

I'M WILD AGAIN
HELEN GURLEY BROWN

From faking orgasms to making love to wife encumbered men, Helen Gurley Brown, the 78 year old editor-in-chief of 38 Cosmopolitan International Editions and author of 7 books, will shock, irritate and amuse with her outrageous opinions in her new book, "I'm Wild Again" (St. Martin's press, \$38.99). Gurley Brown, helped propel the sexual revolution into full thrust by giving women the forum to acknowledge and talk about their sexual experiences, guilt free, during the repressed '50s and '60s. Cosmopolitan magazine became a publishing phenomenon, today selling nearly 3 million copies. In 1996, after 32 years as editor, Gurley Brown was succeeded by Toronto's Bonnie Fuller, who has since left to become the editor of Glamour. Ageism won out when the Hearst Corporation decided a woman in her 70s could not be the voice of the 20 something readers. Gurley Brown's lifetime achievements have been much honored: the World Almanac's 25 most influential women in the U.S., the American Society of Magazine Editors' Hall of Fame, the Publisher's Hall of Fame and many more.

Married for 41 years to film, theater and television producer, David Brown, whose credits include Driving Miss Daisy, The Sting and Jaws, the Browns make their home in Manhattan.

MM: The Cosmo philosophy preaches empowerment to women and at the same time, servitude: be sexy, dress sexy, trap a man, hang on his every word, fake orgasm, have sex if he feels like it and you don't. Aren't these conflicting messages?

HGB: No, it shouldn't be considered so, because there are not enough good men to go around for all the women available. That's shockingly, dramatically true for women over forty and even younger women. Therefore if you find one, you certainly do want to cosset, love, spoil, and hang on to him. So the fact that we're saying, be nice to men, be adoring, be adorable, be sexy, that's simply good common sense. Plus most women, if they do have somebody in their lives who is semi terrific, your great pleasure is in pleasing. Some of it is done perhaps in a cold-blooded manner, in that the competition is kept out there, so you've got to hang onto the one you've got. I've

always said that men are so valuable. They're such a wantable treasure and since they're in rather a scarce supply, it would seem, you better be competitive and do everything you can to have one in your life. We're honoring men, we're saying they're terrific, we want one or more. Aside from that, however, I was just trying to say that most women, who are loving, enjoy the pampering and petting. In my 41st year of marriage, I am squeezing the fresh grapefruit juice every morning, even though I'm in the middle of my book promotion because this is something I like to do for my husband because he's sweet and cute and he loves fresh juice.

MM: Squeezing orange juice is one thing, faking orgasms is another.

HGB: I know faking orgasm is supposed to be a treacherous idea, but each woman should make up her own mind about this. Yes, it's important to have an orgasm, but in my opinion, you might be more apt to have one later masturbating in the bathroom than you are with this particular man. I don't mean to be crass or vulgar, but to fake orgasm is a very personal decision. I believe that by faking an orgasm you make your man feel very accomplished, powerful, manly and masculine. He is giving you himself. It's a lot more trouble to be a man and have sex than it is for a woman. We just lie there. They're really performing; they've got to get it up and get it in. They have to have an erection and manage to enter your body, and that's a lot of work. Women are not so challenged, therefore having him go through that, it seems like appreciating him with an orgasm, real or imagined isn't a bad idea. If he wants to have sex and you don't, I believe you should do it, particularly, if you are a married woman. You can get careless and say "I'm so busy." Women, of course, have a lot of responsibilities, more than ever before, with her job, perhaps kids, but, big deal it only takes 15 minutes to have sex. Get in the mood; don't be too busy. It won't hurt you and it's important, I think, in terms of keeping a marriage viable. I just don't think you should ever say "no" to a man that you love.

MM: But what about trust, honesty and real communication?

HGB: Truth and honesty is a very good idea, in many compartments of life, but not 100% in relationships. Every 24 hours of the 18 you're awake and alive do not have to be crammed to the brim with unadulterated honesty. With everyone you learn how to....

lie is a bad word, let's just say you learn how to avoid total truth for a very worthy cause.

MM: What are the most important things you think women need to know about men?

HGB: Men need to be listened to. A woman who is not gorgeous, beautiful or even pretty can make big inroads with a man. She can be the adored, beloved by a man if she learns how to be a good listener. Men also need to talk about their earlier lives, their childhood, adolescence, college years and military service. You never want to talk about previous sexual experiences, yours or his. Everyone knows that you both were not virginal when you got together and obviously you had sexual experiences before, but you don't ever talk about that. If a man wants to know how many there were before him, three is a good number. Now beauty, is as important as ever. But that's not too scary, because there are a lot of things you can do to look better. I find that men are a little insincere when they are surveyed and they say the most important thing they want in a woman is her sense of humor. Not everybody is beautiful and you can't get to be Cindy Crawford even if you get up at 4 o'clock in the morning and work on it until 11 o'clock at night, but you can look nice. You can have certain flaws corrected and I'm a big believer in cosmetic surgery. If you have a crooked nose, crooked teeth or a really receding chin, why not think about getting it corrected. It doesn't mean you don't value yourself for who you are or that others don't value you for who you are, but you might as well look as good as you can.

