

How To Talk Dirty And Influence People

Lenny Bruce

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Castigated in his time for breaching such American conversational taboos as religion, sex, censorship, and racism, Lenny Bruce proved to be a pioneer in exposing hypocrisies, the impact of which still echoes on both sides of censorship controversies. This book and soon-to-be-released private tapes are sure to bring the extent of Bruce's influence into sharp focus. Photo insert.

How To Talk Dirty And Influence People Details

Date : Published 1977 by Playboy Press (first published 1965)

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From Reader Review How To Talk Dirty And Influence People for online ebook

Victoria says

Kinda meh. Celebrities writing books is kind of hit or miss, I think.

Phil says

This book strongly influenced me. Lenny Bruce is an American icon who died for free speech. Read his own (hysterically funny) words and know his story in this age of political correctness.

"When you take away the right to say "fuck," you take away the right to say "fuck the government."

Michael says

In this politically correct version of the world Lenny Bruce is just as offensive as he was back when he was being busted by the fuzz for being obscene. You see Lenny is an icon that paved the way for greats like Carlin, Pryor, Hicks, and even Sam Kinison. Words themselves aren't dirty. It's the image that they create. Lenny was ahead of his time and he paid dearly for it. It's unfortunate that Mr. Bruce doesn't get the respect that he deserves. He changed the way that people approached comedy and busted down doors that were formerly closed. I know I'm coming off fan boyish, but Bruce is one of those guys that taught me more about life than most teachers. I learned about free speech from Lenny, and I also learned that you don't really have the freedom to speak at all. You just think you do.

This isn't the first time I read this book I read it back when I was eighteen and I hadn't really seen Lenny perform, and I didn't really know all that much about him. I knew how he died, and how dirty he was, but then again when you looked back at the state of who came after, he wasn't really all that dirty. He knew how to hold a audience's attention but he wasn't trying to offend anyone. He just spoke to them the way he spoke to his friends. If you look on Youtube there are some really good bits of his that still hold up well, while others are quite dated. I fell in love with the book and read it about ten, or eleven times. I thought this was an autobiography, but it's really not.

It's just a series of stories that seem true, and who knows, maybe to Lenny they were. They are entertaining and what makes it so readable is that they're funny, and you're inside Lenny's head a bit. There are other biographies of Bruce, but this one is special because it's the man's own words before his world started falling apart. We do get a glimpse of his beginning legal troubles, but we don't get the tragic end. Lenny had no idea just how bad things were going to get. Neither did family or fans. Some of the stuff is dated but anytime you read an older book you're going to have this issue. If you're one of those people that are bothered by that then maybe you should avoid the book and read something else.

It is one of my favorite books though, and one that you should read if you're at all interested in what the world was like for someone like Lenny who actually arrested for saying cock sucker on stage. He talks about his status as a sick comic and we also get a glimpse inside his marriage to Honey Bruce. This was at the time, the definitive book on Bruce and still is. These are somewhat autobiographical tales that will make you

laugh and is a great introduction the legend that is Lenny Bruce.

Jacob says

It's sad to think that the lessons Lenny Bruce taught have been forgotten so quickly. Those who applauded him when they were young, sit quietly now that they're old. It's fear-I think-who knows who's next? Gotta keep the finger away from you, no matter how many people you have to throw under the bus. Friends yesterday, monster's today.

I can't help but be happy that Lenny and George never had to see what we've become. Though, I doubt they'd be surprised.

But in the end, we're all guilty, man, the mob makes sure of that. Something that was funny yesterday, ain't so funny today. You gotta be fast to keep up, light on your toes, but even then, the Internet never forgets. And recorders are everywhere. It only takes one.

A word is a word is a word. It's us who give it power. We do the thinking, not the dumb words.

"Obscenity is a human manifestation. This toilet has no central nervous system, no level of consciousness. It is not aware; it is a dumb toilet; it cannot be obscene; it's impossible. If it could be obscene, it could be cranky, it could be a Communist toilet, a traitorous toilet. It can do none of these things. This is a dirty toilet here." - Lenny Bruce

Ginevra says

Lenny Bruce is a cultural icon, and like most cultural icons, I knew nothing about him before picking up this book. As it turns out, he was arrested multiple times for his comedy act, in which he pokes fun at Catholics, WWII, and himself. The books meanders through stories about his life and larger cultural issues, which makes it an interesting read. It also demonstrates what the limits of free speech in the 50's-60's which, as the bookcover points out, is still relevant today.

I gave it 4 stars, since I realized something from reading this that I hadn't thought of before. Lenny shows how the moral compass of society doesn't really get any stronger or weaker, it just changes course. He points out that his parent's generation had "freak shows" at the circus, yet they consider his humor, to be offensive. There is a lot of social commentary on sex, drugs, and religion, but none of it goes particularly deep. This makes it a good nighttime or airplane read, where you can let your subconscious process most of it.

