



How to Be a Man: (and other illusions)

Duff McKagan , Chris Kornelis

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The cofounder of Guns N' Roses, Velvet Revolver, and Walking Papers shares what the hard-knock rock life has taught him about how to be a good dude (in spite of it all).

One wouldn't usually turn to a veteran of Guns N' Roses for advice on how to live, but Duff McKagan is not a typical rock musician. As chronicled in the *New York Times* bestseller *It's So Easy (and other lies)*, Duff got sober at thirty, went back to school, got smart about money, fell in love, became a father, and got his life back on track. Through trial and considerable error, Duff has learned to strike the balance between family and work, travel and contentment, financial aptitude and sacrifice.

In *How to Be a Man (and other illusions)*, Duff takes the reader into the life of an international rock musician and shares, with disarming candor and humor, the solid life lessons he's learned along the way to success and fulfillment in both his family life and his career. From hard-won advice on such basics as starting with a strong base and staying humble, to techniques on how to stave off depression and transform darker impulses into something productive, *How to Be a Man* is the ultimate guide to rocking life—not as a dissolute train-wreck "rock star," but as a man destined for success and longevity.

How to Be a Man: (and other illusions) Details

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From Reader Review How to Be a Man: (and other illusions) for online ebook

Igor says

Interesting stories from the bass player of one of the biggest rock bands in the world Guns N' Roses. He talks about the period of 2012 - 2014 in his life, period where he is sober for many years and has a family. It is interesting to see how he is adjusting to this period after the years spent as a rock star filled with drugs, alcohol and women. He is finding new challenges to keep his mind occupied and away from drugs and alcohol and maintaining the spark for music in same time. But most important being good father and husband. There are many positive lessons that can be learnt from this book and from men that has been through the worst and returned to the right way. All in all very good book I would definitely read his first book.

Sarah says

Trigger warnings for this book: Light discussion of sex, drugs and rock n roll, but not as much as in Duff's first book "It's So Easy", also there is talk of at least one suicide(by drugs)

I highlighted 4 stars, but really I would give this 4.5. I am a HUGE Duff McKagan and Guns and Roses fan. I loved Duff's book "It's So Easy (and other lies)", so I had high expectations for this book. I was not disappointed! Duff continues to have a very laid back writing style, informative but not inaccessible. I love his story of coming back from near death to return to being a successful author, as well as a loving husband and father. When you read his books, you don't think "Ugh, another successful person whining about celebrity life and bragging about their comeback". Instead, you end up thinking "I am genuinely happy for this guy! He sounds like he really made a positive turnaround!" It makes for a great read each time, and I would definitely recommend any of his writings to others who like this rock n roll bio genre.

I would have given this book a 5-star rating if it didn't have these TINY flaws:

-The book may be about "being a man", but did the reader really need to experience three chapters about sports watching, even if it is about a "personal journey"?

-I became slightly annoyed because this book far more than his other one was much more like a magazine column (yeah I get that he writes those), as in "HAHAHA! You know what I am talking about, don't you subscriber? Those teenage girls.... Those sports games.... My lady.... My DUDES.... (you'll only understand this when you read the book, which I still enthusiastically recommend)

The chapters on CD, book and travel recommendations are really awesome! They make this book worth it, and account for at least one of the whole stars I gave this book. Also, I was pleasantly surprised at some of the relationship advice he had (mostly about listening and letting your partner be themselves). Don't let my griping sway you against this book. I did enjoy it! Duff and GNR fans will for sure love this!

Rod says

This is just as fun as Duff's last book.

The stories of him and his daughters are hilarious. He could fill a book with just that: A Rockstar Daddy who gets ignored by his Teenage Princesses because he isn't cool enough. I know the feeling.

A great book - basically him touring the world TODAY, and trying to fix his back deck at the same time. Lots of fun advice and wisdom for aspiring Dad's and Husbands to overcome their pathetic insecurities and vanities. And how to have a roadworthy sense of humor.

