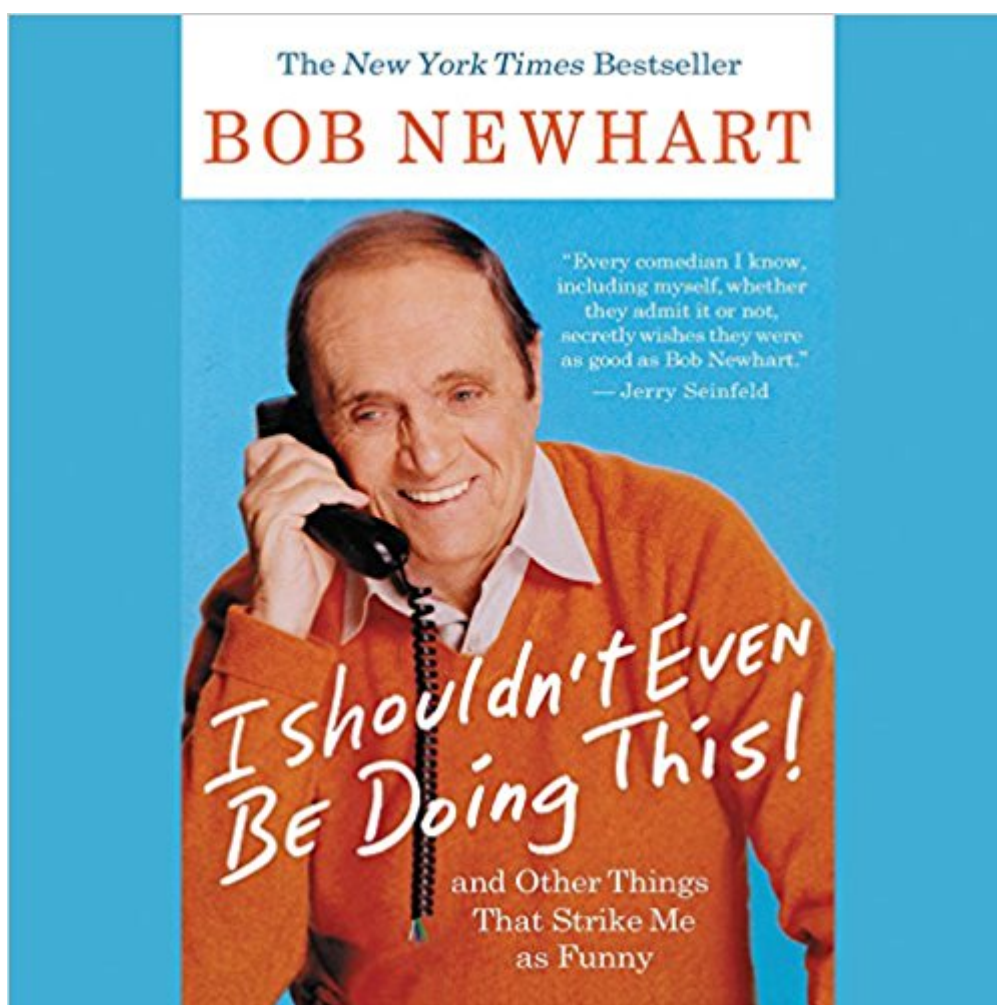




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I Shouldn't Even Be Doing This! And Other Things That Strike Me As Funny



Synopsis

That stammer. Those basset-hound eyes. That bone-dry wit. There has never been another comedian like Bob Newhart. In this, his first audiobook ever, Newhart gives us his brilliant and bemused twist on a multitude of topics, including flying, the trials of a family holiday in a Winnebago, and more serious subjects, such as golf. And, of course, there are side-splittingly funny stories from his life and career. Who else has a drinking game named after him? ("Hi, Bob!") This isn't a memoir like most memoirs. It's an audiobook only Bob Newhart could have conceived, with his unique worldview and irrepressibly wry humor. Oh, and there's a fair bit of plain silliness, too.

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Customer Reviews

Starred Review. Beginning with his 1960 Grammy-winning album, *The Button Down Mind of Bob Newhart*, the comedian's 46-year career has included nightclub standup, TV series (*The Bob Newhart Show*), animation voices (*The Simpsons*), feature films (*Catch-22*, *Elf*)—and now his first book. At age 77, Newhart is clearly in his anecdotal age, with mirthful memories of his successes and failures. Treating the reader almost as a personal friend, Newhart covers everything in this guided tour through his button-down brain, from his 43-year marriage and fear of flying to fatherhood, Vegas, sitcoms, golf and assorted antics with celebrity pals. Aware that digression is the better part of valor, he interrupts the low-key autobiographical flow with amusing asides, and this rambling look at "the absurdist side of life" is just as effective in print as on TV, adding depth and dimension to the familiar image of Newhart as a frustrated, flawed everyman. In the tradition of Max Eastman's *Enjoyment of Laughter* (1936) and Steve Allen's *The Funny Men* (1956), he analyzes

and compares comedy styles. The hilarity is heightened as he reveals how he created his best satirical sketches. Influenced by H. Allen Smith, Robert Benchley, James Thurber and Max Shulman, Newhart himself has now joined that lofty pantheon. (Sept. 19) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

