



It's Not What You Think

Chris Evans

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Chris Evans' extraordinary career has seen him become one of the UK's most successful broadcasters and producers. Here, his autobiography is a funny and frank story of how a boy from a Warrington council estate who started work at 13 and held down 20 different jobs by the time he left school became the most widely acclaimed broadcaster of his generation. From the early death of his father that literally set him to work, to his meteoric rise in TV and radio, he talks openly about the highs and lows of his turbulent career and how his drive to succeed impacted his personal life. This is a fascinating and surprising life story from one of Britain's brightest and boldest personalities.

It's Not What You Think Details

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Lynsey says

I've never been a 'fan' of Chris Evans, but neither has he ever done anything to annoy or offend me! So, I'm not sure I'd have chosen this book for myself, especially given that I tend to shy away from the whole auto/biography genre.

Anyhoo, a good friend lent to me a huge pile of books and this is the one I found myself drawn to first. I picked it for a browse and found it to be really interesting & informative, and I couldn't wait to see what happened next in the saga that is his life.

No one could accuse of Chris of not earning his right to fame, fortune & success. He grafted his way to the top, with the help of a fair bit of luck and his gift of the gab.

I finished the book liking & respecting him a whole lot more than when I started, I'm just annoyed that the book ends in the pre-Billie era, so I now find myself needing to read the next instalment to bring me up to date!

Smart move, Chris.

Cath Williams says

Not my usual genre but quite enjoyed it. Informative, easy to read banter.

Alex Laycock says

i never listened nor watched chris on TV, i always HAD made sweeping unfounded assumptions about him BUT i have just bought a car the previous owner listened to Radio2 ,i cant tune the radio so i started to listen to him for 10 mins every morning, WHAT A REVELATION, complete TONIC! Hence i bought the book, with no regret, huge respect now how he has got to where he is, what wit, whata page turner,insightful tooplus a bloke who admits his own mistakes and embraces life to the full,READ IT!

Toby says

10 Fun Memories Involving Me and Chris Evans

10 - Nothing made me late for school more times than The Big Breakfast - I just didn't want to miss a second of that show. It simply wasn't the same when he left.

9 - I spent an unknown quantity of time mimicking his actions on Don't Forget Your Toothbrush, complete with soundtrack.

8 - The last gift my great grandmother ever bought me was the Christmas single from Zig & Zag

7 - Spending Saturdays listening to Rock & Roll Football on Virgin Radio and preferring the interruption of

the song with chants of "GOALLLLL!!!!" to the song that they were playing

6 - Being introduced to countless great songs by countless great musicians every Friday on TFI Friday

5 - Seeing Donna Air completely naked hanging from a crane outside Riverside Studios on TFI Friday

4 - The truly memorable The Naked Parade, Freak or Unique, The Riverboat Song, the camera "diving" from the bar to stage, every celebrity entrance as they climb the steps to the bar on TFI Friday

3 - Hearing The Breakfast Show gang talk about this little movie called Swingers which later became one of my all time favourites

2 - The incredibly bizarre Sky TV broadcast of the breakfast radio show long before live webcams made the same surreal experience possible for all.

1 - My email address (and subsequent usernames) was created out of my love for the TV created by Chris Evans and even if I somehow forget how important this man was to me in my youth that will stay with me for the rest of my life.

It's safe to say that Chris Evans is an entertaining guy and point 1 is no exaggeration; Chris Evans was a major influence on my formative years, whether that was the music I heard (first time I ever saw Slipknot was live on TFI Friday - scary,) the movies I watched and the way that I talked. I still feel that even on his bad days Chris Evans' radio output was better than anything I could listen to.

So this biography was pretty much essential at some point and for once with a celebrity biography I wasn't acutely disappointed. Sure he skipped huge sections of interest to me but what he did write was both interesting and suitably humorous/poignant/entertaining (delete as appropriate) and I literally didn't want to do anything else but read this book from the second I opened it.

Still it was cruising for 3 star mediocrity right up until the magic of Richard Branson rubbed off on his story; this section was the most in-depth and the funniest and can only enhance Branson's reputation even further (not that it needed enhancing by a popular entertainer,) everything about the man is golden I swear. The Virgin effect in this instance involves a Concorde flight and a GBP90million deal and takes almost a third of the book and is worth the price of admission alone.