MM: There are a lot of single women, who complain there are no decent men out there. There are also women who live in sexless marriages. What advice do you have for them?

HGB: I think that it's okay periodically to have a sexual relationship with a married man. I have been criticized wildly by some of my best friends that just find it horrific that I would suggest such a situation. But particularly for older women, I'd say above the age of 50, you may have trouble finding a well rounded mate who takes you to parties, is the man in your life and you're a couple. There are not enough men to go around, so my suggestion is until you find Mr. Wonderful, who will be your companion and beau, I don't think sex should leave your life. It's what keeps you young, it's what

keeps you part of the human race. So I believe that it's okay to borrow a man for the purposes of sex. You may see each other only once a month, but it can be very heady, very delicious. It can be at your house, it could be at a hotel room. Do I think about his wife and what it's doing to her? Absolutely not! She is to look out for her own interests and that's not your responsibility. The point is, this keeps a women, who doesn't have a steady beau from having that hungry, wolfish frustrated look. She has said "I am going to have sex in my life and I am going to find a person who can supply this for me." I don't want to call an escort service, many women don't feel comfortable with a paid companion. I think you also have to separate your emotions from the act. There are those who think that everybody you go to bed with you have to be madly in love with. I think that's total nonsense. You should be fond of this person, you should like and enjoy him, but you sure as hell don't have to be in love. You don't camp down your emotions totally, but you have to deal with reality. This man belongs to somebody else and you do not let yourself fall in love. And yes, you can discipline yourself in that way without becoming tough, hard and not having any feelings left any more. You can be appreciative of him, but you mustn't be madly in love. Love is different from other conditions and you can have sex very satisfactorily with like, not love. A dear friend once told me "You know you can tell how big a man's penis is by the indentation in his ear." I found that fascinating and found it to be true among the men whom I knew intimately. There is a bony, empty part of the ear like the map of Italy, that comes down into the fleshy part and if it's quite deep and wide that would mean a large penis. If it is flat like a saucer it would mean, not particularly good news. I am of the persuasion that size matters, but not that much. In terms of a man being about the size of a package of Kent Cigarettes erect, that's enough, but anything less than that would be a little skimpy. I hate saying this because they cannot do anything about their penis size, women can enlarge their breasts. We don't need to do anything about our vagina's because they're perfect. So I'm ashamed of myself for saying that size matters to the least degree. Let's say, it's like having a flat chest. It mattered to men that you didn't have a gorgeous bosom, but you made up for it in a lot of other ways in the days before breast enlargement. Yes, having a larger penis would be nice for a

women, but a man can make up for that in a lot of different ways, just as we made up for flat chests.

MM: Why do women older women get neutered in our society?

HGB: They get neutered because other people, particularly men, foresee them as not being juicy and attractive anymore. So in the minds of men, the older woman is not a delicious morsel. She's so often perceived as neutered, she lets herself become that way. To maintain a sex drive or to maintain sexual activity when there isn't anybody around, that can cause you to get neutered. That happens, men and women get less interested in sex than they used to be. You have to not let that take over. You can instigate sex, if you want to if you're the female. I think that you definitely should. You need to make sure that there is sexual activity in your life.

MM: So much has been written about Helen Gurley Brown over the years, what hasn't been said about you that's revealed in this book for the first time.

HGB: I worked for an escort service at age 20 and was a "keptive" at age 25. I joined an escort service only for one evening. I learned you didn't get \$75.00 for going dancing at the Coconut Grove. I was lucky that night not to have been mugged or raped or pushed out of the car. I just didn't get paid because I didn't want to go the distance. The other situation I did go the distance. I was a kept woman. That was a sexual arrangement whereby I slept with this man. He was only 43 years old and I was 25. He wasn't a gargoyle, he wasn't terrible, I didn't mind going to bed with him. I wasn't in love with him, he wasn't the most interesting man in the world, but his real problem for me was that he didn't give me any of the things that were promised, which were a stock portfolio and a house. I entered the arrangement because I was so poor. I was supporting my invalid sister, who was paralyzed from polio before the Salk vaccine, supporting her, supporting my mother, who was terminally depressed. We didn't have any money and it just seemed like a good opportunity to get our futures secured. It wasn't the worst arrangement in the world. What was bad about it was he didn't pay off. I think he sort of figured that he didn't have to. I worked for him as a secretary, I got my secretarial salary and he gleaned that I wasn't crazy, madly in love with him. Every time I would ask about the stock or the house or the bonds he would

say "Oh, you only like me for my money." So I didn't get what I came for. But I'm not ashamed of having done it, too bad I wasn't more successful. It was only going to be for enough time to get a little more security.

