



Drink Smoke Pass Out

Judith Lucy

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At last, a book about life that discusses liquor and lovemaking as much as it does the point of it all.

Judith Lucy has looked everywhere for happiness. Growing up a Catholic, she thought about becoming a nun, and later threw herself into work, finding a partner and getting off her face. Somehow, none of that worked.

So lately, she's been asking herself the big questions. Why are we here? Is there a God? What happens when we die? And why can't she tell you what her close friends believe in, but she can tell you which ones have herpes? No-one could have been more surprised than Judith when she started to find solace and meaning in yoga and meditation, and a newfound appreciation for what others get from their religion.

In her first volume of memoir, the bestselling *The Lucy Family Alphabet*, Judith dealt with her parents. In *Drink, Smoke, Pass Out*, she tries to find out if there's more to life than wanting to suck tequila out of Ryan Gosling's navel. With disarming frankness and classic dry wit, she reviews the major paths of her life and, alarmingly, finds herself on a journey.

Drink Smoke Pass Out Details

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From Reader Review Drink Smoke Pass Out for online ebook

Emma says

Loved, loved, loved this book! I was really touched by it. A unique mix of searching for more meaning in life, heartbreak and humour. I'm a fan!

Shelleyrae at Book'd Out says

Judith Lucy is a popular Australian stand up comedienne who starred in the comedy sketch television show The Late Show and The Mick Mollow Show, hosted breakfast and drive time radio and has had small roles in Australian produced movies like Crackerjack and The Sapphires. She often makes guest appearances on shows such as Good News Week and The Project and tours the country with her own woman stage shows. Judith's first book, a memoir titled The Lucy Family Alphabet, is an irreverent examination of her dysfunctional upbringing and has been reprinted several times.

Judith's wry, dark sense of humour and her distinct voice is the antithesis of the pretentious earnestness of Gilbert's bestseller, Eat Pray Love. In Drink Smoke Pass Out Judith recounts her journey from hard drinking youth to a more moderate middle age as her rekindled interest in spirituality vies with her deeply ingrained cynicism.

Raised a practicing Catholic, Judith abandoned the church when she grew old enough to question the religion's hypocrisies placing her faith in comedy, red wine, marijuana and sex. With disarming honesty and self deprecating wit, Judith reviews the hedonism of her twenties and her mantra of 'here for a good time, not a long time' that excused daily drinking binges and awkward one night stands. Her addictions took a grimmer turn after discovering, during a family fight when she was 25, that she was adopted, and again after the deaths of her parents and a close friend in her early thirties. As her lifestyle began to affect her health she was introduced to Yoga and despite her skepticism found that it helped her feel better. Initially only interested in the physical relief Yoga offered her, Judith eventually began to read some of the philosophy underpinning the movement and found the combination was slowly effecting change as she began to consider the larger questions of existence.

Judith's growing interest in spirituality led to the development of a 6 part TV show for the ABC - the idea to trace her steps from Catholicism to atheism, to her new enthusiasm for yoga and beyond. The precis of the series 'Judith Lucy's Spiritual Journey', which aired in 2011, takes up the last quarter or so of the book. Judith speaks with an eclectic group of people including nuns, an ex-priest, psychics, Aboriginal elders, Buddhists and a handful of Australian celebrities flavoured with her own brand of irreverent humour.

I am not religious nor particularly spiritual and I have to admit I am fairly dismissive of both for various reasons, however I do not begrudge those whose chosen faith helps them make positive changes in their lives or the lives of others. I found Judith's journey interesting because she approaches it without the evangelical fervour, obsessive self interest or smug condescension common to such tracts. Drink Smoke Pass Out made me laugh and made me think and I'm even considering attending a Yoga session.

Robyn Philip says

I read this on the plane and the train, and was caught sniggering away behind the pages. I think that behaviour can make fellow passengers jealous (or is it just uneasy?), because they wonder what you've got there that they haven't, can they have some of it and why is she having all the fun? Anyway, I recommend this book if you are a fan of Judith Lucy the comedian, or a fan of stories about individuals searching for meaning and coming to know themselves. In this case Lucy's 'journey', yes there's that word again, her journey is from Catholicism to meditation and yoga. She's brutally honest about her alcoholism and twisted anxieties, and sometimes that made me laugh out loud; other times her descriptions were so close to the bone it left me squirming, possibly disillusioned or sad, until the next joke blurted out in the following paragraph. As one reviewer said, the first chapter is the funniest, but if you want a quick and light journey through what is really a very important subject - who am I, what do I believe, where do I find happiness - then go for it!

