

My Point-- and I Do Have One Study Guide

My Point-- and I Do Have One by Ellen DeGeneres

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Plot Summary

Ellen DeGeneres describes her book as "a complete, well-rounded, and fleshed-out piece of work," saying that it provides something for everyone in the family to enjoy. The book does not have a plot per se. Instead, the chapters provide comedic episodes and many of these episodes seem to be only loosely attached to any reality. However, Ellen is correct in her assessment that there is something for everyone to enjoy. The book is an enjoyable and easy read.

The book begins with Ellen's search for the truth about her childhood, which she remembers very little about. Unfortunately, her mother remembers even less than Ellen. Apparently, Ellen was not an especially memorable child. A neighbor during her childhood tells the adult Ellen, while she is doing research for her book, that she was "one ugly baby." Perhaps that is why her parents took so few pictures of her in comparison to her older brother, Van, who they seemed to have photographed every thirty seconds. When speaking to her high school guidance counselor about her performance there, he told her that everyone now thinks of Ellen as a bright student. However, the teachers probably only have that opinion since she became a celebrity because he remembers them having to cheat in order for her to graduate.

Although most of the book, "My Point and I Do Have One," ranges from light silliness to a comedy of the absurd, Ellen does make a few points that seem to be based in reality. She offers genuine opinions and concern about these issues. Ellen's love of animals and her strong stance for animal rights comes through loud and clear. She is an advocate for all animals and she detests the use of animals for any testing. Ellen wonders why animals have to be used to test make-up since they will never wear it. Instead, condemned murders should have to try the stuff out. Her dislike of zoos and aquatic parks is also offered with clarity. Despite wrapping this message in comedy, there is no doubt that she is genuine in her love and advocacy for both wild and domestic animals.

Ellen also speaks of her fear of flying and her fear of making an idiot out of herself. Again the comedy does not totally disguise that these subjects are genuine issues to her. She discusses her hope of being accepted as she is. She gives some attention to appearance, the sub-text of which points to a person who deals with being uncomfortable with her own appearance. Again, although the subject is offered amidst funny commentary, a seriousness can be detected about self-worth and self-image. She also sends a serious message to youngsters. She tells them to do better in school than she did because knowledge is power. She says that a person needs as much power as possible in order to be successful. Written in 1995, Ellen does not venture into any contentious aspects of her life that surface later and keeps the subject matter light, general and non-controversial.



Chapter 1

Chapter 1 Summary and Analysis

In Chapter 1, *Thanks for No Memory*, Ellen begins her narrative when she is a little girl in the Jefferson Parish of Louisiana, living with her family in the city of Metairie until she is around eight years old. Ellen does not remember much about her childhood and mainly recalls things that were told to her. She is amazed that some people can remember lying in their cribs. Ellen's parents are not the source of her memories. They seem a little foggy about her childhood as well. There are only a few photographs of her unlike her brother, Van who is four years older than she, who seems to have had a picture taken of him every ten seconds. Ellen finds this last fact humorous and shows no overt bitterness. However, she does mention it quite often.

In an effort to fill the voids of her memory, Ellen decides to interview people who might be able to provide some missing information. Ellen interviews old friend and neighbor Selma Clanque. Selma remembers that Ellen is so fat she could not walk for the longest time and has to be rolled everywhere. On the contrary, her brother is handsome and has absolutely no fat on his body. Ellen also has a huge head as a baby and lacks any hair. Selma sums up her memory by telling Ellen she is "one ugly baby."

Ellen interviews her high school guidance counselor in Atlanta, Texas, where the family relocated during Ellen's second year in high school. Mr. Bowden Lamar tells Ellen that she is remembered as a bright student but probably only because she is famous now. Ellen's high school teachers have to help her along. For example, when asked who the second president of the United States is, Ellen does not know so they tell her that his name rhymes with "Bhomas Hefferson." When she still could not come up with the answer, they sing the theme song for the Jeffersons. Ellen is fairly good at athletics. She is on the girls' tennis team and she starts the girls' golf team. However, she turns out to be the only member. Mr. Lamar does remember that Ellen is fat.

Ellen moves back to New Orleans after graduation. A friend there called Rita Bangs remembers that Ellen's older sister is prettier than she is. Ellen reminds Rita that she only has an older brother. Rita gets Ellen's life mixed up with "Dirty Dancing" insisting that Ellen fell in love with a dance instructor.

Chapters 2, 3 and 4

Chapters 2, 3 and 4 Summary and Analysis

In Chapter 2, A Letter to My Friend, Ellen begins the chapter with a letter to her friend Morgana. In her letter, Ellen apologizes for her behavior at the woman's party. First she mistakenly adds two bottles of rum in the rum cake instead of two tablespoons, but Morgana's nephews have to learn about hangovers at some point anyway. Ellen expresses her regret in blurting out that Morgana used to be known as "Large Marge" and for calling Reverend Green some foul names when he keeps incorrectly guessing the movie title she is acting out in charades.

