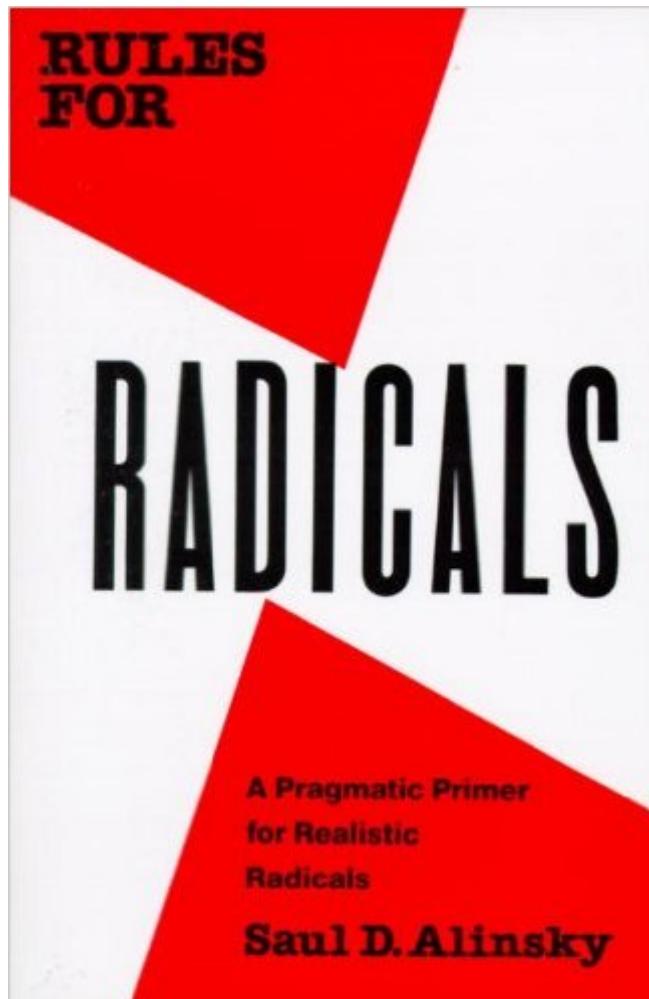


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Rules For Radicals: A Practical Primer For Realistic Radicals



Synopsis

First published in 1971, *Rules for Radicals* is Saul Alinsky's impassioned counsel to young radicals on how to effect constructive social change and know âœthe difference between being a realistic radical and being a rhetorical one.â • Written in the midst of radical political developments whose direction Alinsky was one of the first to question, this volume exhibits his style at its best. Like Thomas Paine before him, Alinsky was able to combine, both in his person and his writing, the intensity of political engagement with an absolute insistence on rational political discourse and adherence to the American democratic tradition.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The purpose for my reading this book was self-educational and an effort to be open-minded about the broad political spectrum that exists today. I found Alinsky's book to be enlightening, thought-provoking, interesting and very relevant. In fact, I strongly feel that "Rules for Radicals" provides a great deal of insight to the current state of political discourse in United States. However, after reading the book, I found myself wondering if Alinsky ever imagined his "radicals" achieving success to the point in which they themselves ultimately become victims of their own methods. "Rules for Radicals" is essentially a guidebook that encourages individuals to gather, organize and develop a battle-plan to spread a socialist agenda; there is even a list of tactics to be used. Alinsky has conveniently simplified the complex socio-economic landscape of the United

States into three groups: The Haves (upper-class), The Have Some, Want More (middle-class) and Have-nots (poor). It is explained that the Haves are the minority that possesses all the wealth/power which is used to ruthlessly exploit the lower classes to enforce their status-quo and maintain their wealth/ power. The Have-Some and Have-nots are basically characterized as being numerically strong, but also mindless and weak ... forced to a life dictated by the Haves. Alinsky then introduces the "community organizer" ... the do-gooder ... the pot-stirrer ... the "social-conscience" ... the one who will fight for those who "can't" or "won't" fight for themselves ... the one who will "take it to" the Haves. Ironically, I found that Alinsky's book provided more explanation of what our current President did prior to being in public office than any media source has ever tried to convey.

This book is a methodical collection of thoughts, actions, and principles from the master 1930s-70s radical, Saul Alinsky, for maximizing opportunities to influence masses of people into rejecting and fighting the status quo. If you share Alinsky's basic and fundamental beliefs, this book is a great 'how-to' for becoming a radical and political activist. If you are opposed to Alinsky's political activism, born out of his negative outlook of and perspectives on our American way of life, this book can help you understand the methods and the 'madness' of those people and forces that disrupt and try to tear down our traditional societal norms. This book was not an easy read for I disagreed strongly with what he said about my country that I love and his general outlook on life. Alinsky used the following terms interchangeably: "activist," "radical," "organizer," "agitator," "revolutionary," and "man of action." Another 'word group' used frequently was the many forms and variations of "organize" and "organizer" - some 356 times in 196 pages. I found his approach to change and reform crafty, cunning, deceitful, insidious, and disingenuous. His methods are masterfully designed to take advantage of our imperfect systems, and human weaknesses and tendencies. Another disturbing aspect of the book was the predominance of militaristic language when discussing the 'how' and 'why' of his logic: war, battle, attack, tactics, enemy, and strategy. Alinsky was smart and well-read, but I believe he chose to put his intellect and energies to use for detrimental purposes. He offered many observations and perspectives that differed from my own beliefs and experiences, which was not necessarily a problem, but coming after his "acknowledgment to..."

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