



You're Not Doing It Right: Tales of Marriage, Sex, Death, and Other Humiliations

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Darkly humorous and told with raw honesty, *You're Not Doing it Right* is Michael's debut memoir. In it, he takes on his childhood, his marriage, his children, and his career with unexpected candor and deadpan wit, as he shares the neuroses that have plagued him since he was a kid and how they shaped him into the man he is today.

In this funny-because-it's-true essay collection, Michael says the kinds of things most people are afraid to admit, and as a husband and father living in the suburbs, asks the question so many of us ask ourselves at one point or another. *How did I end up here?*

You're Not Doing It Right: Tales of Marriage, Sex, Death, and Other Humiliations Details

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From Reader Review You're Not Doing It Right: Tales of Marriage, Sex, Death, and Other Humiliations for online ebook

Clumsy Storyteller says

Haha God this book is hilarious i loved it my favorite story is when he wanted to retire but he couldn't afford it so he told his wife that they should move to inexpensive city Where to ? copenhagen LOL

“Did you work?”

“Of course I worked. I got a lot done.”

Which is true, if you define “getting a lot done” as doing online retirement calculations, researching world’s best cities to live, and spending three hours looking at photos of Britney Spears’s ex-husband, Kevin Federline.

For some reason, I am mildly obsessed with Kevin Federline’s weight gain, which has been substantial over the past few years. A former backup dancer, he now looks like he ate a backup dancer.

Neil Shurley says

I remember enjoying Michael Ian Black's work on the nearly forgotten TV show Ed. And I thought he was one of the funnier parts of the I Love the 70s/80s VH1 shows. Last year I discovered his podcast, Mike and Tom Eat Snacks, which he records with his Ed co-star, Tom Cavanagh. I've also listened to a couple of his comedy albums.

Now I've read his book. And I really liked it.

I actually found myself laughing. Out loud. Not something I often do while reading a book. And I also found it to be shockingly - and painfully - honest.

Black describes awkward moments from his childhood, his relationship with his wife, his colicky children, and his experiences with death. It's filled with amusing observations and also some surprising wisdom. "Choose hope not pain."

Just thumbing through it again, I spot passages that I loved. Passages that make me want to start rereading the whole chapter. And book. I'm now chuckling thinking about his description of viewing himself as the Han Solo in the epic story of his life. His anger at Santa and Alan Alda. His helpful table of medical ailments.

This is a hard book to pin down. It's mostly a memoir, but it's also a sort of series of essays. It's comedy but it's also deeply personal and painful. It will make you laugh but might also get you choked up.

I have to say it: he did it right.

Gina Boyd says

I have always thought Michael Ian Black was very funny, but I had no idea what a good writer he is. This memoir is one of the funniest things I've read in years--I'd compare it to David Sedaris-level funny--but it's also incredibly sad and honest in a way that few memoirs that I've read tend to be. And when I say "honest," I don't mean salacious or scandalous, or full of gory details; I mean that Black is willing to talk about things few people are willing to confess. He talks about loathing a Christmas gift his mother foisted on him in hopes of turning him into an Alan Alda-style New 70s Man, and resenting the gift but not wanting to hurt her.

He talks about his children, and how caring for them--especially as babies--was more like punishment than anything else. He even mentions that playing with little kids is boring, which is something I've often said to people who are thinking of having kids. He talks about how marriage sucks sometimes, and how hypocrisy is FINE as long as HE'S the one being the hypocrite.

Black spends the book trying to work out who he is, and WHY he is that person, and even though he's careful and thoughtful with his memories and feelings, he is damn funny, too.

Kristina says

I am nearly through this book and feel I've read enough to sufficiently review it. I will likely be done reading it this evening. I like this book - I don't love it. He doesn't say anything I haven't thought myself. I have laughed-out-loud approximately once per chapter.

Actually, one or two chapters are quite heavy in their content and kinda took the piss out of the read on a night or two. Having kids sucks and being married - most often - sucks. I know that and, aside from humorous discussions of this type of content, I don't want heaviness thrown into my 'comedy' reads. It is a "memoir", technically, so it'll have to pass :)

I'm projecting a bit, however, and should articulate that I am deathly afraid of having children already and his chapter on newborns DID NOT HELP. I began thinking, "We need to double our birth control efforts!"

