



Waiting for the Punch: Words to Live by from the WTF Podcast

Marc Maron , Brendan McDonald , John Oliver (Foreward)

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"Public figures as you rarely if ever hear them: strikingly personal, surprisingly open, and profoundly emotional."

— *Entertainment Weekly*

"I'm British, so I'm medically dead inside, but even I can't help but open up whenever I talk to Marc. He uses his honesty like a scalpel, cutting himself open in front of anyone he's talking to, and in doing so, invites you to do the same."

—John Oliver

From the beloved and wildly popular podcast *WTF with Marc Maron* comes a book of intimate, hilarious and life changing conversations with some of the funniest, and most important people in the world like you've never heard them before. *Waiting for the Punch* features the stories and thoughts of such luminaries as Amy Schumer, Mel Brooks, Will Ferrell, Amy Poehler, Sir Ian McKellen, Lorne Michaels, Judd Apatow, Lena Dunham, Jimmy Fallon, RuPaul, Louis CK, David Sedaris, Bruce Springsteen, and President Obama.

This book is not simply a collection of these interviews, but instead something more wondrous: a running narrative of the world's most recognizable names working through the problems, doubts, joys, triumphs, and failures we all experience. With each chapter covering a different topic: parenting, childhood, relationships, sexuality, success, failures and others, *Punch* becomes a sort of everyman's guide to life. Barack Obama candidly discusses the challenges of the presidency, and the bittersweet moments of seeing your children grow up. Amy Schumer recounts the pain of her parents' divorce. Molly Shannon uproariously remembers the time she and her best friend hopped a plane from Ohio to New York City when they were twelve on a dare. Amy Poehler dishes on why just because you become a parent doesn't mean you have to like anybody else's kids but your own. Bruce Springsteen expounds on the dual nature of desperation to both motivate and devastate.

Full of stories that are at once laugh-out loud funny, heartbreakingly honest, joyous, tragic and powerful, *Waiting for the Punch* is a book to be read from cover to cover, but it is also one to return to again and again.

Waiting for the Punch: Words to Live by from the WTF Podcast Details

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From Reader Review Waiting for the Punch: Words to Live by from the WTF Podcast for online ebook

Jenny (Reading Envy) says

Thanks to the publisher for providing access to this title through Edelweiss.

I try to read as many books as I can about podcasts, podcasting, interviewing, etc., so I was excited to see this book come up. I used to listen to the WTF Podcast, and still do occasionally when the guest is someone who really interests me. I think, at times, Marc Maron asks interesting questions, and I was curious to hear more about his thought process. That isn't really represented in this book much, although there are tidbits here and there. In the Addiction chapter, his brief intro explains why he asks about addiction if he has that in common with his guest. This is one of the reasons I stopped trying to listen to all the episodes, honestly, but I found that he has a very good reason for doing so - something about when someone connects with you on a shared experience like addiction, it somehow strips the pretense away and allows him to get deeper and more personal about other topics. As a listener not all that interested in addiction though, I would often get frustrated when he got to these moments!

So if you have heard every episode of WTF, there will not be any new content here. What he has done is cull the interviews for thematic content and organized them so they create a rough narrative in the sense that the first person might mention their father and then religion and the next quote might be about religion and move to the next topic. It takes skill to organize bits in this way, so I respect that. It made it enjoyable to read, even though some of the excerpts were revisiting stuff I'd already heard.

There is not a lot of man-behind-the-curtain stuff like I was hoping, but enjoyable just the same. There are a few people I started skipping because I found I didn't particularly care for their flavor (I do think that people have certain expectations about what will happen when they sit down in a garage with a comedian and have a hard time getting beyond masturbation jokes), but your mileage may vary.

Robin says

Ah, yes! The thrill of receiving an advance copy of a book you are excited to read was manifest the day this book came in the mail at the library. After becoming a fan of the WTF podcast in 2015 (this is because I heard that President Obama had been a guest on a podcast which records in a man's garage...turned out to be Maron!) I've been an avid twice a week listener ever since. If you have heard the podcast, you will want to read through this book. It's not the type of book you'll read in one sitting because it's divided into topics but, on the other hand, you won't want to put it down because it's engrossing especially when you discover a person interviewed whom you hadn't known about.

Jason Miller says

It's not unusual for a Marc Maron interview to blow my mind. Christy Brinkley. Norm MacDonald. Molly Shannon. There have been over 800. The honesty of the conversations come through my podcast player clear and strong, and it often leads me to want to share my new insight or understanding with someone.