Most of all she is sorry that she has mistaken the party as Morgana's wedding shower rather than what it actually is. It turns out to be her grandmother's 90th birthday celebration. If she knew, Ellen would not have gotten a present of crotchless underwear. Ellen explains that when Marge, oops, Morgana found her shaving her dog in the bedroom, it was just to get the gum out that landed in the dog's fur. The gum got stuck in the dog's fur when she attempted to spit her gum in the waste can from across the room.

In Chapter 3, Daily Affirmations, Ellen discusses positive affirmations. She offers one way to get around depressing news. She suggests watching the television newscast with the sound muted and to make up stories in your head about happy events. She encourages you to sing loudly as you get dressed for the day. Ellen is an advocate of positive daily affirmations such as "I'm a good person" or "I love myself." Ellen suggests starting small. For example, "I will wake up" and "I will brush my teeth" might be better starting points for those who are suffering from depression. She argues that it is also perfectly fine to do comparative affirmations that put others down such as "She's fatter than I am" or "I have more teeth than he does." To keep from getting blackened eyes, however, she suggests that these should be done as "silent" affirmations.

In Chapter 4, Ellen DeGeneres: Road Warrior, Ellen tells some neighborhood kids about some of her adventures on the road as a stand-up comedian. She tells the kids she had earned the title of "Funniest Person in America." She wins her title after a convoluted process in which Soupy Sales and PeeWee Herman are judges in the final competition. Ellen tells the children about a scary time when she performs in front of three hundred marines who keep screaming for her to take her clothes off. Another time she performs in front of elderly people who did not get her at all- and keep waiting for the main act. She tries to explain that she compares herself to the coleslaw that comes with their barbecued chicken, which represents the main act. However, the conversation becomes a debate about side dishes.



Chapter 5

Chapter 5 Summary and Analysis

In Chapter 5, The Plane Truth, Ellen does not like to fly. She has been told that flying is safer than crossing the street, which only makes her afraid to cross the street. A friend has told Ellen that chanting will calm her when she flies but chanting, "I'm going to die. I'm going to die," does not seem to work. On one flight, a nun sits in front of Ellen and when she mistakes a rattling drink cart for a crash dive, she yells out a few expletives that surely disturb the holy woman. Ellen asks the nun to pray for her. The nun finally gives up on Ellen when she tells the nun not to use the fan above her because it might take power away from the plane. The nun finds another seat. As scary as the flight is, it is not near as frightening as the little planes Ellen is forced to take to get to some stand-up gigs.

Neither reclining her seat nor eating the six peanuts or the horrible meal she receives, can make Ellen forget how frightened she is. She decides to take a walk to the restroom to stretch her legs. There is a bad odor in the bathroom when she enters. When she leaves, she has to tell everyone in line that the smell is not from her. She goes back to her seat and drifts off. She has a nightmare in which Bruce Willis, Sean Penn, and the pilot all claim that their lives are meaningless. She wakes up certain that the plane is crashing. Instead, it lands safely.



Chapters 6 and 7

Chapters 6 and 7 Summary and Analysis

In Chapter 6, Ellen's New Hobby, Ellen keeps a daily journal. She thinks that she needs a hobby. She feels like a car that is pulled over on the side of the road and is not going anywhere. She hears about the "Iditarod" on television. She understands it is a race that involves dogs. Since she has two dogs, she decides she can do it, although she is not certain exactly what is involved. She finally figures out what the Iditarod is and starts training with a sled and her dogs on a concrete street. The training is not going very well as her dogs tend to get in the sled with her. Her neighbors ridicule her but she is determined to be in the race.

Trying to pump her dogs up, she overfeeds them and they become fat and lethargic. On the other hand, Ellen loses weight from the heavy Alaskan clothes she wears in the 87-degree weather in Southern California. Ellen finally makes it to Alaska for the race but her two dogs do not like the snow. The little one sinks in the snow up to her ears. The other dog is in heat and causes lots of problems. The other racers cheat also. They have at least eight dogs each that all look alike and are well-behaved. Ellen decides to adopt more dogs at the animal shelter to have a chance at all. Ellen is only able to obtain seven dogs and several cats. She tries using a motor on her sled but since it is not really attached to anything, it does not work.

Ellen wins the race. She checks the rules and there is nothing about not being able to use a Winnebago to go from Anchorage to Nome. She beats the next sled by two days. All the other racers are sore losers and claimed she really did not win. Ellen soon grows bored however with her Iditarod championship but then feels challenged again when she hears about the America's Cup. She starts training her team that includes both dogs and cats.

In Chapter 7, Ellenvision, Ellen has her own TV series, named "Ellen," which she claims is named after Ellen Burstyn. Ellen thinks the television shows of the sixties are the worst. For example, the growing drug culture makes shows like the Flying Nun possible. "My Mother the Car" is the most bizarre show of all. The concept of the show can be directly traced to drugs. "Mr. Ed" is more believable because Ellen has an Uncle Cookie who has a talking dog that he thinks is a horse.



Chapters 8 and 9

Chapters 8 and 9 Summary and Analysis

In Chapter 8, *I Went to A Psychic*, Ellen decides she does not want to do all the work that it takes to write a book if it is not going to be a success. She decides to go to a psychic for advice. The first psychic is a student psychic who tells her among other things that she either has a sister, brother, or is an only child. The student psychic finally admits that he is not very good but does predict that Ellen would find a good psychic. The next psychic predicts her book will be a huge hit. The bad news however is that Ellen will have to write it. She hopes that the psychic will summon up some elves or some other magical creatures to write it for her.