"Bob Newhart is a great comedian and a great American." -- David Hyde Pierce --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

A sentence in the product description of this novel says this memoir could only have been written by Bob Newhart and that is an absolutely true statement. If you appreciate the humor style of this man, you will like this book because it is absolutely like sitting and having a conversation with him. I was more familiar with the Bob Newhart of his two longest running television series so it was very interesting to read about his stand-up comedy performances, his records, and his film career. There is also fascinating material about the famous people he came in contact with throughout his career. The biggest surprise to me was finding out who the Newhart's as a couple consider their best friends. Proof positive that opposites truly do attract. I thoroughly enjoyed my time spent reading this memoir and now feel I know a lot more about what was going on behind the scenes of this man's career. I laughed out loud at some points, but for the most part this is more the kind of book you read with a smile on your face.

This book is an easy, enjoyable read which is often very funny as Newhart includes a lot of his routines and excerpts of funny routines he likes. I wish he had had more about his co-stars and filming of The Bob Newhart Show but he does explain in detail how the show came about, the casting of Emily, the opening credits, and includes a few of his favorite scenes from some episodes. He includes far, far less about The Newhart Show beyond how it was created the famous final scene of homemaking up in bed with Emily from his first show. Most of the books focuses on his starting out, his gravitating into comedy, developing some of his famous comedy routines and the first two hugely successful comedy albums. He really didn't feel successful until his second The Bob Newhart Show (the first one was made in the early sixties and short-lived) went into syndication. Bob Newhart comes across as being a very nice, likeable person who really enjoys his work and life, and appreciates the success he's had, which I found refreshing. He says that the character of Bob Hartley was 85% Bob Newhart! However I think Newhart is less modest than his alter-ego as

he does enjoy doing some name dropping of the famous actors and comedians he's met or worked with, but he does so in a clearly admiring and respectful way. He writes about a lot of the feature films he's been in. I wish the book had been a bit longer and come with some personal photos, but overall I really liked it and frequently laughed while reading it.

"I Shouldn't Even Be Doing This!: And Other Things That Strike Me as Funny" by Bob Newhart is a pleasant stroll through the moderately interesting life of a very funny man. Newhart is truly one of the most successful comic personalities of the last 50 years and it is wonderful to see that happen to someone who is so laid back about everything. I think that is what makes him so funny. Like Jeff Bridges in "The Big Lebowski," Bob Newhart is an original "Dude". He abides. As I mentioned earlier, the book is very casual. Newhart never seemed to have a problem with achieving fame and then dealing with it. Just like his TV persona, Newhart is almost a secondary character to the things that happen around him. His first and second album spent time simultaneously as #1 & #2 on Billboard's Top 100 list. His first two television shows were long running hits which were allowed to end themselves, which is rare. For all these accomplishments, which have destroyed lesser men, Newhart remains effortlessly casual. Sticking with the tried and true formula of Bob as a secondary character, the book is strongest when Newhart talks about his relationships with other people, most notably his fellow comedians and TV co-stars. He also spends a good deal of the text going over some of his classic gags, like the "Bus Driver School" and "The Driving Instructor." These are particularly interesting because he talks about how he came up with these classic jokes. Bob Newhart belongs to the often overlooked school of casual, subtle comedians. These comedians include his heroes Bob & Ray and Jack Benny. I would be curious as time moves forward to see who the comedians pointing to Bob Newhart as their influence are going to be.

I love Bob Newhart. His stand up routines and his iconic sitcoms have entertained me for years. His deadpan delivery has hit my funny spot for as long as I can remember, so I was very happy to get to read his own story. How's the book? Well, I liked it, but I didn't love it. It was interesting to read his account of his life and his career. But as memoirs go, this one seemed a little superficial. By that I mean that I couldn't help but feel like I was only being told part of the story--the part that Newhart was willing to share. That's OK; I'm a private guy and I really don't need to know salacious details. The private stuff really isn't any of my concern anyway. My only point is that I felt like there was a lack of candor to the story. I could be completely off base though. That's just how the account came off. Putting that impression aside, this was an interesting read and I had a hard time putting it down. I

loved hearing about Newhart's relationship with Don Rickles. The bottom line is, Bob Newhart has brought immeasurable amounts of laughter to my life. So what if his memoir was a little dull? It was still interesting and I'm still glad I read it. It was fun to reminisce. I wish Newhart and his family all the best and I appreciate him sharing some of his stories with us.

I am sorry to have to give this book only two stars. I consider myself a Bob Newhart fan. I loved his television shows, I enjoy his dry humor, and he normally makes me laugh. For some reason I did not find this book particularly funny. It's not a bad book, it's just that I expected more. Maybe others will enjoy it so be sure to read the other reviews prior to basing your decision on this one review.

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