Sue says

If self-deprecation wasn't Judith Lucy's stock in trade, I'd understand her employing it for this book. After all, she is talking about things which require ironical quotes around them - things like "soul," "energy," "consciousness." Things that can make you feel like a right dickhead talking about them, especially (and still) in Australia.

Apart from pretty stuff we might post on Facebook, it's not like we have very easily recognised cultural containers for easy discussion about the spiritual aspect to life. Like so many things it has been commodified, flattened out to be just one more ... thing. One more choice for a flaky selection of the community.

Still, I love to try to talk about it. But my blog provides ample posts as evidence for the difficulty of pulling it off without sounding like a bit of a nong. And so I really understand Judith Lucy's desire to write around this area and the angst it must have caused her in doing so. Every time I go back and read anything I've written that tries to name a spiritual experience, I cringe. I feel pulled in two directions because I identify again with what I've tried to describe about that beautiful and mysterious space, while at the same time part of me is desperate to hit the delete key so nobody else reads this totally sappy drivel. There is never a writing space that you can feel as vulnerable with as this - or as easily misunderstood.

Spirituality is a little like being in love. When you're in it, you're swimming in it and it's the world. And those people who are looking in on your pool thinking you're deluded - well, they're just jealous because their skin's dry, right? And yet when you're out of that space and in a more mundane one - an hour later while you're cooking dinner or sitting in traffic - it's quite easy to believe that that space is really just a dumb and wanky mirage.

Which is why I so enjoyed Judith's book and the way she pokes fun at spirituality and at herself. There's something about her self-deprecation that makes the book even more lovely.

"I'm very grateful to my mind. It's helped me put on pants and write the odd joke, but it can also be a bit like Mickey Rourke's face - an inexplicable, disturbing mess." It's Judith's crazy monkey-mind, the death of her parents and the refusal of career, relationships, the bottle and the bong to provide fulfilling answers that set her to wondering about some of those bigger questions.

As part of Judith Lucy's Spiritual Journey she went on a Buddhist meditation retreat. The schedule makes you gulp - 10 hours of meditation for 10 days, no talking, reading, writing, yoga or music.

"Day four was a nightmare. It was like all my negative thoughts got together and had a huge party. I knew I had some self-loathing issues, but this was like watching my mental dialogue under a microscope, while stoned on some hydroponic grass. It was so relentless that I remember thinking it was futile to even imagine I could change my life. Why not just go back to wiping myself out, if this was the alternative? It was just my usual string of personal abuse (you're stupid, you're ugly and - one of my father's favourite lines - why can't you be more like Tina Arena?), but I had nothing to distract me from these thoughts and it made me feel completely helpless. If my negative mind and I had been engaged in some sort of battle, it had definitely won. I really couldn't see how things would ever improve, and yet the next day was completely different. The thoughts were still there but they didn't bother me anymore. I could sit back and watch them come and go and not get involved, and I actually started to experience tiny breaks in the relentless flow."

The title of this book is a parody of Elizabeth Gilbert's *Eat, Pray, Love*, a book that graces my bookshelves, and some of which I loved, some of which was awfully tedious and not a little pretentious, the author having my own same tendency to sometimes take herself just a little bit too seriously. But what I got from *Eat, Pray, Love* is ultimately what I got from *Drink, Smoke, Pass Out*, and with a hell of a lot more fun, only a little less sugary sweet, with a shitload more swear words and references to dicks and brutal, blatant honesty, all in Judith's particularly endearing and irreverent style. This book is fun.

The piece of this book that I loved the most was at the end, and I hesitate to include it here because it was so lovely coming upon it myself. Judith hesitated to include it because she didn't want you to think she was a crackpot or tripping on acid, but it sums up what I loved most about this book - the fact that we are all mental in rather more than one way, struggling to hold our shit together, making it up as we go along. The culture in which we are forced to live cast us in the harshest light one to another. We are pitted like enemies against each other and against ourselves but still, despite all of that, there is this space that we all experience at times, when we are totally here, and maybe even feel like we're bumping up against something else, a space which I think cultures previous to ours and closer to the ground knew more intimately than we:

"... it probably lasted about two hours. I was completely there. It felt like my senses were all on overdrive - I could feel every little breeze, hear every tiny noise and I was simply drunk on what my eyes were seeing. Every plant or flower, every ray of light that bounced off a surface was just amazing. I felt like I was moving in slow motion. At one point, I passed through a street market and felt completely connected to every person there. Some classical music was playing and it felt like everyone was engaged in some giant choreographed number, where we were all doing exactly what we were meant to be doing. That feeling continued when I saw people walking in the park and when I picked up a ball to hand it back to a father who was playing with his little girl. Everything felt exactly right. We were all part of something much larger, and it was perfect. I've never felt such a feeling of wellbeing. I've never felt such pure happiness. It did feel like a drug, and towards the end of it, I panicked ... It was so different from anything that I'd felt before and I think I worried that if it didn't end, I would somehow not get back to my old life. It's nuts, but it was like I thought I'd be locked in the Narnia wardrobe forever. I haven't experienced anything like it since and I still can't really explain it. Okay, now someone can call an ambulance."