The psychic is unable to tell Ellen's future with tarot cards, so she reverts to a deck of regular playing cards. They play gin for the next hour and a half, with the psychic winning \$150 off of Ellen. Ellen's bird sees a bird psychiatrist. He has a fear of being held upside down over hot mustard sauce. The bird psychiatrist eases Ellen's mind, telling her that her bird, Paco, had probably been a spring roll in another life. By coincidence, Ellen has been told the same thing.

In Chapter 9, *How to Explain Sex to A Child*, Ellen would like to have a baby but not physically "have" a baby any more than she'd like to "have" a washing machine and dryer where you can buy them. Ellen thinks she would be a good mother because she is a good communicator unlike her parents who basically told her that she was born when her dad gave her mom some secret sauce similar to McDonald's. Ellen dreams up several scenarios for the best way to tell children about sex, ranging from bears to bees. In the end however, she concludes that the best way is to just let the kids watch cable television or rent "9½ Weeks" or something starring Sharon Stone.



Chapters 10 and 11

Chapters 10 and 11 Summary and Analysis

In Chapter 10, *In the Kitchen with Ellen*, Ellen reveals her famous recipe for French Toast. Ellen wonders how people figured out that eggs are a good thing to eat. She pictures a Neanderthal biting into an egg and getting a mouthful of shells while other Neanderthals are pointing and laughing at him. To make French toast, Ellen advises that the most important thing you need is a kitchen. Next in descending importance is a pan, flour, and butter. However, above all others, the most essential ingredient is to have a housekeeper who knows how to make French toast so you can sit and have a beer in front of the television.

In Chapter 11, *Things That Sound Like a Good Idea at First, But Really Aren't*, Ellen lists six things that fit in with the title. Among the list of six things that sound like a good idea but really are not are taking a shower with someone and writing a book.



Chapter 12

Chapter 12 Summary and Analysis

Chapter 12 is titled Ellen DeGeneres Is A Man! Ellen once wishes that she is a man when the ladies' room was locked. Ellen is surprised that many people wonder why she never wears skirts and always prefers pants. Ellen does not like heels, dresses, or pantyhose. In fact, she thinks that high heels should be outlawed because they destroy female feet. Ellen can prove that she is a girl because she always goes to the little girls' room when she is out in public.

Ellen admits to being less than confident about the way she looks. She figures that even supermodels can sometimes look in the mirror and see parts that are less perfect than other parts. On a serious note, Ellen feels that her appearance is not as important as her thoughts and creativity and energy and relations with other people.

Ellen emphasizes the importance of having good shoes and checking your hair everyday to make sure there is no spaghetti in it. She also agrees that hair should be clean and trimmed regularly. Having a nice odor is important too. Make-up is optional. Ellen wonders why women are supposed to paint their faces every morning. Clothing should be stylish and comfortable. They do not have to be trendy. The main thing is to be yourself and no one should be told how they should look.



Chapters 13, 14 and 15

Chapters 13, 14 and 15 Summary and Analysis

Chapter 13 is intentionally left blank and untitled.

In Chapter 14, Ellen explains why she did not want a thirteen chapter. Since buildings do not have a thirteenth floor to ward off bad luck, Ellen did not want a thirteenth chapter. The fourteenth chapter also has no content since it could be considered the thirteenth chapter. Ellen moves on to the next chapter. This logic makes perfect sense to Ellen.

In Chapter 15, The Scariest Thing, Ellen discusses her biggest fear. Even as an adult, Ellen is afraid late at night. She is always tuned into the little creaks and noises that seem to happen in the dark when no one else is in the house. Ellen thinks her current house may be haunted by a ghost but she is not sure. One thing that really scares her is the discovery of a huge spider in her shoe just seconds before she put her bare foot in the shoe. The thought of being in a sleeping bag in her backyard and feeling a snake crawl up her leg tops the spider episode however.

Thinking of even scarier scenarios, Ellen imagines what would happen if she ran for an errant Frisbee in a cave on the beach and picked up a bat instead of her Frisbee. The bat bites her and chases her into the ocean where the blood from her bat bite draws circling sharks. Ellen concludes that you do not have to make up scary things because they really happen.



Chapter 16

Chapter 16 Summary and Analysis

In Chapter 16, The Time Ellen DeGeneres Had an Emergency, Ellen describes her experience in the emergency room of a hospital. Before her sitcom is taped, Ellen usually tells a few jokes to warm up the audience or performs feats of strength such as pulling a jeep across the stage with her teeth. On this night, she first claims she was flexing her stomach muscles and letting people punch her as hard as they could. But the truth is, the pain she experiences come from a cyst.

After she gets to the hospital and proves she has insurance, she has to describe her symptoms. However, since the nursing staff recognizes her as a comedian, no one believes anything she says and keep laughing at her every word. They give Ellen every test imaginable. The doctor tells her that her urine looks good. However, she did not give them a urine sample. Ellen figures that it is probably a pick-up line. After hours of testing, they discover that she has a really big cyst.

