my beautiful step-daughter is motivated to add so much metal to her body. For that, I don't have to go far; Part 1, *The New Piercing*, takes care of that. I'm handing the book over to her dad next since his un-pierced body understands none of it.

Angel gives the history of piercings after explaining the motivations for them: from the goddess Lakshmi wearing earlobe and nose piercings back in 1500 B.C.E. to Alicia Silverstone getting her navel pierced in Aerosmith's "Cryin'" video in 1993, it's covered. In more than one case, she was at the evolution of the piercing. Indeed, Ms. Angel received the first honorary "Master Piercer" certificate bestowed by Jim Ward of the Countess—the first professional body piercing specialty studio in America.

With this background information conveyed, Ms. Angel gets into the meat of the book. Part 2 deals with some of the risks, myths and warnings, and asks piercees to consider if piercing is right for them. Part 3 helps in picking your piercer, your piercer, and