Tons of awesome Rockstar stories.

Halee says

My favorite part was his statistical analysis of Bon Jovi's claim that he had "seen a million faces" and had "rocked them all." Duff validated that the amount of faces seen by Bon Jovi could potentially be one million, but there was a low probability that 100% of those faces were rocked. For example, if a parent begrudgingly took their child to a concert, they were probably not rocked. Duff estimates that 80-90% were rocked.

Stacee says

This was a fantastic collection of life lessons with a unique perspective.

Lots of serious advice on things like how to treat your woman (or man) to silly things like poo etiquette when sharing a hotel room to chapters full of albums to own and books to read. Coupled with a great sense of humor and rock and roll royalty, Duff's book shines a light on info that should be considered common sense, but definitely bears repeating.

All in all, fun and quick read.

Huge thanks to DeCapo Press and Edelweiss for providing the arc in exchange for an honest review

Jamie Lyon says

Very random, some parts were interesting and others, not so much. It is nice to see a rock n roll survivor gushing about being a Dad and a husband, and I applaud his continuing sobriety. I just didn't care for this one as much as "It's So Easy (and other lies)".

Mikko says

Many of the rules of behaviour given by Duff in the book were downright hilarious considering they were coming from a former/current member of the "most dangerous band in the world". Don't forget to put the deodorant on BEFORE you go to the gym; when you share a hotel room with somebody else, never poo in the bathroom without the other person's consent, etc. (But if you rather went to the toilet in the lobby like our favourite bass commander advises, wouldn't you just remove the problem of odour to another space/person?)

I liked the book for all the same reasons everybody else liked it, I guess: the down-to-earthness of the main character, his American humour, the intimacy, Duff's omnipresent love for his family--the nature of which DOES get a tad suspicious and sentimental when touted as often as it is here. I also liked it for the ardent presentation of his favourite books and records. Famous people usually don't lash out their nerdiness this willingly. I also thoroughly enjoyed the homosexual innuendos of his Spanish escapade with the keyboard player from Walking Papers. Some nice build-ups there! I didn't really connect with the book until the long piece about Duff's trip to New Jersey to see the Super Bowl, but then it suddenly got quite real and visceral, not just a travelling journal sprinkled with a lot of pragmatic nicknack.

If they had just left out the embarrassingly touristy travelling tips concerning Europe! Most of those were almost like recommending the Eiffel Tower, for Chrissake.

Ruth says

Whilst this wasn't a very long book or high literature, I felt it was a great uplifting read. The few pages he wrote about depression were worth the 5 stars ! Seems a very down to earth guy and he seems grateful to have gotten a second chance at life. Plus my copy is signed... so that's a bonus :)

Kristina says

Duff's first book is a gem, its one of my favorite memoirs, one of those books that really catch you by surprise. This is the sort of a follow up, great attempt, but it really lacks in content. I enjoyed it nevertheless because of the first book, I am becoming the biggest fan of his and his music, and really hope he continues to write and play.

Darci says

This was a very entertaining book but I was a little disappointed because I thought It's So Easy was so well done.

Brent Ecenbarger says

I originally read Duff's first book, "It's So Easy and Other Lies" shortly after reading Slash's autobiography. Between the two, I preferred Duff's book for several reasons: it was obviously written more by the musician than a ghost writer; the book had more humor in it; and the story extended to the Velvet Revolver era. I'm happy to pick up another book by McKagan based on that one, although where "It's So Easy..." was a great biography for any music fan "How to Be a Man (And Other Illusions)" is definitely more in the vein of for hardcore fans only.

The style of this book is about half life lessons and half biography of events since "It's So Easy..." was published. That includes some very cool events, including a book tour, a new band (the excellent Walking Papers that I'd recommend any rock fans check out), and even some reconciliation with Axl Rose. The

events stop short of the Guns 'n Roses reunion however, which is unfortunate because the story of Axl and Slash patching things up would probably be the most fascinating story in any Guns 'n Roses biography.