The hospital gown that opens in the back is annoying. However, Ellen observes that since the hospital is located in Beverly Hills, at least the gown has shoulder pads and creates a slimming effect. She finally recuperates from the ruptured cyst and advises everyone to not get one.



Chapters 17, 18 and 19

Chapters 17, 18 and 19 Summary and Analysis

In Chapter 17 titled One Step Closer to God, Ellen discusses some spiritual issues. Ellen often thinks in big picture terms with questions like "What is the meaning of life?" and "What is infinity?" One day, she is thinking about God quite a lot and spots a woman who has been praying steadily for two hours. She feels like telling her to knock it off and give somebody else a shot. Ellen herself is thankful for the small things in life. In her prayers, she gives thanks for letting her find a place to park and for having gasoline for her car.

Ellen is raised as a Christian Scientist. Ellen tries to picture God and thinks that maybe the traditional image is not accurate and that maybe he looks like the aliens people see with the big eyes and silver skin. Or maybe he looks like a bug and we are going to have to account for every cockroach and ant that we have killed. She would have included her famous "phone call to God" routine but it does not translate well in the written word.

In Chapter 18, The Ellie-Gellie, she talks about dancing. Everyone who knows Ellen knows that she loves to dance. Growing up, Ellen was such a good dancer that all her friends told her she could have been on Soul Train although she never really was. In fact, she invented a dance called the Ellie-Gellie. Before trying the Ellie-Gellie, one should send away for the Ellie-Gellie song. Ellie tries to provide written instructions for the dance but senses that her readers are too untalented and dense to get it, so she decides to abandon the idea.

In Chapter 19, Things to Do If You're Stuck in An Elevator to Help You Pass the Time, Ellen does precisely what the chapter title suggests. Ellen includes whistling as many television themes songs as you can remember and counting your arm hairs among the things that will pass time if your stuck in an elevator. If the other things on the list do not work, the last option is to "scream."



Chapter 20

Chapter 20 Summary and Analysis

In Chapter 20, *Ellen's Wild Kingdom*, Ellen does not understand hunting at all. Killing animals is something she abhors. Why do hunters kill innocent animals and then cut their heads off and mount them on the wall, like they've really accomplished something? Ellen is also uncomfortable with all forms of animal testing. Why test cosmetics on some innocent animals who will not be wearing the stuff? Cosmetics companies should test their products on convicted murderers and rapists.

Ellen is also not in favor of zoos. Although those who design zoos boast about how they have created the natural habitats of the animals, Ellen does not buy it. She is quite sure that she never has seen tires on ropes in the jungles or barriers that fenced off a pride of lions on the Serengeti. She is also against putting tutus on dolphins and making them jump through rings of fire. Ellen only eats tuna if there is a smiling picture of a dolphin on the label indicating that the tuna is dolphin-free.

Ellen loves animals and is known to capture stray dogs and take them to shelters. She has had cats and dogs as pets all her life. When she was a little girl, she wanted to be a veterinarian but that did not work out.

Chapters 21 and 22

Chapters 21 and 22 Summary and Analysis

In Chapter 21, Ask Ellen, Ellen writes about her advice column called, "Ask Ellen." She receives strange requests like how can one explain chewing gum to an alien. Ellen takes her own advice in answering many of the questions which is to answer a question with the response "that's an anomaly" and then to run away quickly. One thing she does tell the person who asked about chewing gum is that there is no polite way to get chewing gum out of your mouth but to be sure to look demure when you are doing it.

She answers one writer who asks what Ellen would do if she ran the Academy Awards. Ellen says that she will announce that everyone wins in each category but actually gives the Oscar statuette to whomever gets to the stage first. She tells another writer that in order to prevent her friends from gossiping about her, she should never leave the room when her friends are there.

In Chapter 22, Crazy Superstitions that Really Work, Ellen shares some of her superstitions. Ellen's crazy superstitions range from, "if your ears are burning, someone is talking about you but if they're itchy, they are dirty" to "if a spider is in your pants, you will hop around and scream."

Chapters 23 and 24

Chapters 23 and 24 Summary and Analysis

In Chapter 23, *The Benefits of Being a Celebrity*, Ellen defines a celebrity as a well-known person who is easily recognized. If you do not have sex, you are not necessarily a celebrity. Instead, you are a celibate. Celebrities get to win every argument they are in. When they play scrabble, the letters Q and Z count for twenty points instead of ten. Also, any spelling of any word by a celebrity is allowed. In local, state, and national voting, all celebrity votes are counted twice. Ellen personally never goes anywhere without an entourage of between fifteen to thirty-five people who incessantly compliment her and laugh at all her jokes.

If a celebrity has one lip injected with collagen, they get the second lip free. The sign "No Shoes No Shirt No Service" does not apply to celebrities. If a celebrity is on a sinking boat, the rule of rescuing celebrities first and then women and children is in effect. Celebrities can always be spotted because they twinkle.