Also, marriages - many marriages - strike me as similar to Michael's dynamic with his wife - which is not ideal and ... sucks. Another terrifying prospective - *shudder*.

I'm at a part in the book where his marriage is beginning to get better and his colicky children are grown - so, I'm laughing again - but am still slightly traumatized!

Kevin Cecil says

I love this book, in part because it made me feel a little bit better about how much worse I'm doing "it." Michael Ian Black represents my Platonic ideal of myself. Had I been born with greater ambition, actual talent, a sharper sense of humor and better looks, I can see myself reaching the apex of my potential as a mildly depressed C-list celebrity like Black. His book isn't the type of complex classic with flowery prose and a propulsive narrative I usually reserve the 5 star rating for. Black's insights aren't necessarily deep; they are something I currently find more fulfilling: honest about their mundanity. I became too embarrassed to read this in public because every page had some passage which made me howl with laughter, or weep with empathy. I love this book.

Jillyn says

This review contains some language that might be offensive. Don't like it? Don't read it.

Michael Ian Black is a comedian who is best known for his work on various MTV shows. This is his memoir, reflecting on such things as sex, marriage, childbearing, and life in New York.

Michael Ian Black is also a douchebag. And I love him for it. Despite him being a fairly successful forty year old Jewish man, and I being a college aged jobless Pagan female, I found tremendous similarities in viewpoints as well as sense of humor.

For instance, some people might be offended by his awful viewpoints on children and infants. I, however, hate kids and found this to be hilarious.

I admittedly didn't know much about him other than he's the guy who talks about Razzles and My Buddy on I Love the 80's. That being said, he's always been my favorite commentator, and that is my reason for wanting to read this book.

Being a comedian, this book is largely humorous, but contains very serious issues. I think there is a good balance of both. It was easy to read, well paced, and made me laugh out loud more than once.

I'm not sure who to recommend it for. Anyone who can appreciate a douchebag sense of humor, and definitely fans of Michael Ian Black, should check it out. This book does contain adult language (my personal favorite is the word "cunty"- the act of being a cunt). So if you're easily offended by words like that, or sexual topics, than this book is not for you.

Conor says

This was a huge surprise, but I really loved this book. Like most of the comedy books I consume, this was an audiobook. I had recently made my way through a few mediocre audiobooks by Demetri Martin and David Cross, and I just downloaded this one because Black's name was recognizable and I hadn't really researched anything else. I certainly wasn't a huge Michael Ian Black fan before selecting it.

As I've said elsewhere, I think writing a comedy book is an almost intrinsically doomed enterprise. In my mind, the author's best bet is to try to tell a story or impart some wisdom filigreed with (rather than dominated by) humor. This is what I loved about Bossypants, and this is what I love about the TV of comics like Louis C.K. If that be a genre of book, this book is its standard bearer.

MIB tells brutally honest and surprisingly heartfelt tales of love and loss, growth and stagnation, all interlaced with refreshing, clever, appropriately apportioned humor. He can be dark as his name at times, and some of the ways in which he described his marriage and/or his coping mechanisms for his life left me thinking that they would be followed up with "we ended up divorced" or "things are much better now" or "so, obviously I went to rehab." But none of these neat little qualifiers ever appeared, because that's not what life is like. But I still finished this book a bit choked up, confident in the hard-won strength of his relationships and the often grudging devotion he has to making them work. Like Louis C.K. and others of his ilk, Black is a bit more acerbic and honest than we non-comedians might be when describing the most intimate details of his life and relationships, but there can be no doubting the sincerity of his love for his family, and the struggles and doubt he describes underscore rather than undermine this conclusion.

This was elegant storytelling and surprisingly poignant. I would recommend it without reservation.

Jon says

3 1/2 stars. Usually, novels written by comedians are not my thing, but I really wanted to read something lightweight and funny after the past week. Black was on the MTV sketch comedy series, the State, and has several other TV and movie gigs on his resume, including the TV show "Ed". The book is autobiographical and primarily focuses on marriage and parenthood.

The structure is loose, anecdotal, and linear only in the roughest sense of the word in the first half of the book. One chapter might deal with how he met and started dating Martha, the woman he eventually married, and the next might describe a particular Christmas when he was 5 years old. The tone alternates throughout the book, at times, he's self-deprecating and, at other times, he's somewhat of a smartass:

"I am not there claiming any musical superiority, but Creed really does suck. Bad music, pretentious lyrics, and a messianic front man. Also they are from Florida. No good rock music has ever come from Florida. Undoubtedly, there will be legions of offended Floridian readers who will think to themselves, What are you talking about? Such and such band is from Florida and they're freaking awesome! No. Whatever band you are thinking of, if they are from Florida, they suck. Not as much as Creed, but they still suck"

OK, Creed really DOES suck, but still.....