Evans fills the tale with so much useful advice on business and life that I wouldn't hesitate to recommend the book to many of the same people who will buy business advice books by the armful and "uplifting little girl lost" tales by the bucketload. It's a feel good story of a working class kid made good, complete with self-realisation of the many errors he made along the way.

It's left open for a second part which I'll be looking out for in secondhand shops next time I'm in England; a fact that in its own way is both infuriating and exciting. An incomplete autobiography is hardly worth reading but cramming a full life in to a mere 350 pages would also be completely unsatisfactory.

Gavin Smith says

Top Ten Reasons This Book Is Just OK

10. The first half is mostly just a description of very mundane childhood details.
9. I did not need to know about how Evans' teenage paper round was organised.
8. Nor did I care (even a little) about his first kiss.
7. It's nice that he loves his mum.
6. The chapters are mostly very short, don't really go anywhere, and then end abruptly.

5. I mostly enjoyed Evans' radio and TV shows but he does seem kind of smarmy and obnoxious in writing.
 4. The book perks up in the second half when he gets involved in radio.
 3. He still has a tendency to focus on the less interesting details. I would like to have learned more about radio broadcasting.
 2. The last few chapters detailing his purchase of Virgin Radio are pretty good. Richard Branson seems like a fascinating guy.
 1. This proves Evans' point about structure, if you have a good ending people will most likely forget a poor beginning and a so-so middle.
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Jennifer says

Enjoying this one far more than the first one, much funnier and much more insight into Chris himself. I reckon the second one was written to fulfill a contract; this one was written because he wanted to!

Hil says

3.5 stars. This took me a while to read because I kept going off on diversions down memory lane via Youtube, watching episodes of TFI Friday, Big Breakfast interviews and so on. I am someone who watched all Chris's TV shows (less so Big Breakfast as I already had a problem getting to school on time) and listened to his Radio 1 breakfast show, happily moving over to Virgin when he did. In fact, I remember I would set my alarm to wake up at the crack of dawn to listen to it all! Somewhere beyond TFI Friday days I lost interest in what he was doing - it wasn't so much that I was a fan of him, but he did great shows. He had become a bit annoying though, as he gladly admits. Cut to 2004 when I returned to the world of work again after uni, and I returned to the radio 1 breakfast show, and from there it was all about Chris Moyles instead. A similar sort of character but somehow more likeable. In 2012 when he left Radio 1, so did I. After a few months trying to find a suitable replacement, I finally settled on Radio 2, now the home of Chris Evans' new breakfast show. It had been going a couple of years by then, but it felt kind of familiar. I still don't love it as much as Moyles' show, but through it I have become a full on Radio 2 listener these days. Another thing to thank Chris for, I suppose.

All that said, I have rated this book higher than Chris Moyles' two autobiographies. Chris Evans tells a story well; his life has been much more interesting and I admired his positive attitude and work ethic, which are no doubt what brought him so many opportunities and lucky breaks. At times it sounded too good to be true. Some of his life reads like a fictional story, the likes of which Mike Gayle or Danny Wallace might write, but he started off in a way I could relate to. His passion for radio rivalled that of Chris Moyles, but I felt Evans put so much more effort into it, working over and above for sometimes nothing at all, to get where he wanted to be. In short, I respect him.

This book ends when he has just bought Virgin radio, and kind of where I stopped taking notice of what he was doing, so part of me is curious to read the next book. It might be a while, but I probably will.

Oh, and disappointingly the kindle version of the book doesn't have any pictures. That wouldn't be much of a problem if the words didn't refer to pictures that aren't there a couple of times. There are also some layout

issues on the top ten lists that start each chapter, and a couple of typos. I will have to visit a bookshop to look at the photos soon!

Andy says

I always like Chris Evans, having fond memories of The Big Breakfast, Don't Forget your Toothbrush, the Radio 1 breakfast show and most importantly for me, TFI Friday. That show was a revelation and perfect for my mid-teens britpop years. Down, the line I've fallen out of touch with him, aside from the newspaper headlines a few years back and occasionally catching his Radio 2 show. I have no idea what he's doing currently.

We follow his life as a child in quite a lot of detail, before skipping ahead a bit more up until his acquisition of Virgin radio. He draws on his natural enthusiasm and confidence to create and get the job done, giving hints and tips in running businesses and life. I've always admired his natural talent and drive, despite the self destructive tendencies. He does come across a little melodramatic at times and some of the 'life lessons' are rather obvious, not needing to be said.