In Chapter 24, *Your Own Fantasy Conversation with Ellen DeGeneres*, Ellen creates a template that anyone can use to have a personal conversation with her. The form is set up with comments from Ellen and blank lines to be filled in with responses from "C.S." which stands for Complete Stranger. Some of Ellen's answers include, "It makes me happy that you find me very, very funny;" "Sure I'd love to hear your joke;" or "I agree with every word you said." Ellen decides she must add more content since she is bound by contract to provide 60,000 words. She pretends that she and C.S. are both eating sandwiches. Ellen then starts to choke and somehow C.S. is able to save her life by giving her the Heimlich maneuver. The chapter ends with C.S. asking Ellen for a loan, which she agrees to provide even though it seems like a lot of money.



Chapter 25

Chapter 25 Summary and Analysis

In Chapter 25, Experiments in Human Behavior, Ellen explains that if she had a nickel for every time she felt like an idiot, she would be rich. She points out that when we trip on the sidewalk, we act like it is the sidewalk's fault. We look around to see who saw us trip and look like idiots. The truth is no one was watching. Everyone is too busy worrying about not looking like idiots themselves. One way to be sure to look like an idiot, is to belt out a song, sounding just like Whitney Houston in your mind and then discover that you are not alone.

An elevator is a place that brings out the idiot in many. When walking up to an elevator where someone is waiting and has pushed the up button, you always have to push the up button again in case they did not do it right. Then someone else comes along after you and pushes the up button again and you get offended! Another place that idiocy comes out is in a public bathroom. When there is no lock on the door and someone opens it while you are going to the bathroom, the person apologizes and you say that is okay. You should not say, "That's okay" because then the person is free to come in and wait with you in the stall until you are done.

Another time to feel like an idiot is when you try to joke your way out of a traffic ticket. Once when Ellen is pulled over and the cop asks her if she knows why she is being pulled over, she responds that it is because of the dead bodies she has in the trunk. She actually is speeding. The cop however does not think that it is funny. Also another embarrassing alternative is when you flirt with the cop but he gives you a ticket anyway. Another idiotic habit that Ellen points out is talking to yourself. Some people start out talking to the television, move on to talking to the radio, then to the toaster, and ultimately they are ready to talk to themselves.



Chapter 26 and 27

Chapter 26 and 27 Summary and Analysis

In Chapter 26, Ellen's Sure-Fire Cures for the Things that Ail Ye, Ellen discusses being sick. Ellen has never been a doctor. In fact, she is excused from all her science classes in high school because she is a Christian Scientist. Therefore, she does not know much about the human body. When her stomach hurts, she thinks that she has a stomach cake instead of a stomach ache. Despite her lack of expertise, she does know of some cures for common illnesses.

Hiccups happen when the esophagus and the trachea get in a fight about who is better friends with the gallbladder. Hiccups can be cured by holding a kitten on your lap, petting it constantly and singing anything by Air Supply. Another tip is to hop for five minutes, scream as loudly as possible, "Hey Mr. Tally Man, tally me bananas," and then to do a backward flip.

For the common cold, she suggests to starve a cold and feed a fever. Other comic lines include to punch a cold in the stomach or kick a fever in the rear. Another cure for the common cold, among others, is to sit in an icy cold bath, smoke a carton of menthol cigarettes, and eat lots of cheese. For walking pneumonia, Ellen offers the simple cure of sitting down!

Cures for headaches include setting your clothes dryer for an hour, sitting on top of it, and playing ride 'em cowboy. Eating pancakes non-stop until your headache goes away is another cure. Laughter however is not the best medicine. If Ellen gets strep throat, she is certain that she will not be watching hours of Benny Hill reruns.

In Chapter 27, The Last Chapter, the lawyers remind Ellen that her book must be 60,000 words and that it is a few words short at this point. Ellen has enjoyed writing this book even though she has to do it in long-hand since she does not know how to type. Maybe that is why it took her a year to complete. Ellen makes a case that the word "therefore" should be counted as two words. Ellen writes most of her book in airplanes, hotels, and restaurants. She does not like to sit behind a desk because it reminds her of school. However, she does encourage young people to do better in school than she did. She says that knowledge is power and that you need all you can get. Ellen concludes her book with a series of random and unconnected words in order to fulfill her contractual obligation of 60,000 words.



Characters

Ellen DeGeneres

Ellen DeGeneres is born in the Jefferson Parish of Louisiana in January of 1958. Ellen begins the book trying to recall her childhood but seems to remember very little. She makes a point that while there is a multitude of photos of her older brother, Van, there are very few of her. Perhaps the reason is that, according to a neighbor at the time, she is fat with a large head and no hair. At the age of eight, Ellen moves with the family to Atlanta, a small town in Texas. According to her high school counselor, she struggles through her classes but is supported by her teachers who try to help her. Everyone now remembers her as a bright student but Ellen says that this is probably due to her fame. After graduation, Ellen moves back to her home state and works as a waitress in a restaurant in the French Quarter of New Orleans.

At the writing of this book in approximately 1995, Ellen is a rising star who is a successful stand-up comedian and the star of her own television sit-com, appropriately called "Ellen." Ellen did not want to waste time writing her book if it is not going to be a hit. She goes to a psychic who assures her that her book will be a bestseller. Ellen is disappointed that the psychic does not come up with some magical way to write her book. Instead, she has to do all the work. She mentions quite often throughout the book that by contract, she has to write the book with 60,000 words. By the last chapter, she is still a little short of that number and has to fill in with a series of random and unrelated words to fulfill her contractual agreement.