Numerous testimonials out there describe how Maron's conversations have let listeners know they aren't the only one struggling with a problem (e.g., addiction, mental illness, bad parents) and giving them a nudge in the direction of a solution or solace. This book is an interesting reformatting of the long-running podcast that allows guests to speak in their own voices and reach the reader like they did when they were sitting in "the garage" talking with Marc. Each of the eleven chapters addresses a theme (e.g., sexuality, identity, parenting, addiction, failure, success) that's been a thread in his years of talks. Marc opens each chapter with a few paragraphs on the topic, and then he lets his guests speak. From that point on, he allows his guests (simply identified by name and professions or professions) to speak by sharing a transcript of part of their conversation. Sometimes, Maron includes some of their dialogue, but most of the time Maron is listening along with us, the reader.

I've been a faithful listener of the podcast since I heard Ira Glass advertise it on *This American Life*, so I can safely say I've listened to every episode. This book captures many of the piquant moments that I remember, and it reminds me of many that I'd forgotten.

The book isn't a substitute for listening to the podcast. Many great recorded moments are not memorialized on these pages. But Marc and Brandon's organization of hundreds of conversation snapshots create a gripping and don't-want-to-put-it-down arc in each chapter.

Who will like the book? If you like the WTF podcast, you'll enjoy the book. If you enjoy hearing celebrities talk about how they really think and feel, the book will be very satisfying for you, even if you have not listened to Maron's podcast. If you have a heavy heart for some reason, there may be something for you here, even if you don't know who the fuck Maron is.

NOTE: I received an advance reading copy (trade paperback) in April 2017 after entering some sort of raffle. I never win anything in raffles, so I consider getting this book a huge deal.

Bookish says

I picked up *Waiting for the Punch* by Marc Maron and Brendan McDonald while I was at BookCon. It's a collection of excerpts from Maron's WTF Podcast, divided into chapters titled "Growing Up," "Identity," "Addiction," "Success," and the like. With guests like Amy Poehler, Robin Williams, Margaret Cho, Patrick Stewart, and even President Obama, you can imagine that the responses to conversation about these topics vary widely. But in their differences, there's also a beautiful sense that they (and we) are all living the human experience. Even without any addiction issues (except perhaps to coffee) so many of the excerpts really resonated with me—in all of the chapters. —Kristina (<https://www.bookish.com/articles/staf...>)

Christopher says

Collected a lot of my favorite highlights of the podcast over the years. Definitely recommend. Almost like an odd self-help book in a way.

Christina says

I liked the blend of humor and solemnity. I thought the book did a good job of balancing the different perspectives under each chapter heading to sort of play devil's advocate - one idea against the next - but in a thought provoking way, not too contradictory.

ERIN SCHMIDT says

I'd never heard Marc Maron's WTF podcast, but I read parts of this book because I was interested in a lot of the people he interviewed on his show about universal topics like relationships, mental health, and sexuality.

I skipped some of the interview subjects whose names I didn't know or whom I didn't think were quite as interesting, but the ones I read had a lot of good, insightful things to say. Some of the interviewees whose wisdom I gleaned from this book included:

Ali Wong
Anna Kendrick
Barack Obama
Carl Reiner
Carrie Brownstein
Chelsea Peretti
Dan Savage
Dave Foley
Elizabeth Banks
Judy Greer
Kevin Hart
Leslie Jones
Margaret Cho
Mel Brooks
Melissa Etheridge
Michael Keaton (talking about Tim Burton, Batman, and Beetlejuice)
Natasha Lyonne
Penn Jillette
Robin Williams
RuPaul Charles
Sarah Silverman
Sir Ian McKellen
Sir Patrick Stewart
Wanda Sykes

Some of these folks are real gems of human beings. They have a lot of worthwhile things to say. Some of these things are very funny, some are poignant, some are both. All of these people are smart people capable of articulating a coherent thought, which is shockingly refreshing in this era of idiocracy.

Woody says

While I've heard most of the episodes included in here, for some reason my reactions reading the same statements had a more visceral effect. Maybe it's because I've always dealt with the world emotionally more through books than actually people. Literally made me laugh & cry & exclaim "Oh, shit!" more than a few times. Anyway, words of wisdom on a variety of subjects from everyone from Conan O'Brien to Barack Obama. Must read.

Nadine Anne says

HAHAHAHAHAHAHA! This is so hilarious! HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA!

