



Out Of My Mind

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Alan Arkin, one of the most beloved and accomplished actors of our time, reveals a side of himself not often shown on stage or screen.

Like many teenagers, 16-year-old Alan Arkin had it all figured out. Then came young adulthood, and with it a wave of doubt so strong it caused him to question everything he thought he knew about himself and the world. Ever skeptical and full of questions, Arkin embarked on a spiritual journey to find something—anything—to believe in. An existential crisis in his 30s led him to the study of Eastern philosophy. Soon he began opening himself to the possibility that there was more to life than what he had simply seen, heard, or been taught.

In this Audible Original "mini-memoir," the 84-year-old actor shares his powerful spiritual experiences, from his brush with reincarnation to the benefits of meditation. In a gruff, earthy voice that sounds more suited to a New York cabbie than a spiritual guide, he shows us that wisdom can come from the most unexpected places and teachers. Out of My Mind is a candid, relatable, and delightfully irreverent take on how one man went searching for meaning and ended up discovering himself.

Out Of My Mind Details

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From Reader Review Out Of My Mind for online ebook

Marty says

Alan Arkin provides a narrative as an author, actor, father, husband and a man who's insights about meditation reveals his lifetime of spirituality.

He reveals how he circumnavigated his life of many miracles he has witnessed and discovered.

Many readers will broaden their knowledge of life to feel comfortable to think for themselves beyond societal expectations.

Personal beliefs are often in conflict with what is expected while learning and discovering a world filled with many opportunities of simple ways to live a life spiritually on ones on terms.

Ani says

I very much enjoyed Alan Arkin's open, honest and revelatory sharing about the unfolding of his consciousness, highlighting some key moments in his inner journey. There is much wisdom to be found here.

Alan's stories about the indelible impacts—of the Holocaust survivor, Esther Raab who never lost faith, the remarkable Brazilian “surgeon,” who removed tumors with a pen knife and no blood, the Guru who taught him meditation, and others—are rendered relatively succinctly as he manages to mine for and reveal the treasure in each of those encounters. His telling builds to a crescendo—a quiet serene one—when at the end he shares about living in the present without plans and ambitions and about his “I” briefly dissolving.

I read some reviews here on Goodreads that dismiss what is contained and communicated here. Alan's age, informed by decades of meditation practice, and yes therapy as well, have given him perspective and insight that does not conform with popular, conventional messages about striving, identity and what success in life means. This is precisely the value here: to listen deeply and respectfully as he harvests what he does.

For one who is still living immersed in the illusions of which Alan speaks and to which he was bound as well—it is quite understandable that they would devalue the wisdom gleaned in Alan's journey and shared here.

True wisdom can sound so simple, even simplistic, especially when one has not yet seen through the illusions. Alan has. He shares wisely, generously—and with humility—about that transformation.

Maria says

I enjoyed this. The reviews I read below seemed misguided. This is man in his 70s or 80s reflecting on his inner experiences, there is something to be learned when older people speak.

Andy Klein says

Total and complete crap. He totally lost me with his belief of some mystical Brazilian who cured people of cancer by doing surgery with a rusty pocket knife while in a trance. Seriously. HE. BELIEVES. THAT. next up is the Easter bunny. Good thing this drivel was free on Audible.

Joshua Rigsby says

This pile of malarkey is aptly named, if nothing else.

For some reason, actors believe that average Americans want to hear their undigested self-referential beliefs, no matter how poorly founded they are. In fairness, I listened to the audio book of my own volition, so half of the blame is on me. But still. What a wagonload of incense-scented bullshit.

This was like an episode of *Touched by An Angel* that was rejected for being too implausible for a gullible daytime TV audience. Incredulous story, after easily debunked mythology, after urban myth cloaked in legitimacy by celebrity anecdote.

In an age when science and reality are under daily assault by powerful ignorami, children are dying of vaccine-preventable measles, and seawater has risen above our ankles, we do not need to entertain this neo-pseudo-religious-Hollywood-mystical charlatanism any more.

This is not just a case of having your "touchy feelies" lubed up with snake oil. It encourages the kind of rejection of reason that keeps us from thinking, voting, or living in a remotely intelligent way.

This isn't just a waste of time; it's dangerous.

Susan Kennedy says

No, I didn't really like this at all. It was really hard to listen to. It was a lot of, I don't even know what to say, mess? Nothing flowed really well and it was just a droning monologue of a whole lot of nothing. It was about Alan Arkin's search for something spiritual, maybe? I'm not even sure. It was a difficult couple of hours to get through and it felt more like half a day, but I did manage to get through it and I'm just left with not much of anything. To me, it was just really boring.

Definitely not one for me.

Amy says

This was another free Original from Audible. It wasn't bad - I did finish it, but there were times I found it a

little repetitious and/or a little too hard to relate with to truly enjoy it. It was interesting, however, to hear about Arkin's personal spiritual journey through the span of his lifetime in his own voice.