Betty DeGeneres

Like her famous daughter, Ellen's mother, Betty, cannot recall much about Ellen's childhood. She and her husband take many pictures of their son, Van, but run out of steam when Ellen is born four years later. There are not many baby pictures of Ellen. Ellen's parents decide not to take pictures of Ellen because they are sure they would remember everything about her. Her mother tries to make up for the lack of baby pictures by substituting other girls' photos in the family album but Ellen is not fooled.

When she begins writing her book, Ellen does not remember much about her childhood so she naturally speaks with her mother about her early years. Unfortunately, her mother cannot recall much about Ellen either and is not able to provide much assistance.

Ellen is very close to her mother and relies on her for advice and as a sounding board. Ellen writes that her mother calls her "Ellen, hon," but points out that her real name is not "Ellen, hon" and that only her mother can call her that.

Ellen also relies on her mother in times of emergency. For example, when Ellen suffers from a ruptured cyst, she turns to her mother. Not knowing the cause of the excruciating



pain, her mother drives Ellen to the hospital. Since Ellen's mother is a speech pathologist at the hospital, she uses her influence to make sure Ellen receives excellent care. Ellen includes her mother and father, Elliott, in her acknowledgments section.

Vance DeGeneres

Van DeGeneres is Ellen's brother who is four years older than her. Their parents take a picture of Van every 30 seconds when he is young as opposed to Ellen who they rarely photograph.

Selma Clanque

Selma Clanque is on the first people Ellen interviews about her past. She remembers that Ellen was such a fat baby that she could not walk for the longest time. Her parents would just roll her wherever they would want her to go.

Mr. Bowden Lamar

Bowden Lamar is Ellen's high school guidance counselor. She interviews him for the book. He confirms that everyone thinks that Ellen is a bright student but probably only because she is famous now.

Morgana

Morgana, Ellen's friend, is known as "Large Marge" in her heavier days. Ellen comes to a party at Morgana's house and loses a friend forever.

Rita Bangs

Ellen works with Rita Bangs in New Orleans after Ellen graduates from high school. Rita remembers that Ellen fell in love with her dance instructor who gets someone else pregnant. Ellen is certain that Rita is confusing her with "Dirty Dancing."

PeeWee Herman and Soupy Sales

PeeWee Herman and Soupy Sales are the judges in the final round of "The Funniest Person in America" competition that Ellen wins. Ellen only wears her crown and banner at home when she is alone.



The Hollywood Celebrity

The Hollywood Celebrity lives by other rules than mere mortals. Ellen always has an entourage of at least fifteen people with her at all times. They laugh at all her jokes and tell her she looks great.

Bootsie and Muffin

Bootsie and Muffin are Ellen's two beloved dogs. Bootsie is a labrador and Muffin is a mixed breed. Ellen thinks Muffin might be part rodent.



Objects/Places

Metairie

Ellen spends her childhood in the town of Metairie in Jefferson Parish just outside of New Orleans, LA.

Atlanta, Texas

In her second year of high school, Ellen and her family move to a small town in Texas called Atlanta.

French Quarter

After finishing high school in Texas, Ellen returns to Louisiana and works as a waitress in a restaurant in the French Quarter for about a year.

Beverly Hills

Ellen is taken to a hospital in Beverly Hills when she has a ruptured cyst. She hates the hospital gown that is open in the back but since the hospital is in Beverly Hills, at least the gown has shoulder pads and offered a slimming effect.

Hollywood Hills

Ellen buys a house in the Hollywood Hills. She spends part of her time writing her book outside on the patio there until the birds start fighting and get so loud she cannot concentrate.

Maine

Ellen thinks she has taken a camping trip in either Montana or Maine once. After careful thought however, she does not think that she actually went camping in Maine but she instead just visited there.

Airplanes

Ellen hates to fly but because of her career has to fly quite often. She wrote part of her book on airplanes and is known to spook the other passengers with her fears.



Academy Awards Ceremony

Ellen would change the Academy Awards Ceremony by announcing that everyone won in each category. However, only the person in each category that makes it to the stage first, gets the Oscar statuette.

Elevators and Public Bathrooms

Ellen focuses on these two locations as places where one is very vulnerable to looking and acting like an idiot. She notices how people in an elevator look up at the floor numbers—like the elevator wouldn't go unless they look at the numbers. She advises women not to say "that's okay" if someone opens the bathroom stall door on them. That's just inviting them to come on in.

Zoos and Aquatic Parks

Ellen is not a fan of either zoos or aquatic parks. She believes that animals should not be caged up but should be allowed to live their lives in their natural habitats.



Themes

Animal Rights

After reading, "My Point...and I Do Have One," there is no doubt that Ellen DeGeneres loves animals. She speaks about having pets all her life. When she is younger, she has cats. At the writing of this book, Ellen has two dogs named Bootsie and Muffin. Bootsie is a Labrador retriever and Muffin is a mixed breed. Ellen suspects that Muffin is part rodent. When Ellen decides to participate in the Iditarod in Alaska, she begins training the dogs but her dogs are so spoiled that they try to get in the sled with her. She makes the point of telling the reader that she gets Muffin from an animal shelter.

