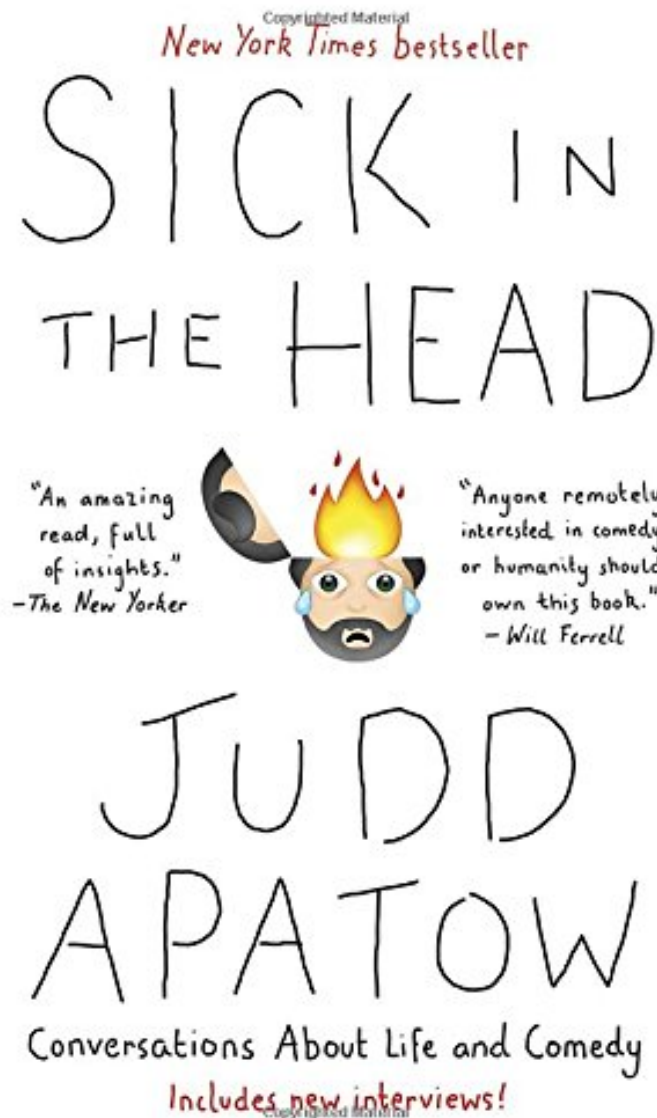


Sick in the Head: Conversations About Life and Comedy

Judd Apatow

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Judd Apatow : Sick in the Head: Conversations About Life and Comedy before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Sick in the Head: Conversations About Life and Comedy:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. One of the Best Collections of Comedian Interviews Ever By Crazy Feline This is one of those books that you really don't want to put down but then realize if you do, you can savor it a little longer. You don't want it to end. Almost every interview in this book is so inciteful, so interesting and such a joy to read, you wish they could go on forever. The subjects are some of the greatest comic minds of our generation and

Apatow digs deep into what makes them tick. Apatow bares his own soul in the process, ruminating on his own dysfunctional childhood which basically culminated into making him the auteur he is today. Apatow's backstory would make for an interesting memoir in of itself, but this is one of the great behind the scenes, how it's done, tell all you're likely to find dealing with the comic world. I have bought a lot of comic/comedian memoirs/autobiographies over the years, mostly on Amazon, and I can say this is one of the best. 4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Thank God for the comedians! By Papaya Girl For fans of comedy, comedians, biography, interviews or Apatow. And if you like all five, you'll love this book. Great read. I learned a lot and found a lot to admire about so many of the subjects. Mostly, though, it confirmed my sense that Judd Apatow's "crass with class" vibe comes from a truly moral place. Thank God for the (good) comedians! 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Rave reviews by my brother, regarding Judd Apatow's book "Sick in the Head" By Suzanne M. Seeger Got this book "Sick in the Head: Conversations about Life" by Judd Apatow for my brother. He was raving about this book and its collections of Mr. Apatow's dialogue's with various modern day comedians. My brother especially enjoyed being able to "pop open" the book to any page and enjoy some quick contents.

