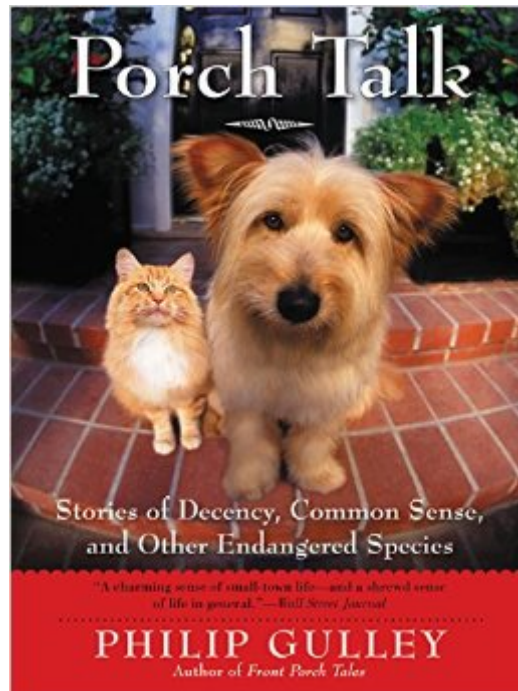


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Porch Talk: Stories Of Decency, Common Sense, And Other Endangered Species



Synopsis

Evoking a time when life revolved around the front porch, where friends gathered, stories were told, and small moments took on large meaning, in today's hurry-up world, Philip Gulley's essays remind us of the world we once shared "and can share again.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I have to admit right up front that I LOVE everything Philip Gulley has written. Thank goodness I love this one, too. His wit and his wisdom are unparalleled. Each story/essay is absolutely perfect. I wanted to start at the beginning and not to stop until I reached the end, but I knew it would be better to read a few a time and savor the flavor like a fine bit of chocolate or very good port. Each story is exquisitely crafted and an utter delight. I am in the process of clearing out a large amount clutter from my home and getting rid of huge volumes of "things", however my Philip Gulley books (including this one) are STAYING.

I own all of Philip Gulley's books - and love them all. I did enjoy this one - but was disappointed at his injection of politics. One reason I read books such as this is to not have to deal with politics - I get enough of that from television, newspapers and magazines. I purchase books such as Porch Talk just for the purpose to reflect, to be amused and to enjoy. I did enjoy the book but it was marred by the politics.

In this case the sub-title seems to say it all. "Porch Talk" features "Stories of Decency, Common Sense and Other Endangered Species". Author Philip Gulley's 14th book is a compilation of some 30 short essays on topics ranging from the demise of the local hardware store to the simple pleasures of a summer night spent with family and friends on the front porch. Gulley makes a compelling argument that it was in just such settings that so much wisdom was passed from generation to generation in years gone by. And he laments the fact that many of these comfortable and familiar settings are simply not available to most folks anymore. It really is a shame. In an essay simply entitled "Camping" Gulley reminisces about camping overnight in nearby woods with a couple of his closest friends at the age of 12 or 13. Such simple pleasures and such wonderful memories! He describes those nights as "the source of my most pleasant childhood memories." In another essay he discusses "The Tornado" that struck his hometown back on Good Friday in 1948. Seems folks still talk about it today and if you look real closely around town you can still see evidence of that frightening day so long ago. But for me the most interesting essay is one Gulley calls "The Slow Life". Readers are introduced to Leon, owner of the local Dairy Queen. Leon is a real anomaly these days. While the lives of most folks in town resemble those of hamsters on a Habitrail, Leon has made the conscious decision to live his life at a much slower pace. As a result, Leon has time for those who seek his counsel and friendship. In this essay Gulley quotes a passage from a book called "In Praise of Slowness" by Carl Honore. Honore compares the fast-life vs. the slow-life. He observes: "Fast is busy, controlling, aggressive, hurried, analytical, stressed, superficial, impatient, active, quantity over quality." In contrast, "Slow is the opposite: calm, careful, receptive, intuitive, unhurried, patient, reflective, quality-over quantity." Now you might disagree with this point of view but there sure is an awful lot to ponder in that quotation. And in "My Conflicted Life" Gulley worries about those individuals who are so cock-sure that they are right that they refuse to change their minds about an issue no matter what the evidence might indicate. Unfortunately, these seem to be the types of people who dominate the scene in Washington D.C. these days. Now since there are some 30 of these essays in "Porch Talk" you will more than likely find yourself at odds with the authors point of view on at least a few of them. I certainly did. But that is not the point. Many of the topics presented in "Porch Talk" are subjects that really do lend themselves to debate by family members, neighbors and friends. In the course of such discussions you just might change your mind about a few things and be instrumental in helping someone else to look at a given issue just a little bit differently. Philip Gulley longs for a return to a lifestyle that sees the value in such discussions. There is a lot to be said for "chewing the fat" with your family, friends and neighbors. I really did not get the feeling that Philip Gulley was interested in telling people how to live their lives.

In fact, Gulley pokes fun at his own foibles, failings and inconsistencies throughout the book. Rather, I suspect he is trying to encourage each one of us to evaluate how we live our own lives. At the end of the day I found "Porch Talk" to be a pretty thought provoking book. Any one of the essays would provide the basis for a great discussion around the family dinner table. Great summer reading and a pretty good bathroom book as well. Recommended!

I had never heard of Phillip Gulley before I was handed this book, and I have to admit the title was a little off-putting for me. I'm not an outdoorsy person and I immediately got the picture of sitting on an evening porch being eaten alive by mosquitoes. It didn't make me very enthusiastic. But I read it anyway. Several of the essays sparked a healthy dose of nostalgia (which at 30, I'm just beginning to appreciate) and most were coated with a subtle humor that I loved. I felt a little smile on almost every page. He has a way of teaching little lessons while at the same time making you feel like you just realized something on your own. The book is fairly small and the essays short enough that it would be great to carry around for those downtimes when you could use a distraction or a little pick-me-up, like sitting in the dentist's waiting room or in line at the DMV. Two of my favorites are the one about Thanksgiving and the one about the pond, though that one made me choke up a little at the end.

I took this book out of the public library and then purchased it for my father, I loved it so much. Gulley is a great story teller. His anecdotes are brief, familiar, and well written. He has a knack for taking common experiences and weaving them into an engaging tale. That, and his subtly self-deprecating sense of humor makes for a very readable book. There are morals to the stories that he tells, and he does speak a bit about politics. I did not find this book to be overwhelmingly political in the ways that other reviewers did - it seemed more subtle to me. This will be a book I reread.

and the recipient knew about this book ... in fact she had it in her collection, so the kids will get this one. I think it will provide good reading for everyone in the family! BTW, the seller on all these books I've reviewed is EXCELLENT! Perfect packaging and very fast delivery!

I love reading Mr. Gulley's books!! He is a wonderful writer...he makes me laugh and he has a way with words that gets his point across without hurting anyone...I love the stories about the people and what they are like in church (meeting), i.e. who claims what pew, who thinks things must be their

way, etc. It just proves people are alike in all ways in all churches.

I must confess that I purchased this book because it was "on sale" and because of the adorable dog and cat on the cover. I did not expect to enjoy this book as much as I did. It was interesting, I actually dog eared a couple of pages to go back to because they were "aha" moments.

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