What I love about this book is she is so real. There's no ethereal sitting up in the skies having your shit together. As Judith says herself, "I'm not living in a cave in the Himalayas, I'm single and I still drink (sometimes I still drink a lot). But I *am* less fucked up, and I thought, why not share a story that's sort of about spirituality, but doesn't take itself too seriously, and has no eating, less praying and loving, and a lot more drinking, smoking and passing out, because if my tale didn't have those elements, it would just be a pamphlet."

Sean Kennedy says

Although perhaps not as good as The Lucy Family Alphabet, this is still a fun read as Judith takes us on the spiritual journey that led her to the making of her television series about the same subject. If you've seen the series parts of this book may seem like a retread, but you'll never be bored in Lucy's company. Her writing style is especially suited to her style of delivery on stage, and no doubt you will hear her as you read along.

If only she would do audio books!

Margaret says

Australian funny lady Judith Lucy takes a look at religious and spiritual practice. Not to take the piss, but to chart her own journey from Roman Catholic to atheist and onwards.

It's an honest, interesting, funny, and thought provoking read. Judith pulls no punches.

Highly recommended.

Narrelle says

I've loved Judith Lucy's stand-up comedy for years – her earthy, dry, self-deprecating wit rarely fails to hit the mark with me. Recently, in her Australian ABC documentary series, Judith Lucy's Spiritual Journey, Lucy (a lapsed Catholic) explored her own search for spiritual meaning in a way that I (an atheist interested in philosophy) found both engaging and entertaining.

Drink, Smoke, Pass Out is a companion to the TV series, giving Lucy's whole background from goody-two-shoes Catholic girl (so hard to imagine!) through to her adult avoidance of being troubled mainly by staying drunk and high, through to her realisation that maybe she needs to tackle her relationship with the universe rather than trying to stay numb to it. The book steps lightly through the events of the TV series (after all, you can watch that for more detail) and concludes that although she's still looking for answers, it's a good thing to at least be asking the questions.

The title is a riff on the popular Eat, Pray, Love, and the book is firmly planted in traditional Judith Lucy territory: sardonic, self-deprecating, earthy and mocking of pretensions, most often her own. This book could so easily have been an indulgent, self-righteous 'I have seen the light' affair. Alternatively, it could have been a terrible, cynical excuse to laugh at the many (and, to be fair, sometimes quite strange) ways people seek for meaning.

Instead, what you get is a thoughtful, passionate exploration of Judith Lucy's personal demons and her practical methods of finding a better way of dealing with them than by being drunk most of the time. She's not gone all wowser on us – she still likes a drink, she still smokes (though she seem to have given up passing out) – but she is genuine in her curiosity about people's search for wisdom, and still approaches things with a sense of humour.

Most of the time this works well, especially given her stated aim of wanting to talk about spirituality and the search for meaning in a way that 'doesn't want to make people puke'. Sometimes, it's a little jarring – a few

paragraphs of thoughtful analysis and even insight often ends in a neat, sardonic little joke, and it feels like Lucy is backing off from her own opinions. Still, she is a comedian, and while she takes the notion of spirituality seriously, she remains keenly aware of human absurdity. She's not cynical, but she has a healthy scepticism about practices and approaches that seem more about making a buck than about enlightenment.

In many ways, Drink, Smoke, Pass Out is the sceptics' guide to the search for meaning. Grounded in reality, Lucy's journey admits to the many ways in which people try to find harmony with the world they live in and with their own fears, lacks and disappointments. Her conclusion that the search for meaning is as important (or even more important) than claiming to have found it resonated with me. I may be an atheist, but that doesn't mean I go through the world devoid of a moral framework or a need for meaning. Everyone needs to work out what their relationship is with the universe: with their environment, the land and their fellow creatures. My search has let me to philosophy rather than religion, but that is just one way to engage with the world.

If you are wary of treatises that wax too lyrical about angels, crystals, healing energies or other mystical gateways to happiness, but you remain interested in the human search for balance within themselves and with their world, Judith Lucy's unsentimental but open-hearted exploration is worth reading.