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER NAMED ONE OF THE BEST BOOKS OF THE YEAR BY THE A.V. CLUB
Includes new interviews! From the writer and director of *Knocked Up* and the producer of *Freaks and Geeks* comes a collection of intimate, hilarious conversations with the biggest names in comedy from the past thirty years including Mel Brooks, Jerry Seinfeld, Jon Stewart, Roseanne Barr, Harold Ramis, Louis C.K., Chris Rock, and Lena Dunham. Before becoming one of the most successful filmmakers in Hollywood, Judd Apatow was the original comedy nerd. At fifteen, he took a job washing dishes in a local comedy club just so he could watch endless stand-up for free. At sixteen, he was hosting a show for his local high school radio station in Syosset, Long Island a show that consisted of QAs with his comedy heroes, from Garry Shandling to Jerry Seinfeld. They talked about their careers, the science of a good joke, and their dreams of future glory (turns out, Shandling was interested in having his own TV show one day and Steve Allen had already invented everything). Thirty years later, Apatow is still that same comedy nerd and he's still interviewing funny people about why they do what they do. *Sick in the Head* gathers Apatow's most memorable and revealing conversations into one hilarious, wide-ranging, and incredibly candid collection that spans not only his career but his entire adult life. Here are the comedy legends who inspired and shaped him, from Mel Brooks to Steve Martin. Here are the contemporaries he grew up with in Hollywood, from Spike Jonze to Sarah Silverman. And here, finally, are the brightest stars in comedy today, many of whom Apatow has been fortunate to work with, from Seth Rogen to Amy Schumer. And along the way, something kind of magical happens: What started as a lifetime's worth of conversations about comedy becomes something else entirely. It becomes an exploration of creativity, ambition, neediness, generosity, spirituality, and the joy that comes from making people laugh. Loaded with the kind of back-of-the-club stories that comics tell one another when no one else is watching, this fascinating, personal (and borderline-obsessive) book is Judd Apatow's gift to comedy nerds everywhere. Praise for *Sick in the Head* I can't stop reading it. . . . I don't want this book to end. Jimmy Fallon An essential for any comedy geek. Entertainment Weekly Fascinating . . . a collection of interviews with many of the great figures of comedy in the latter half of the twentieth century. The Washington Post Open this book anywhere, and you're bound to find some interesting nugget from someone who has had you in stitches many, many times. Janet Maslin, The New York Times An amazing read, full of insights and connections both creative and interpersonal. The New Yorker Fascinating and revelatory. Chicago Tribune These are wonderful, expansive interviews at times brutal, at times breathtaking with artists whose wit, intelligence, gaze, and insights are all sharp enough to draw blood. Michael Chabon Anyone even remotely interested in comedy or humanity should own this book. It is hilarious and informative and it contains insightful interviews with the greatest comics, comedians, and comedienne's of our time. My representatives assure me I will appear in a future edition. Will Ferrell

I can't stop reading it. . . . I don't want this book to end. Jimmy Fallon An essential for any comedy geek. Entertainment Weekly Fascinating . . . a collection of interviews with many of the great figures of comedy in the latter half of the twentieth century. The Washington Post Open this book anywhere, and you're bound to find some interesting nugget from someone who has had you in stitches many, many times. Janet Maslin, The New York Times An amazing read, full of insights and connections both creative and interpersonal. The New Yorker Fascinating and revelatory. Chicago Tribune For fans of stand-up, *Sick in the Head* is a Bible of sorts. Newsweek This exploration of what it really means to be funny, day in and day out, is for the comedian in everyone. Publishers Weekly (starred review) Incandescent . . . an irresistible, ultimate-insiders comedy-interview extravaganza . . . [Judd] Apatow never loses his unabashed fans enthusiasm even as he asks canny questions that yield superbly illuminating conversations rich in shop talk and musings on the lure, demands, and resonance of comedy. Booklist (starred review) If Apatow's gift for comedy is a sickness, may he never be cured. Playboy Sprawling and insightful . . . The candidness of the interviews also exposes the peculiar community of comedians with anecdotes and cameos unlikely to be heard elsewhere. A delightful and hilarious read for anyone interested in what makes comedians tick. Kirkus These are wonderful, expansive interviews at times brutal, at times breathtaking with artists whose wit, intelligence, gaze, and insights are all sharp

enough to draw blood. Judd Apatow understands as well as any of them the pain that holds the knife, and the glee that wields it. Michael Chabon Anyone even remotely interested in comedy or humanity should own this book. It is hilarious and informative and it contains insightful interviews with the greatest comics, comedians, and comediennes of our time. My representatives assure me I will appear in a future edition. Will Ferrell From the Hardcover edition. About the Author Judd Apatow is one of the most important comic minds of his generation. He wrote and directed the films *The 40-Year-Old Virgin* (co-written with Steve Carell), *Knocked Up*, *Funny People*, and *This Is 40*, and his producing credits include *Superbad*, *Bridesmaids*, and *Anchorman*. Apatow is the executive producer of HBO's *Girls*. He was also the executive producer of *Freaks and Geeks*, created *Undeclared*, and co-created the Emmy Award-winning television program *The Ben Stiller Show*. His latest film is *Trainwreck*. He was also the editor of the collection *I Found This Funny*. Judd Apatow lives in Los Angeles with his wife, Leslie Mann, and their two daughters, Maude and Iris. From the Hardcover edition. Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved.