Coleman says

Millennial left-leaning cucks such as myself are often credited for creating and proliferating the "Politically Correct Society" we supposedly find ourselves in, and I hate to perpetuate my own stereotype, but I must say I take offense to that. You see there's a large sect of people who think we have something of an epidemic on our hands: a generation of coddled pussies. They believe we would rather live in a world of "safe spaces" and "trigger warnings" than think critically or allow our ideas to be challenged. They believe that we all want to end free speech, and censor any dissenting opinion or hurtful word because we're just too coddled to cope

with reality. For anyone who believes this, or who believes that this “Politically Correct Society” is the reason our future as a nation looks more Orwellian with each passing day, I invite you to read *How to Talk Dirty and Influence People*.

Lenny Bruce was a comedian and entertainer, perhaps the most notorious of his day, whose acts were hilarious, but were also constantly under attack thanks to Obscenity Laws. These laws, when put into practice, made the utterance certain, obscene four-letter words an arrestable offense. In the words of the law itself, public speech is declared to be obscene (and therefore illegal) if “to the average person, applying contemporary community standards, the dominant theme of the material, taken as a whole, appeals to the prurient interest.” Let me translate that for you. You have no right to free speech if the words you speak are deemed OFFENSIVE.

Of course Bruce probably could’ve gotten away with saying certain four-letter words. After all, he performed mostly in jazzy strip clubs and salacious bars. What really got him into trouble was the meaning behind his words, not the words themselves. See, Lenny Bruce dared to criticize the most hypocritical institutions of his day (and our day): He joked about organized religion, officers of the law, and the supposed progressive liberals who talked the talk whenever it came to race relations, but never walked the walk. He was a brilliant and witty social satirist which made him a dangerous criminal, and with each new city he performed in, he faced another arrest, another trial over words.

What Lenny Bruce experienced 50 years ago was censorship. Today, bigots say bigoted comments and are promptly called out for being bigots, and then they complain that “the liberals are trying to censor me!” When that happens, I can only laugh. When certain alt-right pundits are dropped by their publishing companies (Note the word *companies*) for vitriolic, baiting comments that don’t reflect the values of those companies, they decry the state of our “Politically Correct Society” and invoke the tenets of the first amendment. Then I laugh even harder. When online forums are shut down for being incestuous buckets of hate, and the suddenly silenced army of rage monkeys unleashes fury via social media I just laugh and laugh. “WHERE IS MY FREE SPEECH!” They all scream. “I’M A VICTIM OF CENSORSHIP!”

What these people don’t get, is that they are not victims of censorship. They were not arrested for their unpopular opinions, they weren’t even forced to stop speaking. They may have been dropped by a for-profit organization, or a website that has its own rules about discussion, but they act as if they are revolutionary martyrs fighting tyranny and oppression. What they really are is a group of sissy crybabies. They’re crying because slurs and remarks that used to be acceptable in polite conversation are no longer acceptable, and they just can’t take it. Companies looking to reach as wide an audience as possible don’t want to be represented by racists. Websites designed to be social and welcoming don’t want to be overrun by nazi trolls. The first amendment protects your speech from government persecution, not from economic consequence.

But you may say “what about these college campuses? Full of liberal censors, going around and telling speakers not to come, telling professors what to teach?” Obviously, I don’t condone that, and honestly I wouldn’t worry too much about it. Congress has stepped in on this issue, and they’ve reached a bipartisan consensus that it just isn’t acceptable. Meanwhile, laws that actually promote censorship, such as laws against Net Neutrality, and laws that allow parents to edit school textbooks and reading lists, fly right under the radar. Funny how I don’t hear complaints about censorship from our revolutionary martyrs then...

But I’m getting off track. My point is that the “Politically Correct Society” did exist, and Lenny Bruce lived through it. His fight against the censorship of that society took such a toll on him that it very probably killed him. So to anyone complaining about our P.C. culture today I do not think you should be censored, but maybe every once in a while you could just shut the hell up.