There's a strong feeling of leaving a lot out and the further through we go the less detail is given. He's quite open about his sexual conquests and relationships (and how they went wrong) but the background suggestion of a lie falling apart through partying, drinking and possibly more is rather glanced over. You know it's there but it's never explored.

Note: this would have got another star if it weren't for the completely made up and inaccurate medical procedures he mentions - his mum having a cataract operation and him having some bones in his hand reset. Neither of these procedures as he describes them are anything remotely realistic (either now or at the time they would have occurred). Sure, the story about his mum is second hand so maybe either she was telling porkies, or it's become a family story, but still. This make me wonder how many other anecdotes are completely falsified or tainted.

I liked the book though, and the set up for the next one will almost certainly get me reading. I want to find out how it all fell down (hinted at multiple times throughout but never appearing).

Jim says

It galls me to state this, but the autobiographies of Chris Evans, Danny Baker and Piers Morgan - on the face of it, three totally insufferable big heads - are some of the most easy to read, entertaining and enjoyable autobiographies I've read. (I draw the line at Russell Brand, no matter how many rave reviews his Booky Wook gets.)

As ever with me, it's the days before celebrity hits that I most enjoy reading about. However, the recollections from the old school days endured by Chris Evans do leave you wondering wondering if he went to school in the Victorian age? His grammar school experience certainly feels like it was from some long lost era of mortar boards, flowing gowns and table legs being covered up. This sepia-tinged tone continues through much of the book. The Eighties feels like the Thirties, almost, and maybe to Chris, always charging

forward into the future, the Eighties is ancient history. Bottle it, preserve it, look back and laugh at it but don't dwell. And don't, under any circumstances, moan and complain about the past, the present or the future. The zest for life, for seizing the day, sparks off every page. This isn't some dumb smiley-smiley optimism though. It's just a relentlessly positive attitude that's determined to make the most out of any situation that presents itself. And he doesn't care if you are with him or not, this is his life and he's going to use it.

The book starts at pace and then speeds up as it charges through the decades. I was never a fan of anything Evans ever did on radio or tv and am happy to state I never heard or watched any of it. From what I read here, I didn't miss much, although I did enjoy reading about it all. He comes across as nobody's fool and even when he chides himself over his overblown ego you still get the impression that the mistakes he made, the people he upset and the errors of judgement (all happily recounted in the book) merely add to his overall self-reinforcement. And just in case by the end of what is only Volume One you still wonder if he's a good guy, he gets people to write their own assessment of him at the end of the book. Surprisingly, they're all effusively glowing.

This is an easy and entertaining read which is Not As Annoying As You Might Think.

Mary says

A great autobiography, loved the style and what a fascinating career so far.

Seaside Sparkles says

I found this a novel approach to an autobiography, each chapter with a top 10 and subsequent related story. It's a fascinating read and illustrates Evans' talent and hard work and the culture of celebrity. It's honest and interesting.

Sharon says

I bought this because I really enjoyed the recent *TFI Friday* return, and also because it was £0.99 for Kindle and I hadn't read an autobiography in a while.

My knowledge of Chris Evans extends only to *The Big Breakfast* and *TFI Friday* - I barely remember *Don't Forget Your Toothbrush* and I've never listened to him on the radio because I'm not in the UK. This book covers the period of time between Chris' childhood and his purchase of Virgin Radio from Richard Branson in the early 00s. Each chapter starts with a "Top Ten" list, which was a lot of fun. The Number One in each list is the topic for that chapter - the chapters were short, between 1 and 5 minutes long on Kindle. At the end of the book, some of the people mentioned get a little paragraph or two in which they give their memories of Chris.

Chris comes across as a really down to earth, genuinely nice man. He acknowledges mistakes (and there were a few), he is respectful of his ex wives and partners, and doesn't slate people in the book which is refreshing. He takes full responsibility for any bad behaviour or attitude problems he had at various times, and is not afraid to say that he became too big for his boots at one point. This is the first of a few

autobiographies, and I liked his writing style so much that I downloaded the next one after I finished this.

Mark Speed says

Very much outside my usual reading range - a 'celeb bio'. I was curious to find out what his journey was and how he'd managed to be so phenomenally successful. It's not particularly well-written - in fact, quite clumsy in parts - and at some points it comes across as a bit of an ego-trip when he talks about the famous women he's had relationships with (and the 'references' at the end from his friends, colleagues, family and former lovers is just a bit too much). On the whole, quite interesting. It gets a lot of points for having a very strong motivational message running through it: don't ever even think of giving up - just keep plugging away and trying to be original.