David Sedaris (2016) David Sedaris is a writer. For the past twenty years, he has been publishing hilarious, poignant collections of personal essays *Naked*, *Me Talk Pretty One Day*, *Dress Your Family in Corduroy and Denim* and doing epic radio pieces for *This American Life* that are ideal versions of the form. His material is his life his family, his walks around the neighborhood, his French lessons and the most amazing thing about him is that he never fails to make it fresh or meaningful. I can think of very few -writers in comedy or elsewhere with better timing or sense of the absurd. When hes not writing or doing pieces for public radio, David is on tour massive forty-city tours, thousand--seat venues and his act consists of walking out onstage, standing at a podium... and reading for ninety minutes. He absolutely kills. Ive never seen anybody do this before. David doesnt consider himself a stand-up comedian, because he stands at a podium and reads off of a piece of paper. I didnt want to say this to him during our interview, but he is a stand--up comedian. That doesnt mean his essays arent brilliant and insightful, and it doesnt mean hes not one of my favorite writers. But you take that podium away and force him to memorize his material, and hes one of the great comedians of our time, or any time.

Judd Apatow: How do you define what you do? Do you think of yourself as a performer or a writer? David Sedaris: I would never call myself a comedian. I dont think Ive ever done stand--up. If I had to try, I really dont even know what I would do. If you said to me, You have one month to come up with ten minutes of material, I honestly dont think I would be able to do that. I read out loud and I enjoy that. And when I go on tour, theres usually a question-and-answer session at the end of the reading and I dont have any papers in front of me, Im just answering questions. Sometimes at the end of the evening, Ill think, Oh God, that didnt go well at all. Those were really bad questions. Then I realize: Its not the questions, its me.

Judd: Yeah. David: If youre in the right mood, you can do anything with any question even if youve been asked that question a thousand times. If youre in the right mood, and youre feeling comfortable in front of the audience and not too self-conscious, then you go anywhere you want. But I dont know much about comedy. Every now and then Ill look at it on YouTube, but I dont go to comedy clubs. I dont have anything against laughter or anything. I just think everything I know about comedy I learned from listening to Marc Marons podcast.

Judd: When youre reading in front of an audience, are you reading things that havent been published yet? Is this a way to work on them? David: Yes. Judd: Your goal, I would assume, is: How funny can I make this? It seems like, in some ways, the process of writing and stand-up is the same, except what you do are more specifically stories. But thats what most comedians are doing every night, just going onstage and trying to figure out how to make it tighter and funnier.

David: Im about to start a weeks worth of shows at the Cadogan Hall in London. Its maybe eight hundred seats. I have eight shows. So I have these stories Im working on, and Ill go in and Ill read them and then Ill go back at night and Ill rewrite them. And then the next day usually, when Im on tour, Im taking two planes and then Im in a car for a couple of hours, and this way, I have all day to work before I go to the next theater in the evening. And thats what I want. I mean, I made myself laugh today while I was sitting at my desk, and that doesnt happen too often. I always think that if you make yourself laugh, then it might make the audience laugh. But Id say, nine times out of ten? No, its just me.

Judd: Does that hurt? David: It makes me laugh. Judd: But do you enjoy getting a laugh? David: It means everything to me. When Ive gone to other peoples readings and Ill go see a poet or Ill go to a bookstore because a friends novel is out. And I hear them get up there and read something serious, and I think, Oh, how can you do that? How do you know people are listening if theyre not laughing? You can feel people drifting away from you when youre reading a story, or telling a story. But nothings better than hearing them laugh. Nothings better than that.

Judd: Sometimes when were doing a movie that has more drama in it than usual and were testing it showing it to audiences to get their reaction I always find myself wishing there was a noise people made that let me know a dramatic scene is working. Theres no equivalent to the laugh, as far as knowing if a scene is effective. I have no idea. Whats the noise for that? David: There is a kind of a wistful sigh that people make when theyre touched. Sometimes at the end of a story, I hear that little noise and I think, Ah, that feels as good to me as a laugh. Its just a feeling of I dont know, if I say its a feeling of people being touched, that makes it sound like I make greeting cards. But its a little sound that people make, just some air escapes their mouth. Its very quiet, but if you have a couple thousand people doing that, you can hear it. But just barely.