The biggest question about this type of book is whether it's funny or not. This one definitely is, though most

of the time it elicits a smile or an amused chuckle instead of an outright laugh. The things he touches on are universal: dating, marriage, parenthood, etc., so most readers can find things in it that they can relate with:

“Later in life, when I have children of my own, I will come to hate Santa and everything he represents: forced jolliness, fuzzy logic, the exploitations of elves, children sitting on the laps of strange men. I will struggle with whether or not to preserve the Big Santa Lie and will feel enormous societal pressure to do so. A braver man would just tell his kids the truth. “I bought this shit for you with my money and I expect you to be grateful. See? Here are the goddamned receipts. Santa my ass”

But I am not a brave man. So, as generations of parents have done before me, when Christmastime comes, I will look into my children’s wide, trusting eyes and I will lie. I will feed them a line about a magic fat man and his mutant deer. And they will believe me because they are stupid”

There are parts of the book that are poignant and Black touches on some serious issues from time to time, his father’s death for example or the marital problems that Black and wife started experiencing. His mother came out as a lesbian after her divorce and Black does touch upon growing up in a same sex household to some degree. He also isn’t afraid to be completely honest and admit when he’s acted like an asshole during his life:

“So I end things with Mrs. Levine, and because I am afraid of conflict, I do it in the worst possible way. One day, without warning or explanation, I just stop taking her calls. After a couple of weeks, I hear through the same friend who set us up that Mrs. Levine is deeply hurt. She feels used. She hates me. I don’t blame her. My behavior is inexcusable, cowardly, assholeish”

So if you’re looking for some light weight reading, something that will elicit a smile and an occasional laugh, then I definitely recommend reading the book

Chris says

Black’s well-known to my generation as one of the players from MTV’s much-beloved sketch show *The State* and has gone on to a career in Hollywood, often appearing on television and in commercials. He’s carved out a distinct niche for himself as a snarky know-it-all and I’ve enjoyed much of his work post-*State*... but I wasn’t chomping at the bit to read his book. I decided to give it a shot and I am ridiculously glad I did.

You’re Not Doing It Right is quite simply, the most accurate book I’ve ever read about what it’s like to be a husband and father in the 21st century. There’s depth to this book I did not anticipate. Black’s observations are shrewd and often biting... but they’re never inaccurate. The bald-faced way Black lays out his feelings is sometimes shocking; at various points he details the times where he has flat-out hated both his wife and children in a manner which defies the traditional “happy home and family” image most of us carry.

If that was all the book was about, *You’re Not Doing It Right* would be funny but morally bankrupt. I could easily see another comedian taking the short way around and simply presenting that concept, but Black doesn’t do that. What most impressed me about the book were not the laughs (and there are many) but the heart and sentimentality. Black starts from a comedic situation (I hate my wife and kids) and works backwards and forwards to reveal the truth behind being a mate and a parent today. You will occasionally have moments where you despise your kids... but you despise yourself more for being a person who would feel that way, and that motivates you to be better than you thought you ever could be. I can’t say I’ve ever

called my wife a c*** (the word Black uses I can't even bring myself to type) but I've experienced many of the same emotions and frustrations detailed here. That marriage is HARD is not a new concept. What is slightly new in our society is that it's so easy for many to just quit trying. Simply having that option is part of Black's default view of matrimony; what becomes admirable is the way he combats that view and displays through those sour feelings the love he feels.

It's a wonderful book which comes with about as high a recommendation as I can give.

Curtis Edmonds says

Michael Ian Black's *YOU'RE NOT DOING IT RIGHT* is sort-of an autobiography that focuses on domestic life. Black seems to have learned from the example of President Van Buren, who never mentioned his wife's name in his autobiography. We learn next to nothing about Black's career, but we do learn a whole awful lot about his attitudes towards his wife ("crazy" is a printable word I can use) his kids (Black brutally describes his lack of affection for his children as colicky babies) and his dog (a heart-rending account of his Labrador's losing battle with cancer).