MM: You've also been quite open about your cosmetic surgery. What procedures have you had done and why is it so important to you?

HGB: I've done a lot: a facelift, my eyes, my nose, breast augmentation, as well as derma abrasion and laser abrasion. Those are cosmetic procedures you get with a dermatologist. I'm not pushing anybody, I'm only stating that I did it and found it very satisfactory. Everybody said "Why on earth would you go in for breast augmentation when you're already 75 years old." It was because, at that point the procedure got to be very adroitly handled. My very conservative internist at New York Hospital asked if I had heard about all the good work that was being done and I said "No I hadn't, but Harvey if you think it's good, I'll go out and look into it." And I did. Nobody in her right mind would talk about her breast augmentation, but I am at such an age, that I don't mind doing it . I had it three years ago and found it highly satisfactory.

MM: You've also had breast cancer.

HGB: That was in 1998. I never really quite believed it was true, because I had such a small bosom all my life. Until recently, I thought that breast cancer didn't get people like me. I had gone for regular mammograms. There was no breast cancer in my family. I exercise like a maniac. I just couldn't imagine that I was the one, however I think I brought it on myself, because I did take massive amounts of premarin with progesterone for a while, but then later I didn't use the progesterone. I was always under the care of a gynecologist and an internist, but they didn't keep me from doing that because I was doing so well, I'm so frisky. I'm still feminine, I'm still having sex. I just had a tiny bit of the breast removed, because the cancer was very much up at the top. I was very pleased that he was able to leave me all of my breast . I didn't have chemotherapy; they did radiology. I just had a checkup last week and everything is fine.

MM: You said your mother never told you that you were beautiful.

HGB: She would sometimes cup my face in her hands and say, "I think your getting better looking." As though I had started out as something very unsatisfactory. But she had her own history of being compared to a beautiful younger sister. She was considered the plain, the smart one. I forgive her for not telling me I was pretty, but she could have lied a little. I've seen pictures of me when I was a teenager, I looked okay, but she had such a fixation about gorgeous, pretty, beautiful that she gave me the feeling that I didn't look too red hot. A lot of mothers have done that I guess and I wish that hadn't been the case but, I'm okay now.

HGB: In your book why did you write a letter to a daughter you never had.

HGB: We needed an ending for the book. In a way it's ironic because I didn't want children. People find that a little peculiar, but I have no regrets. I don't think I wanted children because I was responsible for my invalid sister a lot of the time. My mother tried to not have that happen, never the less, I took my sister everywhere, to the movies, the opera, the library. I took care of her bedpan and tucking her into bed. I had so much responsibility I didn't want anyone else to take care of. I had to make enough money to support us all, so I didn't need a baby on top of that. Anyway it just turned me off the idea of having children.

MM: Cosmo women may be climbing in and out of different beds, but you've been sleeping in the same one for the last forty one years. Why does your marriage work?

HGB: Being faithful works for me because I had those 17 years of all the sex that I could want or felt was pleasurable with one or more partners. I got the sexual play out of my system. I was ready to be faithful. David, in a sense, is the same way. He had two marriages before me and in between, his two marriages I think he was pretty active. Adultery doesn't feel good if it's happening to you. Adultery may feel good if you're the adulterer, but if you're the adulteree, never mind that I have recommended that you go and steal somebody else's husband for a sexual encounter once every six weeks. Back to David. I married a man with wonderful character. He's really a dreamboat, a fine human being. It took a lot of work to get him to marry me; he didn't want to. Although I could kill him at times, I would never divorce him because if I were

out there in the marketplace I couldn't find anybody nearly as good as him. Aside from that we both have interesting work that we share. We have fun together.

MM: Why isn't retirement in your vocabulary?

HGB: Because it's not very interesting to be retired. People don't much want to talk to you. In the eyes of the world you're boring, even though you're the same wonderful person you always were. Retirement isn't feasible for my husband or me, David's 83, I'm 78. Work has brought us so much success and pleasure, we're both maniacal workaholics. Work is play and play is disagreeable. Neither of us does sports and we've traveled every place in the world so why would we want to retire. Retirement is not in my vocabulary because I think I'd be miserable.