My favorite quotes from the book:

"Marilyn Monroe's respectability when she died was based principally upon her economic status, which is, in the final analysis, the only type our society really respects." (67)

"I knew in my heart by pure logic that any man who calls himself a religious leader and owns more than one suit is a hustler as long as there is someone in the world who has no suit at all. So I made up my mind. I would become a priest." (75)

"Any 19-year-old girl who is married to a wealthy, elderly guy... well, never mind that – just *anyone* who is married for security is a hooker. Two dollars for a short time, as opposed to a marriage license and a lot of two dollars for a longer time." (105)

"Marijuana will be legal some day, because the many law students who now smoke pot will some day become Congressmen and legalize it in order to protect themselves." (164)

Procyon Lotor says

Autobiografia di Lenny Bruce Autobiografia di Lenny Bruce, noto oggi per soli due motivi, la celebrazione che ne fece Bob Fosse nel secco film Lenny (lo interpreta D. Hoffman, IMHO una delle sue migliori interpretazioni) e l'essere stato l'ispiratore riconosciuto di Daniele Luttazzi in Italia. Il resistibile successo di Lenny fra gli anni 50 e 60 si basò sullo scandalizzare a oltranza. Tecnica infantile che ha sempre (contro i muri solidi) un discreto successo. Se poi teniamo conto dell'America profonda tutta torte di mele, Doris Day e zii che violentano nipotine nel capanno degli attrezzi possiamo comprendere come un tipo come Lenny Bruce - un classico, one-liner da battaglia, facesse sbellicare dalla risa gli hip urbani. La società? contro cui si scagliava? quella che Kurtz rievoca in Apocalypse Now "Addestriamo dei ragazzi a sganciare Napalm sulla gente, ma i loro comandanti non vogliono che scrivano "cazzo" sugli aerei perché? una parola oscena" Fu perseguitato da una censura codina e ottusa ma ci mise del suo, non cap? che c'? molta gente cui piace realmente la vita torta di mele & Doris Day, non per ipocrisia e senza violentare le nipotine. Di questo errore lo perdoniamo, fu il primo, era solo, l'ha pagata e molte ipocrisie erano demolende e meritoriamente demolibili. Stupisce che il medesimo errore l'abbia commesso trent'anni dopo un uomo che spesso appare acuto e intelligente come Luttazzi. Il disastro di Lenny fu sia nelle persecuzioni che sub? che nel seguente rendersi conto che la dissacrazione esasperata somiglia molto a segare il ramo su cui ci si ? seduti. Se stesso incluso. Fortemente consigliato ai reduci degli anni '70 e a chiunque voglia ghignare. Ricordate che fu originariamente pubblicato da "Playboy", toglieva il singhiozzo inevitabile dopo la liturgica contemplazione del paginone centrale. Solo interessati / astenersi per ditempo.

Matt says

I love Lenny Bruce and I respect what he was able to accomplish, regarding free speech and the position of the satirist in the modern world. Every comic- every. single. one.- who has come after is in some sense trailing in his wake.

I got really into reading this in high school. I relished noticing that other people got into it, too, and saw what happened when the American legal structure decided to try and take him down. A landmark case for

defenders of free speech and dissent.

Only trouble is: a lot of his work, this book included, seems too dated to stand up to today's reader. Too many obscure 50's references along the lines of "that's like telling Arnie Winkler to start selling dolphin insurance to AMERICA UNITED!!!"audience cracks up completely and....it goes way over my head.

I've heard a couple things recently, particularly 'How to Relax Your colored friends at Parties' which actually did make me laugh out loud, so maybe my opinion isn't still relevant....

Anyway definitely recommended for anyone interested in post war American counterculture...

Douglas Florian says

Page for page, line for line, semi-colon for semi-colon, the funniest book I've ever read.

Carolyn says

This new edition of Lenny Bruce's autobiography still bites, shocks, and provokes some nervous laughter and some belly laughs. I hadn't read it before, although I was a fan and saw one of his live performances many years ago. Much of the hypocrisy he pokes fun at is still around, and many of his lines are still hilarious. He changed comedy forever, and paid a high price for doing so.

Crystal says

This was a rare book left behind by the overweight and greasy lead singer of a band I booked once when I used to do that. I read it immediately and furiously like a masturbating teenager adopting Bruce's jargon as my own and made many decisions based on what I thought Lenny Bruce would do. When those decisions went up in flames I thought to myself; "well, fuck, it could be worse, I coulda been Lenny Bruce". Reading this book at times made feel overwhelmingly dirty, disgusted and guilty (like porn and Bukowski) and I can't wait to read it again.

Kristina says

2018 review:

I abandoned this because I read it already when I was going through my Lenny Bruce phase. I'm sure I enjoyed it then, so why repeat my reading? My reading list this year is way too long for repeats I'm not sure I want to repeat.

Cameron says

This book starts off well but toward the end slips into a mess of legal rhetoric that became dull so I'm giving it a 3 star rating. But there are valuable lessons to be derived here; such as what it is to be a jew vs. a gentile, the power of words both written and spoken under those people in power who are in charge of censorship, how sticking your neck out in society does not always go over well, and why it is important to remain stoic and objective in a climate of religion vs. politics.

Don says

good book!

