



## Rock 'n' Roll Wisdom: What Psychologically Astute Lyrics Teach about Life and Love (Sex, Love, and Psychology)

By Barry A. Farber

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In a novel look at rock 'n' roll lyrics, psychologist Barry Farber highlights those that rise above the rest because they are not only clever, but also wise in their psychological themes and conclusions. These great lyrics embody enduring truths about topics as diverse as love, identity, money, sex, religion, aging, social justice, and the search for meaning. Join Farber in a fun and informative journey across rock 'n' roll history to see how we can learn about significant areas of life through the medium of psychologically wise rock 'n' roll lyrics.

The Beatles meet Sigmund Freud. Bob Marley trades ideas with Carl Rogers, and Joni Mitchell shares thoughts with psychological great Erik Erikson. Those aren't actual face-to-face meetings, but a reflection of the fascinating interplay developed for this book by Barry Farber. In a novel look at rock 'n' roll lyrics, Columbia University professor Farber shows us those lyrics that rise above the rest because they are not only clever but also wise in their psychological themes and conclusions. These great lyrics embody enduring truths about topics as diverse as love, identity, money, sex, religion, aging, social justice, and the search for meaning. Join psychologist Farber in a fun and informative journey across rock 'n' roll history to see how we can learn about significant areas of life through the medium of psychologically wise rock 'n' roll lyrics.

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*By Barry A. Farber*

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

"Barry Farber....has written a book that many readers will respond to....His presentation is jargon free and draws on psychodynamic thinking but also on basic psychological research from areas such as personality, developmental psychology, and social psychology. It is fun to read, reads easily, and stimulates a good deal of reflection as well as nostalgia." - **PsycCRITIQUES**

"[C]onsiders rock and roll lyrics and their influences from an unusual vantage point: that of a psychologist who considers the interplays between lyrics and society. Rock lyrics here are used to understand the human psyche, with chapters drawing intriguing connections between Freud and rock star perspectives. College-level collections strong in either music or psychology will find this an intriguing, scholarly interplay between music and psychology." - **The Bookwatch**

#### Review

"It's been 50 years since modern-day rock 'n' roll redefined the American musical landscape, allowing plenty of time for its messages to seep into our consciousness through lyrics both deep and seemingly simple. So what does it all mean? Dr. Barry A. Farber's mission is to find out and he does so dutifully with diligent research and an uncanny knack for analyzing the true weight of the written--and sung--word." (Shirley Halperin, Senior Writer, Entertainment Weekly)

"As Farber astutely reminds us in his Preface, our knowledge of human behavior, indeed life, comes from many sources-including poetry, literature and music. In this fascinating and most unique volume, Farber offers a creative melding of his psychological insights about life's joys and challenges with his encyclopedic knowledge of rock 'n' roll. Vividly illustrated with rock lyrics from the past half century, this impressive book is creatively designed for those who love music and want to gain a deeper understanding of what it means to be human." (Marvin R. Goldfried, Ph.D., Distinguished Professor, Stony Brook University)

"Finally! an academic and accessible book on one of our most powerful and overlooked art forms. Barry Farber's *Rock 'n Roll Wisdom* explores rock music lyrics with insight and sensitivity rarely found in music journalism. It is bound to capture the hearts and minds of a new generation of music lovers, and vindicate generations of rockers who have always felt the depth and power of great lyrics." (Julian Harris, acclaimed composer, songwriter and musician)

"Barry Farber has a deep understanding and love of rock music. He reminds us that it has the power to change us and the world we live in, if we'll only listen." (Paul Gordon, Keyboardist/Guitarist Goo Goo Dolls, New Radicals, Lisa Marie Presley)

"Dr. Farber has written a captivating and insightful book. From the perspective of a well-known researcher, teacher and therapist, he eloquently captures current psychological views on core issues in life (existential, social, political, and spiritual), and shows how these views are echoed and frequently enriched by the evocative wisdom of many rock and roll lyrics. This book will lead you to listen to rock and roll with a more discriminative hear, more appreciative of how songs can touch your soul, punch your heart, revisit your past, give new meaning to your life and new hope for the future. It rocks!" (Louis Castonguay, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Psychology, Pennsylvania State University)

"As a songwriter, Dr. Farber has given me new insight into the magical power of a great lyric. I have learned so much from this deliciously readable book!" (Andy Marvel, Songwriter/Producer)

"Known for his major contributions to psychological science and practice, Dr. Farber has done us all a favor by turning his creative approach to the wisdom of rock 'n' roll and bringing it alive. If you aren't smiling and humming as you read this book--and tempted to jump up and play air guitar--call 911 and tell them your pulse is missing." (Kenneth S. Pope, Ph.D., ABPP, author of *What Therapists Don't Talk About and Why*)

"The wisdom of these lyrics comes through loud and clear, along with the wisdom of the author, for whom the book has clearly been a labor of love. It will be enjoyed not only by students of psychology, who can find in rock lyrics a much pithier understanding of eternal human questions than they can find in their textbooks, but also by pop music lovers, pop culture mavens, and all of us who have grown up with rock music as the back beat of our complicated, emotionally challenging lives." (Nancy McWilliams, Graduate School of Applied & Professional Psychology, Rutgers University)

#### About the Author

**Barry A. Farber** is Professor of Psychology and Education at Teachers College, Columbia University. He has twice served as Chair of the Counseling and Clinical Psychology Department at Teachers College. He has been the Program Coordinator and Director of Training in the Teachers College Clinical Psychology Program since 1990. He serves on the Editorial Boards for the journals *Psychotherapy*, *Journal of Clinical Psychology/In-Session* and *Psychotherapy Research*. He received his Ph.D. in clinical psychology at Yale University in 1978. Farber maintains a private practice in Westchester County, N.Y.

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**Jane Moore:**

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