Kathy Fogarty says

If you only pick this up for the laughs you might be disappointed as it's bittersweet in many parts. I could really relate to a lot of her exploits with boys and booze and also to her exploration of the spiritual via Buddhism, meditation and yoga. So it was a pleasure for me to read this book and I really gained a sense of her being a much steadier and happier human being at this stage of her life. Uplifting in a funny, down to earth kind of way.

Kathleen Ferguson says

I found the first few chapters funny and captivating. But found myself wanting the book to end and slow going.

Sharon says

I admit to finding Judith Lucy rather annoying, but at the same time, quite funny with her dry sense of humour.

This book though did tend to annoy me. It was only two thirds of the way in we got to the spiritual journey, and while I understand that the first part of "kept getting stoned, drunk, sleeping with the wrong men" was laying the groundwork of where she was beginning this journey from, after a while, it became too repetitive. (A point that she herself was aware of, but could not seem to stop)

I nearly tossed this book aside a few times, but continued, because to be honest I needed something to read while waiting for my broadband to download the internet page I needed. (but that's another story)

Cyn says

Go Judith, you legend. Highly recommended.

dwillsh says

I liked reading Judith Lucy's tale. Her initial presentation of being pretty fucked-up gradually gave way to a picture of a somewhat thoughtful person who has hit upon some interesting insights. Quite humorous too.

Sue-Ellen says

I read Judith Lucy's book in a couple of days; it is a very easy read. As the title suggests, Judith likes to drink, smoke various substances and pass out. She doesn't like bullshit, especially in herself and much of her self deprecating humour seems to come from this. As she goes through the death of close friends, her parents and the end of a number of relationships she starts to look for something other than alcohol and drugs to answer the big questions. The book ends with the production of her ABC series, Judith Lucy's Spiritual Journey. During this section of the book her humour is less edgy and feels gentler than in the first.

There are some good laughs throughout, including the crazy and wrong scenarios her thinking conjures up about a situation - I could really relate to these. For me there is quite a tension in the first half of the book and her humour is very self deprecating. By the second half of the book she appears happier in her own skin. Also, importantly, she is always respectful towards the different spiritual paths people have chosen. As she observes, if they are genuine and help others who is she to make fun of their beliefs. As she resolves issues with her beloved but whacky parents and becomes more allowing of other people and their spiritual searching, Judith notes that she is starting to run out of material for her shows.

While I write this I feel a dread that Judith Lucy may read it and say that it is all bullshit, that's not what her book was about at all. Thank goodness for the anonymity of the Internet and thank goodness for Judith Lucy's honesty delivered with a good dose of humour. Truth delivered with humour makes it much easier to swallow.

Tez says

I was only in it for the laughs. And in Chapter 1, there's something immensely quotable in EVERY paragraph, and I'm not exaggerating. The rest of the book doesn't fare as well. Spirituality just isn't for me.

Here's a collection of my favourite quotes:

- "Sure, I was an imbecile. But I think this was one of the reasons Catholicism really got its hooks into me."

- "...the Eucharist. The fact that eight-year-old children are involved in some sort of spiritual cannibalism is strange enough..."

- "My best friend Michelle and I attended a 'stranger camp'. Although it sounds like a get-together of lolly-

bag-clutching paedophiles..."

"...I put such concentration into slicing up fancy cheeses that you would've thought I was performing a circumcision."

"...unfortunately, the hottest guy in church was the semi-naked one up the front nailed to a cross."

"...greeted you a little like you're a stranger with a rare form of syphilis that can only be contracted by looking you in the eye and saying hello."

"Come on, Richard Curtis: what rom-com's complete without the leads watching each other banging a couple of whores?"

"...an article that actually suggested that instead of the word 'vagina' we should use the phrase 'sacred space', and, my favourite, instead of 'penis', we should use the phrase 'wand of light'. Not surprisingly, Darth Vader was lurking in the punch-line somewhere."

"'Children are like life's orgasms...' No. They're not. You can't fake one and if you put one in a pornographic movie, you'll be arrested."

"I knew working for commercial radio might be a bit like sucking the Devil's cock, but I knew a lot of comics who had still managed to do really great work with Satan's schlong in their traps, so why not me?"

Susie Griffin says

I really did enjoy this book and would give it 2.5 stars. I laughed out loud on several occasions but wish the back half of the book was expanded - the spiritual journey bit that is. I had already read 'The Lucy Family Alphabet' so a lot of the first half of the book was pretty familiar. I loved the Spiritual Journey tv series and especially enjoyed these sections of the book. It made me thankful I wasn't raised Catholic!!