Ellen is a strong advocate of animal rights. No matter how well a zoo is designed to mimic an animal's natural habitat, it is still not acceptable to Ellen. She has never seen a tire on a rope swinging from a tree in the jungle nor a fenced-off area surrounding a pride of lions in the Serengeti. Ellen has the same sentiment about aquatic parks and does not think that dolphins should be forced to jump through hoops of fire to earn their keep. Ellen will not eat tuna unless it is marked as dolphin-free. She points out that fisheries try to sneak in dolphin meat into the tuna since dolphins are so plentiful.

Animals should not be forced to be used for testing products for humans. Ellen raises the question of why should animals have to test cosmetics when they will never wear them. Instead, Ellen declares, convicted murderers and rapists should be made to test the stuff out.

Although surrounded by comedy, it is clear that Ellen loves animals and strongly advocates for their safety and welfare.

Fear of Flying

Ellen's entire book is light and comedic. However, there are a few issues that come through that are obviously based in reality. In Ellen's line of work, she cannot escape flying on airplanes but she dislikes this method of travel. She describes herself as a "white-knuckler" on her airplane travels. She uses an episode that is either not real at all or greatly exaggerated to illustrate how her fear of flying impacts other passengers on the flight. When a noisy food cart clangs by her, she is sure that the plane is crashing. She lets loose with a string of expletives that greatly upset the nun in front of her. She asks the nun to pray for her but to not use the air flow above her because it may take energy away from the plane. The nun cannot take it any longer and finds another seat.

Ellen dislikes large planes but the small planes that she must take to get to some of her stand-up gigs are even scarier. She tries to focus on the peanuts and the meals that are served on the planes to distract her from her fear but it does not work. The food is so bad that it does nothing to ease her worries. She thinks that by getting up and stretching her legs, she can kill some time so she goes to the restroom. She stays there as long as



she can. When she finally emerges, there is a long line of people impatiently waiting to use the bathroom. She awkwardly has to explain to them that the odor they can smell is not from her and that it was there when she first went in.

However, Ellen flies so much that she is finally able to figure out a way to put the time to good use. Ellen writes a good portion of her book on airplanes.

Human Behavior

One theme that strongly emerges from all the comedy of "My Point and I Do Have One" is that Ellen is a close observer of her fellow human beings. In fact, a lot of her humor is based on the unique ways in which people behave. She is open and honest about her own foibles and her ability to make herself look like a total idiot. In fact, she claims she would be rich if she received a nickel for every time she looked like one.

It is easy to relate to many of the hilarious examples Ellen provides. Even though they are light and funny, the examples are rooted in the familiarity of common human experiences. She discusses being uncomfortable with one's appearance and the ensuing struggle of self-acceptance. Although she jokes about it, there is a hint that Ellen is annoyed by so many people who ask her why she does not wear skirts.

In a very funny chapter, entitled "Experiments in Human Behavior," she hits home with her comments about tripping on the sidewalk. People are more concerned if anyone witnessed the fall than if they are hurt from it. She talks about the experiences of being humiliated in public places like elevators, airplanes, and public restrooms. Ellen writes about belting out a tune and sounding just like Whitney Houston until she realizes she is not alone. She discusses the habit that many people have of talking to themselves. It gets to be so common that it seems normal. Many people start out by talking to the television or radio and then advancing to discussing things with themselves.

Style

Perspective

Author Ellen DeGeneres' is a stand-up comedian and television personality. She has written the book, "My Point...and I Do Have One," in the first-person narrative. Ellen is the only person who could have written this book since it is comprised of a series of off-the-wall thoughts and logic that Ellen is famous for. For example, when she feels that she is in need of a hobby, she decides to enter the Iditarod. It does not occur to her that practicing for the race with her two pet dogs in Southern California in 87-degree weather on a concrete street is not the optimal way to prepare for the race. Ellen's unique humor is tied to that kind of silly logic but it works for her as there is a genuineness and niceness about her that comes across in her writing. Even though her comments are absurd, she makes us believe that she believes them and that they are logical to her.

The subject matters that are important to Ellen may not matter others. However, Ellen has a way to make them important in a meaningless way. Perhaps only Ellen would understand that. She tells the reader she has the best recipe for French toast but her key ingredient is having a housekeeper that knows how to prepare it. She calls out everyone on how idiotic we all feel when we are caught in compromising situations. For example, when you think that you sound just like Whitney Houston as you belt out a song when you think you are alone but find out you are not. Some more funny examples include bringing an inappropriate gift to a 90-year-old grandmother's birthday celebration or cursing like a sailor at a nun when you think the airplane that you are on is going down.

Only one person has that unique perspective to write "My Point...and I Do Have One" and convey these interesting and wildly entertaining stories at times in a way that is authentic and appealing. Luckily, the editor and publisher got it right.

Tone

Ellen DeGeneres has written a humorous account of some real and some imagined episodes from her life or of the life she lives in her head. Ellen is an observer of people. She notices their habits and foibles. She offer a crisp and befitting critique of them. However, she is not as harsh with anyone as she is with herself. Ellen's self-deprecating humor hits home and presents Ellen as a young woman who is open, honest, naive, and not in the least mean-spirited. Her brand of humor is refreshing, unique, and distinctly her own voice. She comes across in her written word in a similar fashion to her live performances.