Kevin says

In 2009, comedian Marc Maron began interviewing his friends for a twice-weekly podcast he still records in his garage. With each episode of WTF with Marc Maron running an hour or longer, Maron's intimate setting and relaxed, freeform conversational style lures comedians, actors, writers, directors and musicians into becoming more vulnerable and open. WAITING FOR THE PUNCH is a powerful and fascinating collection of some of those conversations. Although the majority of these conversations are with comedians, they are deadly serious when they discuss childhood sexual abuse, drug and alcohol addictions, failed relationships, mental illness, sexuality and death.

These soul-bearing interviews are woven together by topic, and form a compelling tapestry of voices and advice from survivors who have faced tragedies, loss and shame, and have put themselves on the path to healing. Bruce Springsteen discusses reversing parent-child roles with his schizophrenic father. Aubrey Plaza reveals she suffered a stroke at age 20. Artie Lange and Natasha Lyonne share their struggles with sobriety.

The extensive roster of celebrities sharing harrowing and darkly humorous tales include Amy Schumer, Garry Shandling, Lena Dunham, Mel Brooks, Barack Obama, Dan Savage, Margaret Cho, Sasha Baron Cohen and Amy Poehler. Louis CK sums up Maron's gift for creating a confessional space: "We understand each other's flaws really well. That's why we're able to tell each other things that we don't want to tell anyone else." WAITING FOR THE PUNCH is a knockout collection of heartbreaking conversations that will help heal many readers.

Harrowing and darkly humorous, this collection of celebrity conversations from Marc Maron's long-running podcast is shocking, revealing and healing.

Liz Willard says

This book takes blurbs of what famous people have said on the podcast and groups them together by topic (relationships, parenting, failure, etc), and the result is pretty uneven. Some of the impact of each story seems lessened by taking it out of context and plopping it amongst other stories; there isn't really a thread to follow. I fully confess I found the parts by people I'd actually heard of more interesting than those of people

unfamiliar to me (a lot of comedians and character actors, some of whom I googled, some I didn't care enough to do so). Overall I came away with the feeling I often have when reading something written by people in Hollywood... that actors, musicians, and other creative-types experience a lot more highs and lows, and extremes of any and every kind, than your average person. And it's difficult to relate.

Todd N says

Obviously very influenced by Please Kill Me, which is a book Mr. Maron has mentioned several times on his podcast as being influential on him. It also happens to be one of my favorite books as well.

This book is arranged thematically instead of chronologically, which works well in this case because Mr. Maron (or really Mr. McDonald, who I'm pretty sure did most of the heavy lifting on this book) can take the core insights from interviews that deal with these themes and put them next to each other in a way where they build on each other and even at times reflect on each other.

It's almost embarrassing the amount of source material they were able to work with to distill down to this book. Recommended.

Jared Duran says

This sort of anthology for a show as long-running and storied as WTF can often feel bloated, unwieldy, but Maron and Brendan McDonald have done a fantastic job grouping these interview excerpts thematically, weaving a thread throughout so that, combined--even in the very distinct voices of the people involved, it is a very much cohesive whole. A great meditation on the human condition.

Kdawg91 says

I used to be way more social than I am now, I don't know what happened but the older I got, the more inward I went. That is one of the reasons Marc Maron and the WTF podcast fascinate me. Maron is a bundle of issues and the last person you would expect to be easily one of the better interviewers I have ever heard. He feels like he has a honest need to be totally open with his guests, and has a great talent in bringing out the marrow in the figurative bones of the people he is talking with.

Waiting for the Punch is a terrific collection of interviews and pieces of conversations from the WTF podcast, if you are fan of the show, or a fan of interviews on a variety of subjects, this is a must read.

Bob says

I'm a big fan of the podcast, so no surprise that I loved reading this. Very moving, very funny. Good book to pick up once in a while-- not necessarily something you need to power through.

Barry Wightman says

Full disclosure. Before this heartfelt, scatterbrained book landed in my lap, I'd never heard of Marc Maron. According to the bio on this collection of podcast interviews, *Waiting For the Punch*, he's a "stand-up comedian, actor, author and host of the WTF podcast," which my iPhone tells me is currently number 59 on the podcast charts! Mr. Maron is just ahead of Anna Faris is *Unqualified*, and *Your Mom's House* with Christina P and Tom Segura! Whoa...I had no idea. I was totally out of it.

But I remedied the situation. Quickly, I flipped through the WTF catalog (is that what they're called, catalogs?) of past shows – jeez, there's a lot of 'em, what's the matter with me? – I found a couple that were up my alley – a long interview with Bruce Springsteen, and a chat with Randy Newman. I was about to leave on a long road trip, so the timing was perfect. Fired up the trusty Subaru, headed to Vermont.