Jeffrey says

Not as funny as I would have liked. Dry read, despite the fact that Lenny Bruce lead a fascinating life.

yellowbird says

Reading this book is just like watching a history of Lenny Bruce's standup act. It's funny and interesting in the beginning and then becomes bogged down in boring legal issues towards the end. Was he victimised by people in power? Sure, I can see that. But I don't need to read a verbatim account of the many trials. That stuff just doesn't interest me. My opinion - read the first half of the book and then give it to a Lenny Bruce fan.

Riley Vermilya says

Ok. So this guy is a cultural icon. I consider myself well read and in touch with comedy and the entertainment world past and present, yet I had no clue who LB was. When I asked my mother if she knew who he was she said matter of fact, "He was a comedian/entertainer in the 50's and 60's and was a druggie." Ok...sounds like a fun read...NOT.

I did not race through this and love every minute of it. But, I did appreciate how Lenny broke the June and Ward pristine barriers of the 50's and spoke his truth about the hypocrisies of the world with potty mouth flare. He ultimately paved the way for George Carlin, Eddie Murphy, Chris Rock and the like and I dig that!

Ned Rifle says

An entertaining book for anyone already kindly disposed towards Lenny though the only moment that it really teeters into (his usual) greatness is when he, disguised as a priest in order to collect money for a fake charity (fun guy), passes a Rabbi, who nods at him and he is forced to wonder whether they are always doing

this, like bus drivers.

Gabriel says

There is an ebb and flow to the tale of classic comics. People are brought up on a basis similar to comets passing through the atmosphere. Someone dies and the comet appears a little quicker ("X lived in the shadow of Y who had paved the way for X to do their most famous bits ...").

Lenny Bruce's comet comes every 5 or ten years, it seems. He's been labeled a martyr and a genius and one of the most important comedians to ever come across a stage. Just a couple of weeks ago, another website was looking at Comedians who had forced society to move forward and started their discussion with Bruce and Mort Sahl (a contemporary whose humor was a bit more political). This reminded me, "Man, it's been a while since I heard those Bruce bits. Gotta hear them again." And then, "You know, there's his autobiography. I wonder what that's like."

The answer: It's the ESSENTIAL Lenny Bruce. More essential than the book falsely labeled as The Essential Lenny Bruce if only because this one ties his jokes together. He took his time with this book and crafted something that tells [a great deal of] his story. From early life to beginnings of his comedy career to his obscenity cases to his overwhelming paranoia (stuff that comes out in Let The Buyer Beware's CD's ... but that's over 7 hours of listening to poorly recorded material), it's almost all here. And integrated throughout are some of his more classic bits. Yeah, "Christ and Moses" is not complete. Sure, "Are There Any Niggers Here Tonight" (while quoted on the back) is not here. But instead, we get him running off on jerking off. We get Lenny discussing the mysterious object in his Aunt Mema's cupboard (a douche) and we also get his criticisms of the police and "The Man". We even get him criticizing himself from time to time.

It rambles on, like his performances, but because it's written, we don't lose any word. The reader understands the power of the words that Lenny uses in his comedy and, with the book spelling out some of his performances word for word, we can actually laugh at it. This book is what needs to be discussed every time Lenny's comet rolls on through the comedy ether. They talk about seeing him and listening to his records, but frankly, they didn't translate very well. This book, though, allows us living 50 years after his death to get in touch with his work and understand what makes it funny and what makes it poignant and why it was important in the first place.

Now, how much of this autobiography is true ... that's up for debate. I don't know, I don't want to know (my guess is around 75%). This book isn't about learning about who Lenny Bruce is. This book is about why Lenny Bruce was important in the 1950's and 1960's and why we should still care about him now. Some of his bits (like one I named a couple of paragraphs up) still can't be performed today. As South Park gets censored over and over again (via death threats of all things!), as words are still thought of as dirty, as Political Correctness has swamped the nation and our thoughts with what should be allowed ... sometimes we need a Lenny Bruce to stick a finger in our assholes and tell us it smells like shit down there.

The only drawback to reading this book (or listening to a lot of Bruce) is that you begin to talk like him. Give me a week and I'll stop.

Carl Waluconis says

I read this book so long ago that I decided to revisit and read it again. The best parts are the bits, probably

from some of his routines, which still cause laughing out loud. However, some of the material is dated, but valuable historically to show how times change. The justice system then was so bothered by him that they hounded him as badly as the Internet can now hound people. He provides court records that show him caught in a kind of theatre of the absurd over what one could or couldn't legally say. The memoir portion of the book is rich with stories of his time in the Merchant Marine and his love with Honey Harlowe. Also he tells of a con game he ran of raising money to help foreign countries in the name of religion. (This reminded me of Elmore Leonard's novel, "Pagan Babies", which was about the exact same kind of scheme.) Though at times dated, he was also prescient, declaring marijuana would some day be legal. Lenny Bruce died in the mid-60's shortly after this book was first published, which adds a different dimension to reading about his hounded situation.