I really hope Black is being honest with us. It is entirely possible that he is not, and that the essays in *YOU'RE NOT DOING IT RIGHT* are comic exaggerations of real life and real circumstances. I doubt this, for the simple reason that a lot of what he talks about *simply isn't funny*. When you have a two-hour, knock-down drag-out fight with your wife over the settings on the clock radio, and it escalates to the point where threats of divorce are hurled, and children tearfully ask you to stop fighting, well, there's nothing funny about that. If you are going to write about such a thing, and present it in a way that is unflattering, it needs to be done in either the most honest way possible or the funniest way possible. Black seems to have chosen the path of honesty, and if he has done so then it is to his credit.

This is not to say that *YOU'RE NOT DOING IT RIGHT* isn't funny, because it is. Black gets a lot of mileage out of poking fun at himself, and like most men in most domestic environments, there is a lot of material close at hand. But his dry, droll wit is more than counterbalanced by what seems to be his honesty, his introspection, and his willingness to lay his soul bare, even when it makes him seem selfish and petty.

Actually, it's worse than that. Black comes off as a bit of a monster here, enough so that he is almost certainly exaggerating a bit about the awfulness of his life, the wretchedness of his marriage, and the existential horror he feels about coveting and driving his new BMW. But I hope he's not. This is partly because I don't think anyone (especially anyone who drives a new BMW) has a life so awful and wretched, and partly because it would be sort of ooky for someone to make money writing a book that basically slags their wife and kids to this extreme. But it's mostly because, from time to time, I recognize myself in *YOU'RE NOT DOING IT RIGHT*. I hear my voice, and it's the voice I use when I am being honest with myself. And when I do, it's not funny. Not at all, not one little tiny bit.

Randi Kennedy says

Michael Ian Black can be a jackass, but in the end, the sweetness & sincerity of his love for his family and his life mitigate the vast majority of his more selfish statements. His statements about the difficulty of marriage and child-rearing were sometimes cruel (especially to his poor wife), his regret later about his

actions rang true as well. The chapter in which he described the pain of losing their first dog had me teary and made me feel immense sympathy for this sweet, arrogant comic.

Cathy says

Spot on! Hilarious preparatory course for marriage and parenthood. Michael had the self-deprecation and balls to reveal his true feelings and admit half the stuff most people would never admit. So thanks for that, I appreciate your boldness to allow me to seem 'normal' for once.

Gaelen says

Michael Ian Black has his talents as an actor/comedian, but he should stop trying to be a writer. Even setting aside the fact that this book reveals him to be FAR more of a douchebag than I originally realized, his writing style is very similar to unfunny dad-comic Dave Barry. It's irritating, and not particularly funny. Further, he has a self-conscious habit of fake self-deprecation, when he pokes fun at himself for things that are only borderline embarrassing (in order to prove himself less of a douchebag?) while reserving almost no self-awareness for his truly awful qualities and/or behavior (such as hitting on his future wife while she was living with her boyfriend, then secretly carrying on an affair with her for some time before she broke up with the then-BF). Finally, he seems to believe he's the only one "bold" enough to talk about how marriage is incredibly trying at times, and raising small children is awful. News flash: That's not new material, and he certainly doesn't retell it in a way that's fresh or entertaining. TL;DR: Skip it.

Sahar says

Should be called "I Sort of Hate My Wife and I Almost Feel Bad About It."

Jessi says

I could watch Michael Ian Black on TV all day. As a matter of fact, I used to do just that. I taped all those dumb VH1 "I Love the..." series, mainly because of him. I like listening to him talk, and I love following him on twitter.

For some reason, though, I just couldn't get into this book. To me, it felt sad and awkward. I get self-deprecating humor- believe me, I do. And I really like it. But I didn't get that from this book. I was so excited to receive it, and started reading it as soon as I got home from work. I stayed up late, reading by booklight, because of my dedication to the figure that is Michael Ian Black. And the whole time I was reading it, I kept waiting for my mouth to break into a smile. Instead, it felt like I was reading a story by an awkward friend. And not even adorably awkward, like some actors/comedians/writers. Just...awkward. It made me feel a little uncomfortable. And that, in turn, made me sad.

I'm not saying the book was bad, just that it wasn't what I was expecting. I guess I'll keep relying on twitter for my fix of this very funny guy (and hope that someday soon I'll see him on tv again.)