Char says

OUT OF MY MIND by Alan Arkin was a free Audible Original, so I figured why not?

I like autobiographies on audio, especially those of comedians. I've always admired Arkin so I thought I would give this a shot. I knew going in that this was about Arkin's spiritual/philosophical journey through life and not really a memoir or autobiography.

I enjoyed his voice and I found what he had to say somewhat enjoyable and helpful.

Thanks Audible for the free audio.

Listened to on 1.24.19. I'm not entering dates read so this doesn't count towards my reading goals.

Charles says

I'm not sure what the point of this book was. It's a narrowly focused memoir about Mr. Arkin's spiritual quest... but it's not particularly spiritual. It's just a long series of anecdotes about things he has felt and experienced that seem extraordinary to him. I repeat: these events seem extraordinary *to him*.

If there is one thing that all these experiences have in common, it's that he chooses again and again to describe them with the disclaimer, "I don't know how or why, but..."

So we are told right up front that there will be no great truth revealed. No profound life lessons that he derives from his experiences.

The experiences themselves? I'll recount just a few:

--He once played 45 minutes of flawless tennis.

--He twice healed his son by laying his hands on him. Once for a fever and once for a sunburn.

--An untrained surgeon in a remote part of Brazil has extraordinary success resecting tumors with a non-sanitized pocket knife.

To his credit, he admits that in the miraculous tennis session, he made a slight change to his tactics. He also admits that it's possible his opponent was having an off day.

And the healing? He admits that he tried the same trick on other ill people without success. But thank goodness he stepped up for his son. Otherwise, the poor lad might be feverish and sunburned to this day!

But the experience he spends the most time on is the healer from Brazil, a story that has all the hallmarks of an urban legend. By far the most interesting part of this story is that when he and his wife/writing partner attempt to write the screenplay, he goes temporarily blind at the end of each writing session, and she ends

each day to discover that the ends of her hair singed.

I guess the most extraordinary, astonishing thing about this book is that Audible chose to produce and promote it, but for the life of me, I can't explain how or why.

Mahlon says

Too much self-analysis for me. I like and respect Alan Arkin, but I wasn't expecting to go to therapy with him!

Kelly ... says

I really enjoyed the stories that he told about different acting experiences as they felt personal, and a touch voyeuristic. I also felt that he was open with himself, talking about his mother, his stage fright and his conversations with a survivor of Hitler's death camps. However, a good chunk of the book is about his personal religious convictions and what he terms consciousness. I have learned that I really do not enjoy books that delve deeply into religion. It always feels preachy to me and I hate it. Proselytizing isn't something I do, and isn't something I enjoy in my literature. Often it feels like the person is lecturing and judging. Sometimes this book felt like that. For me religion is very personal. Luckily it was both very short and free.

Taher Al Kiyumi says

What we need is already buried in us!

Blythe says

I've read a lot of criticism about this book that it isn't the memoir readers expected. I fully understand that; however, Arkin accomplishes what he sets out to do: write a memoir of his spiritual/philosophical journey throughout his 80+ years. He is open minded, intelligent, and humble. I appreciate his hunger and perseverance in seeking purpose in life. And I'm in awe of his ability to process and articulate his journey. I found this short memoir intriguing and interesting.

Alan says

Bits Cut from An Improvised Life?

Review of the Audible Audio edition

I haven't actually read Alan Arkin's biography "An Improvised Life," but I assume that it primarily covers his stage and film acting career.

This compendium of spiritual or therapy related anecdotes seems like it might be collecting chapters that were deleted from that biography as being of little interest to fans of the actor.

I'll admit that I became skeptical of the book as soon as Arkin began recounting the career of Zé Arigó, a Brazilian psychic surgeon (see also Arigo: Surgeon of the Rusty Knife) which was a failed film project of his.

Penny says

(Audible)

I really like Alan Arkin. I like his voice, his speech cadence and the quiet intensity that he commits to his roles.

I'm not really sure what I was expecting. What Arkin gave me was a surprise.

The book is a series of unrelated chapters that together build an experienced based belief system for Arkin. He stresses that each of us through our own experiences create, mold, massage, reinvent and revise our belief systems as we go through life. We are impacted by what happens to us, the work we do in therapy, reading, spiritual quests, tragedies and successes.

There's a universal human condition to want to know why we're here. What's the purpose of our life?

Where Arkin loses me a bit is when he relays his experiences of past life found memories and psychic surgery. I realize he believes in these. And he tells us about his own skepticism and why he believes in them. If I'd had his experiences, perhaps I'd be as committed. But my experiences and context make me more skeptical. Perhaps I haven't had enough experiences?

Some interesting stuff here. Some thoughtful stuff. And a little off the deep end stuff. But a worthwhile read.

RECOMMEND