Judd: What about when youre writing something that is less comedic? You have stories where you talk about people passing and doing very personal things. Sad things. What is it like to read those aloud? David: Usually what I do is I have, in advance, an image in my mind that Im going to think about when I read. So I dont

become emotional. Because that would be the worst. It has happened to me twice my voice cracked onstage when I was reading something, and, oh my God, I was just so embarrassed. I would have been less embarrassed if I'd shit my pants. Judd: (Laughs) Why is that? I always found it touching when, you know, Johnny Carsons voice cracked when he said goodbye at the end of the run of his show. David: Maybe if it were somebody else, I would find it charming or moving or something. But I don't know. My dad was in the audience one night and I read something that was about him it was sort of about him dying but, you know, he's not dead. He's in his nineties and he's still alive. It was about how I hoped to remember him after he was dead. And because he was in the audience and I don't we don't talk in my family. We don't say things like, Oh, I love you. We don't say stuff like that. So reading this would really be the closest I would ever come. And the word love is not in the entire story. But... and he was in the audience and... ugh. There was a story I wrote in 2004 that really kind of tore me up when I would read it. And so my boyfriend, Hugh, and I were looking for an apartment at the time in London, and as I was reading the story, I would just wonder what the front door of that apartment would look like. At the very last paragraph, I would just think of that. So I wouldn't really be there, you know. I mean, of course I would be there reading it, but emotionally I wouldn't be there. I guess it's about not wanting to lose control. But I don't know. It's all just an illusion? Judd: When your dad is there, and he's a guy who doesn't express himself that way, it seems like a conscious choice to read that on that night when he's attending. Did he react afterwards in any way? David: He said that he appreciated it. And I didn't expect anything more than that. I don't know that my dad reads anything I write. He pretends to. But if I were him, I wouldn't read it, either. If someone were to write something about me, I wouldn't read it. I'd say, Oh well, I know it's out there. No need to actually sit down and read it. Judd: It seems like there are different kinds of parents of writers and performers. There are the parents who just soak it up, and then there are the parents who don't seem like they approve or show interest. David: We were at dinner one night and I overheard my dad saying to somebody, Well, David is a better reader than he is a writer. And I thought, Where did you get that from? Like, I know my dad has a book that he's read about golf, right? But other than that, I don't think he's ever read another book in his life. Judd: His entire life? David: He was parroting somebody. But I just thought, Who says that? My dad gets a double dose because I have a sister, Amy, who is an actress, but he likes the attention. He likes the attention, but the couple times I have had to go on TV like, if a book comes out and I have to go on TV, I'm just not comfortable. There are some hosts who make it easy, like Jon Stewart. He's really nice. And Jimmy Kimmel comes into the dressing room and sets you at ease. He says, Hey, we're just gonna go out there and have fun, so don't feel too much pressure. You know? It helps a lot. If you're not an actor, it makes a big difference. And every time I've ever gone on television, I go back to the hotel and the phone rings and it's my father. You looked terrible. I can't believe white socks? You went on television wearing white socks? That jacket doesn't fit you. You look like a goddamn clown. But when Amy goes on TV, it's different. She gets home and the phone rings: I didn't laugh once. He gets off on it but at the same time, he Judd: But is that his love language, in some way? David: I don't know. Judd: But your mom was the opposite, right? David: She died before things started happening for me. I think I got my first book contract a year and a half after she died. Judd: So she didn't see any of that part of your life? David: No. But you know, I would be in this play in New York and it was just a play. It was like monologues based on some stories that I had written. This was the year before she died, and she sent me a check for a thousand dollars. I mean, that was huge. That was a huge amount of money to me. And I didn't ask her for it. She was really good that way. She didn't make you ask. But she wasn't a big reader, either. She would read Harold Robbins novels and beach books every now and then. But this whole sense of my dad's judgment doesn't mean anything. It sounds bad, but it doesn't mean anything to me. You know what I mean? Because he doesn't read. He doesn't have anything to compare my writing to. I mean, it's nice if he likes something I write, but it doesn't I feel bad for people whose parents were writers. Or people whose parents were big readers. I feel bad for them. The last thing you want is a father saying, That reminds me a little bit too much of that Philip Roth novel. That's the last thing you want to hear from a parent. So I'm fine with having parents who don't understand what I do. My mom was generally supportive of whatever artistic endeavors my siblings and I were interested in. I really consider myself so lucky to have had the parents I did, but my entire career is based on taking whatever advice my father has ever given me and doing exactly the opposite. It has all gone in opposition to him. If he had been supportive and encouraging and said, Let me read the first draft, then I would be nothing. Judd: It's like you got the best of both worlds. You got the supportive mom and the dad you rebel against by trying to prove him wrong. David: It's the perfect combination. I think if you have two discouraging parents, that might be too much. And if you have two supportive parents, that might be too much, too.