Jules says

This autobiography charts part of the life so far of Chris Evans – a Northern British media figure who has, at periods, dominated TV and radio output in the UK.

In recent times I have warmed to Evans as a knowledgeable persona who is gently entertaining and seems to sense what listeners and viewers want. I now listen to him almost daily as he presents the morning drive to work slot on BBC radio 2. It's worth noting that further back in his career I found Evans a bit loud and brash but this book has given me more knowledge about his media ascent and, as a result, I have gained more respect for him.

Earlier on in his life and despite being academically bright and sharp, Evans eschewed a formal university education and became a working man as his career of schooling came to a close. As he explains his early morning exploits leaving his house before daybreak to mark up newspapers at a local shop, you get the sense that graft matters to this man and soon realise that his uber-successful media career was earned as a result of a likeable personality, a hint of cheekiness and a heavy dose of hard graft. His career break happened as a result of scamming Manchester DJ Timmy Mallett by posing as a fake interviewer for hospital radio. Lucky for Evans, his scam paid off and after hearing about an unpaid position 'chez Mallett' he applied and got the job – the rest, as they say, is history.

After moving to London, Evans moved further into media circles developing a career in production and becoming infamous as a presenter on TFI Friday and Don't Forget Your Toothbrush. The book ends as he discusses aspects of his media ownership and entrepreneurship and elaborates on his media buying negotiations with Richard Branson. Obviously you leave the book thinking and firmly believing that Evans has come such a long way. Yet somehow he seems still in touch with his roots – that's the beauty of the narrative via which he appears to give an honest and uplifting account of an ambitious life.

This book has various levels of appeal. It appeals to me as I like to read autobiographies and memoirs and it has given me much more of an admiration of Evans as a plucky character – he's an optimist and has obviously worked damn hard to get his breaks by not being prepared to settle for second best. This book will also appeal to anyone who is passionate about the media industry and entrepreneurship – Evans worked his way up in the industry with initially no contacts or connections. Working against our British class system it's inspirational and refreshing to see this kind of progression where a working class lad from Warrington can

now call the shots as he does.

Recommended!

Michael says

I did not know much about the British radio and television host Chris Evans other than what I had read online and with British media that is not always flattering for a celebrity. In the past I've downloaded episodes of his podcast to hear interviews he had conducted with musicians and actors but the podcast never really touched on Chris Evans the man.

It's Not What You Think is the story of Evans before he buys his own radio station. If you've read the autobiographies of Chris Moyles, or for Americans, Howard Stern the story seems very similar. Evans grows up with a love for radio and knows that working in radio is what he wants to do. How he gets to doing his dream job is more luck than following a proven path. He by no means has an easy road to travel and, by all accounts, puts in the time and effort to achieve his goal. He learns at a young age, thirteen, that the harder worker will be rewarded before the person that does just enough to get by.

Evans starts his radio career working behind the scenes and then gets a shot as a character on a popular afternoon show. He works that into his own show until an off handed remark gets him fired. He then is offered a position as a producer for a show broadcasting out of London, but still has the desire to work on air. He is offered the best position in British radio the BBC Radio 1 Breakfast Show. While working in radio Evans takes on television presenting roles and from there starts producing his own shows.

Along with his career achievements and struggles Evans also shares a few of the ups and downs of his personal life. It is nice that he does not use this book to name drop all the celebrities that he knows, instead he would rather discuss the impressive list of cars that he has owned. Believe me it is a very impressive list of mostly Ferraris.

This book was a quick read thanks to Evans sense of humor that pops up often during his story telling. His story is interesting enough to keep the readers attention but realize that *It's Not What You Think* is only the first book of the Evans journey. Much like Stern had two autobiographies so does Evans. Evans ends the book meeting with Richard Branson to purchase Virgin Radio and the cliff hanger is good enough that it will make the reader to immediately continue on to Evans second book *Memoirs of a Fruitcake*.

Evans has a top ten list to start each chapter and the number one is always the subject of the next story. Each chapter is a short story focusing on an important point in Evans life. The stories really flow into one another very well keeping the reading focused and interested. Evans radio background helps him to tell a good story in the least amount of words.
