

## Librarian's Shelf by Karen Stuart

### Genre Spotlight: Celebrity Advice

Who do you go to for advice? Would you ask your Grandfather which smartphone you should buy? Do you ask your little sister about buying your first house? So why do we take the advice of celebrities over experts in a subject? We read their advice books because they're experts in entertaining us- celebrities are successful in the "entertainment industry."

Before you dismiss a celebrity's advice completely, or start to take it too seriously, remember who wrote the book and how they are qualified, or aren't, to be giving advice on the topic.

At Columbus Public Library, you can find advice books on relationships from Chelsea Handler, Jenny McCarthy, Steve Harvey, and many more. None of these celebrities have the best track records with successful relationships and yet they seek to provide us with advice. Before you decide not to read their books, however, dig deeper on what they are writing about. For example, Chelsea Handler's book, "Are You There Vodka, It's Me, Chelsea" is clearly written as a humorous biography focusing on her dating history and family relationships. Steve Harvey, on the other hand, wrote two books on understanding how men think. If you're interested in dating Steve Harvey, take his books seriously. If not, understand that all men are different and while his books will provide some interesting generalities, no one will be exactly as he describes.

One area where celebrities may have expert advice is business. Celebrities are brands and in order to be successful, they must manage their life like a business. You may not agree with Paris Hilton's life style, depicted in her book "Confessions of an Heiress," but she has built a business of marketing herself and would be poised to give advice on such topics. The Kardashian family has the same experience and expertise, building an empire of clothing, perfume, and other consumer goods, as well as publishing books.

Some celebrities became famous for being an expert in their field. For example, Tim Gunn worked in the fashion industry before appearing on Project Runway. His book, "A Guide to Quality, Style, and Taste" provides advice from a fashion expert, as opposed to an enthusiast. Likewise, Jillian Michaels was a fitness expert before working on The Biggest Loser and gaining notoriety. She shares her diet and fitness expertise in quite a few books, including "Making the Cut."

Diet and Fitness books should be read with caution, no matter the author, and you should consult your doctor before starting any plan you read about to make sure they are right for you. This is especially important when reading health books by celebrities. Are they writing from experience? Have they consulted a nutritionist or doctor when writing their books?

Jessica Seinfeld did it right when she wrote "Deceptively Delicious," a book of recipes that hide healthy foods in your diet. She was inspired by her children's avoidance of vegetables and discovered solutions such as blending spinach in their brownies. She doesn't ask you to take her word that the recipes are healthy, but instead includes a nutritionist's expertise.

Keep an open, yet discerning, mind the next time you pick up an advice book written by your favorite celebrity. If you plan to take their advice seriously, make sure they're someone whose

opinion you respect. If not, just enjoy their written entertainment the same way you enjoy their on-screen entertainment.