Long story short, Mr. Maron ain't Mr. Smooth, no Dick Cavett, interviewer-wise. Rough around edges, nasally voice, sort of charming in a guy-on-the-next-barstool kind of way, he interrupts Springsteen, he's an all agog fan boy, hey-I'm-from-Jersey-too!, agreeing with the Boss on just about everything – yes, right, right, oh yeah, what was it like to...on and on and on for an hour and a half.

Bruce's book, *Born to Run*, was better.

Same with Randy Newman. Rather listen to his records.

It was a long trip to Vermont.

But here's the thing. Maron got those guys talking. And that's the point of a podcast. As comedian John Oliver says in his Foreword, "He uses his honesty like a scalpel, cutting himself open in front of anyone he's talking to, and in doing so, invites you to do the same."

And they do. Folks talk, and talk.

Here's another thing – *Waiting For the Punch* is almost four hundred pages of snippets of past interviews – comedians, musicians, actors, comedians, TV hosts, and comedians – sixty or seventy percent of whom I'd never heard of. Your mileage may vary, but I wanted to throw the book across the room.

And I did.

But then I thought better of it, retrieved the book, and did the right thing.

I dipped in and out of the book, leafing through it, finding somebody or something I cared about. Oh, look, here's Ian McKellen, Carl Reiner, Patrick Stewart, Mel Brooks, Springsteen, or....Barack Obama. Yes, I know, Obama isn't a comedian, but he made the cut. I read those bits.

That's how you read this book.

Organized into sections that reflect the culture of our self-centered times – Growing Up, Sexuality, Identity, Relationships, Parenting, Success, Failure, Mental Health, Mortality, and Life Lessons – *Waiting For the Punch* is edited like a movie trailer. Super quick cuts, a little bit of her saying this, little bit of him goofing on that, banality, and the inevitable punch lines, the money shots of the podcast, little potted 21st century

epiphanies we can wrap up, call our own and take home.

Maron introduces each section, getting us into the mood. Here's a bit from his intro to Mental Health:

"It seems there are people who talk about mental health and there are people who really don't talk about it at all. I'm a talker. Or at least I was. I'm not as much as I used to be, which I can only see as an indication that I am getting better...look, I'm still pretty fucked up but I'm not as dangerous to myself or others...sometimes you just have to be okay with who you are."

I feel better already.

But then Norm Macdonald, Jenny Slate, Chelsea Peretti, Whitney Cummings, Dave Attell, really get into the subject. Here's how Aubrey Plaza listens to her hair, "I do a loop and then I scrunch it inside of my ear. I'm usually freaking out when I do that. My therapist said it's a soothing thing, a defense mechanism."

Phew. Hope she's okay now.

Thankfully, there's Michael Keaton talking about coming up with his Beetlejuice character. Or Mel Brooks riffing on Blazing Saddles, with Cleavon Little and Gene Wilder – nothing earth-shaking or deep, just entertaining. Did I read that somewhere else years ago? I dunno. Doesn't matter.

But then, way out on page 386, the last bit of the book, President Barack Obama wraps it up:

"The more you do something, you lose fear. I was talking to somebody the other day about why I actually think I'm a better president and would be a better candidate if I were running again than I ever have been. It's sort of like an athlete, you might slow down a little bit, you might not jump as high as you used to, but I know what I'm doing and I'm fearless. You're not pretending to be fearless...it almost compensates for the fact that I can't play basketball anymore."

Makes Waiting For the Punch almost worth it.

Nah.

I threw it across the room again.

(This review was originally published by The Washington Independent Review of Books, October 25, 2017. <http://www.washingtonindependentreview...>)

Jill says

i don't like marc maron and i don't listen to wtf so this was a good way to get some of the interviews without all the stuff i dislike. but ugh louis ck is talking about jerking off fucking everywhere all the time, isn't he?

Mary says

I read 95% of this---I skipped over some guests' graphic descriptions of events in their lives. I'm a longtime WTF podcast listener, but I haven't heard all the conversations---after all, Marc has now done 840 episodes. Much of this book moved me deeply. (My copy is an ARC. The book will be released in October 2017.

Jenn says

The WTF podcast has helped me through some tough times, and this book encapsulates some of those really profound, important moments.

Neri. says

I laughed and almost cried while reading this book, so much awesome thoughts were provided here. The author not only expresses his own thoughts about how things work in life but also asks opinions from other people in his and other profession fields. Great read overall.
