



Skipping Towards Gomorrah

Dan Savage

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In **Skipping Towards Gomorrah**, Dan Savage eviscerates the right-wing conservatives as he commits each of the Seven Deadly Sins himself (or tries to) and finds those everyday Americans who take particular delight in their sinful pursuits. Among them:

Greed: Gamblers reveal secrets behind outrageous fortune.

Lust: "We're swingers!"-you won't believe who's doing it.

Anger: Texans shoot off some rounds and then listen to Dan fire off on his own about guns, gun control, and the Second Amendment.

Combine a unique history of the Seven Deadly Sins, a new interpretation of the biblical stories of Sodom and Gomorrah, and enough Bill Bennett, Robert Bork, Pat Buchanan, Dr. Laura, and Bill O'Reilly bashing to more than make up for their incessant carping, and you've got the most provocative book of the fall.

Skipping Towards Gomorrah Details

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Author : Dan Savage

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Brook says

I highly recommend this book. Dan Savage is the syndicated gay columnist who writes some really funny advice columns. Here, he explores each of the "seven deadly sins" in one of there modern iterations. For example, for "Gluttony," he visits a Fat Admirer (FA) convention in Vegas. It's filled with big, big women, and the men that love them.

For "Lust", he interviews a very well-to-do "normal" couple in, I believe, Chicago. They are married, have kids, white-collar jobs, but are involved in the swinging community. This one was the most interesting for me, because he talked about aspects of human physiology that I had learned about in the past, how neither human males nor females being hard-wired for monogamy (not that this is some sort of excuse for multiple partners).

The book is really funny and entertaining, and takes you into subcultures (FA, Swinging, other stuff) that you dont hear much or anything about. Entertaining if nothing else.

Nara says

What a fun thing Dan Savage does, here! He does a wee "case study" of each of the seven deadly sins - Lust, Gluttony, Greed, Sloth, Wrath, Envy, and Pride - exploring a variety of subcultures, from groups of the morbidly obese to riverboat gamblers as he does it. It's a weirdly memorable book; the way he chooses to look at each "sin" is a little random, but the experiences he has are told in his inimitable style, and some of them really stuck with me. Definitely worth a read; it hasn't dated itself yet, but it will eventually.

Emily W says

If you've ever read "Savage Love," the author's weekly sex advice column, you already know that Mr. Savage is the patron saint of What Happens Between Consenting Adults Is Nobody Else's Business. In *Skipping Towards Gomorrah*, Savage extends that principle beyond the bedroom and into the traditional "seven deadly sins." It's a celebration of indulgence, of people doing whatever the hell they want as long as it doesn't hurt anybody. He's probably preaching to the choir, as I can't imagine anyone reading this who's not already on his side, but it's still entertaining, interesting, and occasionally educational.

Chris Herdt says

I accidentally read this book. I picked it up one morning while drinking my coffee and didn't put it down until I'd finished reading it. I enjoyed the chapters on gluttony and greed the most, I think, but it was entirely entertaining and occasionally insightful.

Trin says

Essays on the glory of sin. Savage tackles each sin individually, coming at most of them from interesting and unique angles. For Greed he explores the psychology of gambling, for Lust he talks about swinging; Sloth leads to a discussion of marijuana; Gluttony brings him to a pro-fat conference, Envy to a health spa filled with rich people; Pride becomes an analysis of gay pride; and Anger finds him holding a gun. Each section is full of interesting information and anecdotes, and while Savage does not *actually* find himself glorying in all seven sins (the chapter on gluttony is *so scary*, mostly because it shows that the way America eats, doesn't eat, treats people who eat too much or eat too little, or even thinks about eating is so incredibly unhealthy and fucked up), he does raise far more than seven important questions about American society, and reveals how it's both better and worse than we think it is. The essential argument of the book—directed mostly, but not entirely, at the religious right—is "if I am not hurting anyone else, please keep the hell out of my personal life," and it's one I agree with. (Of course, what to do when people are hurting *themselves* is a tougher issue.) I'm not sure if anything Savage says in this book would actually convince anyone on the other side, although that's a near-impossible task, as for the most part, I don't think they'd really listen to him in the first place. However, if everyone put as much thought and consideration into all these issues as Savage does, I think the country would be in much better shape.

Punk says

Non-fiction. Dan Savage heads out to chase down America's seven deadly sins. After a weak start (the first chapter reads like an angry blog entry), he pulls himself together, and the rest of the book is infinitely more focused and professional. It's funny, well researched and, unlike his grouchy responses to the pilgrims of Savage Love, here he treats people with patience and respect while he travels the country indulging in greed (Vegas), lust (wife-swapping), and gluttony (super-size it) -- just to name a few. Savage addresses the right-wing virtuecrat scolds and counters their superstitious arguments against such crowd favorites as same-sex marriage and the legalization of marijuana. He's read what Robert Bork, Patrick J. Buchanan, William J. Bennett, and Dr. Laura have to say, and he neatly pokes holes in their tangled demands for a more moral America. It makes this book more than an angry rant against the right. It makes it a strong argument against the right's push for a more virtuous America.

Four stars. My advice is to just skip the introduction and head straight for the sinnin'.

Claudia says

Funny stuff! Savage takes on the moralists...Bennett, Bork, O'Reilly...and deliberately goes out of his way to commit all the Seven Deadly Sins. While he doesn't always succeed, he learns a lot. And his attitude to the people he meets is so respectful and accepting...his heart is good, even when he sins.

He learns to shoot a gun, he visits swingers, he spends time at a convention for heavy women. He learns but does not judge. He gambles in Las Vegas and in Iowa! He learns blackjack. But he does not judge.