Interspersed in those biographical chapters are life lessons from Duff. There are also several short chapters on subjects like dating and parenting, some more successful than others. My main criticism of the advice portions of this book is that McKagan seem to be writing as a character. Much of the advice begins "Make sure your chick...." or something in similar vernacular. While McKagan certainly has a rock and roll attitude to much of his writing, he also comes across much more intelligent in most of his writing that he does when boiling things down to life lessons.

I loved the section on 100+ records every dude should own which gave me some solid education on punk rock. The section on books to read was less successful as it was much more limited in its variety. The van tour by Walking Papers was probably the backbone of the book and served as an interesting anchor to keep coming back to, however the shadow of the Guns 'n Roses reunion hangs over the book as the mega event that the reader knows the outcome of but knows will take place after the book is over.

With all of the excitement of Guns 'n Roses successful reunion as well as the popularity of McKagan's daughter's band The Pink Slips, one can only suspect that McKagan will have plenty of material for another installment in his biography series. If Chris Jericho and Theodore Roosevelt can justify three volume biography sets, then the bass player from GnR, Loaded, Velvet Revolver, Walking Papers and more will have me back at the book store for round three as well.

Byron Wright says

An enjoyable book for me, but I think you need to be the right demographic. As a mid-40s Gun 'n Roses fan, I think I am that demographic.

This book provides a lot of advice in the context of his memoirs. Mostly about how he's grown up since he got a family and dropped the substance abuse. There's nothing earth shattering here but it's interesting to hear someone who's had a very different path in life come to similar conclusions about what's important in life. Mostly it boils down to being a decent human being and working hard.

Alasdair Martin says

I get it. I do. His life was a mess, he was eating his own vomit for the sake of a drink but he ultimately turned it around and is in a good place now, which is great; unfortunately former addicts often run the risk of coming of a bit preachy when they talk about they turned their lives around and to be honest it makes the rest of us feel somewhat inadequate!

McKagan does a reasonable job of recounting how he turned things around and where he is now but I found the constant name-dropping and martial-arts references tiresome. Die hard fans will no doubt lap it up though, particularly the latter part of the book that talks about playing with Guns N' Roses and jamming with some of the original members, there's definite interest there. Not to forget Andrew, one lucky Aerosmith fan who struck the fan jackpot - that was a cool anecdote, I'd have liked more of that :)

Amy says

The highlights of this book are the anecdotes. Funny, bittersweet, sometimes painful, a man on the cusp of 50 looks back on his life and has plenty of stories to tell. Not as engaging or engrossing as *It's So Easy*, and some of his chivalric advice is too old-fashioned for my taste. Duff has come a long way in his life, and there are words of wisdom in his raconteur's shtick, but I wouldn't recommend this to boys or men who are seeking a model of modern masculinity.

Randee says

My all time favorite groups are Led Zeppelin, Aerosmith, NIN and Guns N' Roses (not necessarily in that order because there is no order...I love all four pretty equally) and I read anything and everything that I can about these groups and the musicians who have taken me higher throughout the years. Duff McKagan is the original bassist of Guns N' Roses.

What an interesting guy and book! In his opinion of how to be a man, I have to say that I agree with him 99% of the time (which totally shocked me because I am opinionated and do not suffer fools gladly.) Every male should read this book and seriously consider behaving as the author suggests.

He had his crazy days of youth and debauchery, wised up, went back to school, got married to a woman he still adores and had two daughters who probably have one of the best Dads in the world. He actually reads books, thinks about things seriously and has obtained sobriety and maturity though hard work and determination.

I am impressed. It's so awesome to know that one of my 'heroes' is, in actually, a hero. It's an interesting read and I highly recommend reading it and following his advice. Thanks Duff!!!