Even when she disparages another person, her logic is so inane and ridiculous that Ellen always winds up as the butt of the joke. This is not by accident. By making herself



so vulnerable and fragile to insult and degradation, her rambling and asinine remarks are forgiven, brushed away and seen in a new light.

When Ellen plays with presenting an arrogant exterior, the holes that she knows will be poked in that facade quickly destroy that image. She emerges as an unpretentious woman. For example, when Ellen claims she is named the Funniest Person in America, the reader knows that it is all for fun. Ellen relates how she only wears her crown and banner when she is alone.

Structure

Ellen DeGeneres' book, "My Point...and I Do Have One" is separated into twenty-seven chapters with each chapter having titles pertinent to the episode or subject at hand. Ellen's accounts are not necessarily connected as there is no main plot. Hence there is also no chronological order, beginning, middle or end. Although she starts out with the beginning of her life in a small town outside New Orleans in the first chapter called "Thanks for No Memory," the reader should not be deceived into thinking that this is the beginning of the story of her life. That chapter is mainly for fun, as is most of the book, and emphasizes what an unmemorable baby she was. She does not remember much of her childhood but her mother remembered even less.

After that point, the story just skips from one unrelated subject to another. From the second chapter on, her main focus is her life as a stand-up comedian and television actress with her own sit-com show. As far as her personal life, she includes small vignettes, most of which the reader can take with a grain of salt, but some reveal her love for animals and perhaps a hint of struggles she has with self-identity and self-worth.

Only Chapter Thirteen is left blank and untitled. In Chapter Fourteen, she explains that since hotel owners are superstitious and do not have a thirteenth floor, she decides not to have a thirteenth chapter. Since Chapter Fourteen could then be mistaken for Chapter Thirteen, she includes nothing in Chapter Fourteen other than the caveat about Chapter Thirteen and then goes on to Chapter Fifteen to recount her next episode. That scenario makes all kinds of sense in "Ellen logic."

The last chapter titled appropriately The Last Chapter, is only necessary to fulfill her contractual agreement to provide 60,000 words. Ellen is a little short at the end of her story, which she asserts actually concludes in Chapter 26. However, she needs more words and so she adds The Last Chapter, which she fills with at least one paragraph of random and disconnected words, ending the book with "phew!"



Quotes

"Well, you had a big old head, too, and not a lick of hair on it. Bless my corns, you were one ugly baby" (Chapter 1, pg. 5.)

"I didn't know it was a party for your grandmother's 90th birthday. Otherwise, I never would have gotten her the crotchless underwear and the coupon for a free nipple piercing" (Chapter 2, pg. 17.)

"The Great Spirit smiles on me. On me and only me. The Great Spirit hates everybody else. We're best friends" (Chapter 4, pg. 24.)

"It was in the mid-80's when it wasn't considered "cool" to know where you were" (Chapter 5, pg. 26.)

"The sixties were when hallucinogenic drugs were becoming really, really big. And I don't think it's a coincidence that we had the type of shows that we had then, like "The Flying Nun" (Chapter 7, pg. 60.)

"I went to a psychic or baloney is just salami with an inferiority complex" (Chapter 8, pg. 62.)

"How did people ever figure out that eggs were edible? Did they see something come out of a chicken and think, 'Boy, I bet that would be tasty?'" (Chapter 10, pg. 82.)

"There is only one rule: You've got to have nice shoes; that will get you by. (Remember the saying: 'I felt bad because I had no shoes, then I saw someone with really ugly shoes?')" (Chapter 12, pg. 96.)

"Ellen's wild kingdom or you can put high heels on a poodle, but that won't make it a hooker" (Chapter 20, pg. 143.)

"One of the major benefits of being a celebrity is that more people know how to pronounce your name correctly. That may not sound like much, but when you have a name like DeGeneres, that counts plenty" (Chapter 23, pg. 173.)

"Do I feel like an idiot? If I had a nickel for every time I felt like an idiot, I'd be very rich" (Chapter 25, pg. 187.)

"I really feel that this is a complete, well-rounded, fleshed-out piece of work—an eclectic book. A little something for everyone in the family to enjoy" (Chapter 27, pg. 209.)



Topics for Discussion

What kind of student is Ellen in high school? What kind of support does she receive from the teachers to help her graduate?

How does Ellen cope with her fear of flying? How does she frighten a nun away on one of her flights?

What points to Ellen's strong stance on animal rights? What does she think of zoos? How does she feel about animals being used to test cosmetics?

Why does Ellen dislike writing her book at a desk? Where does she wind up writing most of her book? What advice does she give to youngsters about school?

What advice does Ellen give on curing the common cold? What cure does she offer for headaches and walking pneumonia? How can hiccups be stopped?

How does Ellen prepare to participate in the Iditarod? How many dogs does she have for her sled? How does she wind up winning and what is the local reaction to her win?

What scenarios does Ellen present about making an idiot out of yourself? What does she say about showing one's idiotic side in public places like elevators or public restrooms?