Along the way, he DOES judge the judges...the sanctimonious talking heads who want their morality to be the law of the land.

I laughed out loud often, learned, and was glad I came along on this skipping trip.

Beth Barnett says

A fun and thoughtful book. Savage, the syndicated "Savage Love" sex-advice columnist, takes it upon himself to examine and celebrate the "seven deadly sins" as they are manifested in American culture. He looks into gambling, sexual swingers' culture, attends a convention of a fat acceptance group, smokes pot, shoots some guns, attends a gay pride parade, and even rents "escorts" (to interview them, not for sex). Although not every line of this book is a masterpiece, as a whole it is entertaining and thought provoking for sure, and I recommend it for anyone with an open mind and a resentment of those annoying and hypocritical right-wing, conservative "scolds."

JoJo Z says

When I saw him at his reading, the book seemed like it would be more exciting than what it was.

Manny says

Dan Savage, of Savage Love fame, decides he'll check out the Seven Deadly Sins and give you an updated account. It's interesting and often rather scary; he neither tries to glorify sinful behavior nor condemn it in advance. He just wants to find out the facts for himself, and let you know what he discovered.

He's quite imaginative about picking a good modern example of each sin. His descriptions of the bizarre people who think that extreme obesity is attractive were fascinatingly disgusting, and I liked his meeting with the very upmarket prostitute and her gay hooker boyfriend. His brushes with gambling and gun culture were also well done, and thought-provoking in a less dramatic way. At the end of the book, you agree that there's a reason why they're called Deadly Sins. A fine piece of journalism.

Naomi V says

This review is for all of Dan Savage's books. Let me just get this out of the way: I love Dan Savage, I love his podcast, I love his columns, and I love his books.

Dan Savage mixes good old-fashioned common sense, a progressive view of . . . just about everything, a wry sense of humor, and a wicked use of the English language to tell about his coming-out, his adoption of a child and his subsequent marriage to his partner. His books are full of wit and self-deprecating humor. I read the three books that I own in the space of a week, one after the other, and laughed out loud (and cried in public!)

Although I don't always agree with Dan (I know; that's a surprise, isn't it?) he always presents his case in a

rational, informative way. Okay, usually.

Lord Beardsley says

I don't really feel like I learned anything in particular from this book. It was entertaining at times and at other times sort of tedious and unsurprising. Most of the time, I felt like I'd already read/seen/heard this about a thousand times before.

He had a nice point that we all should stop trying to regulate one another's pleasures and vices and just be. That's a pretty revolutionary thing to say in this day and age (a time of right wingers and left wingers scolding one another while nothing in the end being accomplished). So I give him that, which is essentially why I gave this book 3 stars.

This book made me realize how quickly dated September 11 hysteria is. Many times, Dan Savage states that he feels that the war is "justified". This may have been written before America went into Iraq (if that is the case, and he is just referring to Afghanistan then I suppose I can understand where he's coming from). I am very curious to know, at this point, where the author stands on that. That's his beliefs and all and he's entitled to them, but I really am skeptical of anyone who finds this war at all justified at this point and am consequently bored of listening to what I consider, a load of horseshit. I can't really see how any war were a bunch of yokels from Oklahoma and Texas are sent in to capitalize on mass suffering as "justified" so I don't agree with ya there Dan, but otherwise I find your beliefs on the concept of "gay pride" awesome and deserve a strong hallelujah.

Bottom line: not super-plused, but I'll gladly read another book by Mr. Savage. We can agree to disagree, which is I think a theme found at the heart of this book.

Ethan says

Funny attempt to commit all seven deadly sins, Savage realizes they aren't all fun, but they are all necessary. Good voice, treads the line well between liberal and whiny.

Tim says

Dan Savage sets out to commit each of the Seven Deadly Sins (wrath, greed, sloth, pride, lust, envy, and gluttony) and ends up writing an entertaining and mostly thoughtful Think Piece about America. Each chapter is split between political analysis and personal storytelling. The political analysis tended to be dated and a bit repetitive (does anyone really care about Bill Bennett anymore), but the narrative bits were great. With the exception of the chapter on Envy (largely pointless), the stories he tells on his personal quest are funny and insightful. The best was the first chapter on green where Dan learns how to play blackjack and has to fight off the lure of the big score. The rest of the stories about swingers, prostitutes, shooting ranges and fat-rights activists were all fascinating and not necessarily what you might expect. The culture war has moved on since the publication of this book, but the personal stories reported here are worth a read.

Leonora says

This was a funny, original book written by Dan Savage of "Savage Love" fame, the sex column that appears in weekly newspapers like the Village Voice.

The title comes from the title of a right-wing pundit's book, "Slouching toward Gomorrah." The author, who I had never heard of, along with other conservative commentators Savage quotes complain that America is on the wrong path and that feminism, homosexuality, pornography, gambling, etc. are responsible. Since Americans are such sinners in the eyes of right-wingers and since 9/11--the book was published in 2002--the eyes of Muslim fundamentalists, Dan Savage decides in his book to take us on a tour of American sinnery and celebrate it.

The book is divided into about 10 chapters, 7 of which focus on the 7 deadly sins. Sometimes Savage loses his way a little. For instance, he wants to champion all the sins but he barely holds back biting judgement of the proud-to-be-fat people in the gluttony chapter. This one I thought was the most interesting. Anyone know what a "feeder" is? Yeah, I didn't either.

Savage makes good points, sometimes ones you don't want to hear. His chapter on Pride (you guessed it, gay pride) is certainly controversial, like Savage himself. But I found his opinions refreshing.

Besides that, this book is pretty much hilarious. It's not quite as good as "The Kid" or "The Commitment" but definitely worth reading.
