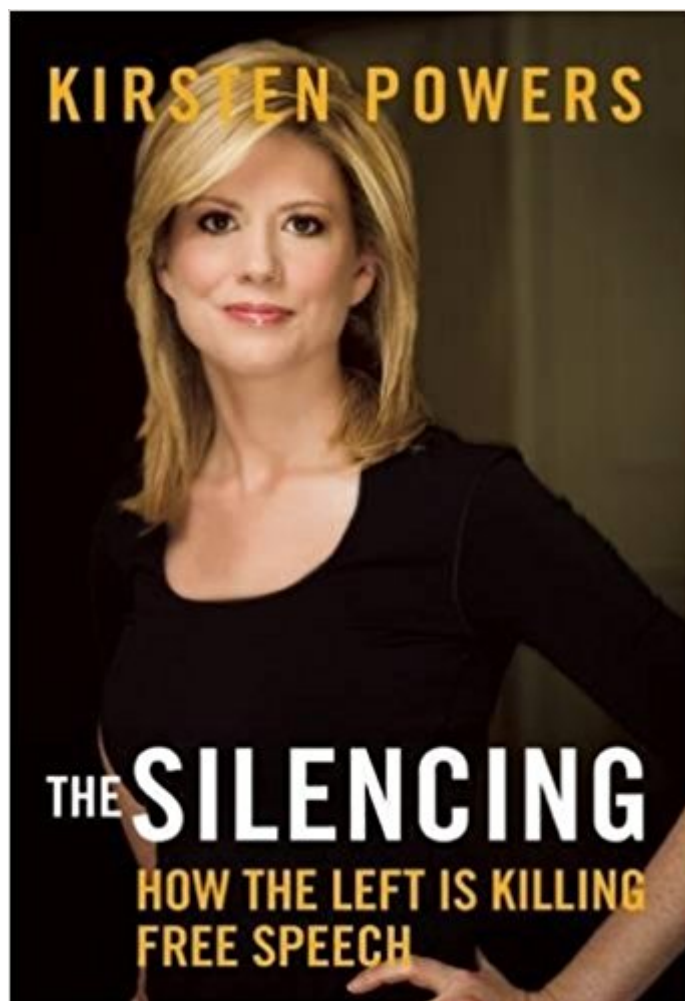


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The Silencing: How The Left Is Killing Free Speech



Synopsis

Lifelong liberal Kirsten Powers blasts the Left's forced march towards conformity in an exposé of the illiberal war on free speech. No longer champions of tolerance and free speech, the "illiberal Left" now viciously attacks and silences anyone with alternative points of view. Powers asks, "What ever happened to free speech in America?"

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Customer Reviews

"A searing and courageous indictment of the growing intolerance of the American left; written with passion and eloquence by one of the nation's most principled and fair-minded liberals. An important book on a subject many are simply too afraid to touch."—Charles Krauthammer, Pulitzer Prize-winning syndicated columnist and author of the #1 New York Times bestseller *Things That Matter* "Kirsten Powers convincingly calls out her fellow liberals for being astonishingly illiberal. A great read."—Brit Hume, Fox News senior political analyst "Kirsten Powers explodes and skewers 'The Silencing'; the demonizing and repression of different views, especially conservative views. Here is a liberal calling out other supposedly liberal people who claim to believe in free speech but tell all who disagree with them to shut up. Hallelujah; you are lucky to have this book in your hands!"—Juan Williams, Fox News political analyst and New York Times bestselling author of *Muzzled* "I salute my friend Kirsten Powers for boldly and eloquently breaking the spiral of silence on silencing."—Eric Metaxas, New York Times bestselling author of

Miracles and Bonhoeffer" Tolerance and free expression are founding values of our republic and yet they're under attack from the extreme wings of the American political spectrum. Shining a harsh light on the 'illiberal left,' Kirsten Powers exposes a grim campaign to silence speech. This is an important book."#151; Ron Fournier, senior political columnist and editorial director of National Journal "In this examination of the multiplying attacks on freedom of speech, Kirsten Powers casts a cool eye on the damages done to politics, academia, and civic discourse by the aggressive assertion of a perverse new entitlement. It is the postulated right to pass through life without being disturbed, annoyed, offended, or discomposed by the expression of anyone else's thoughts."#151; George F. Will, Pulitzer Prize-winning syndicated columnist and author of the New York Times bestseller *A Nice Little Place on the North Side*

Free speech and freedom of conscience have long been core American values. Yet a growing intolerance from the left side of the political spectrum is threatening Americans' ability to freely express beliefs without fear of retaliation. USA Today columnist and Fox News contributor Kirsten Powers calls it "The Silencing." Powers chronicles this forced march toward conformity in an exposé of the illiberal tactics deployed to shut down debate on some of the most important issues of the day. While preaching tolerance and claiming to hold liberal values, the "illiberal left" works to delegitimize political and ideological opponents in ways that stifle freedom of expression, thought, and religious belief. In *The Silencing*, Kirsten Powers, herself a proud liberal--but from a far more tolerant Jeffersonian tradition--exposes the illiberal left. You'll learn: Why the illiberal left has become an Orwellian "big brother," policing what it deems acceptable speech and opinions How the illiberal left is obsessed with delegitimizing Fox News How illiberal left pundits--even self-proclaimed "feminists" (and Powers names names)--engage in outrageously misogynistic and sexist dismissals of their female opponents How illiberal colleges and universities limit freedom of expression to tightly regulated "free speech zones" and ban speakers (even liberals) with whom the illiberal left disagrees How "truth" matters little to the illiberal left, for whom ideology is everything How is it that liberalism, once associated with open-mindedness and reason, has become a vehicle for irrational prejudice, ideological conformity, and the marginalization and punishment of alternative opinions? Kirsten Powers chronicles this troubling trend in perhaps the most important--and chilling--political book of the year.

Kirsten Powers opens up by explaining that she is not a natural conservative. She comes from an Irish, working-class background and considered herself Democratic all of her life. She went to

George Washington University and the University of Maryland, one which I attended, the other one just down the street. They are liberal bastions. Her life's experience has made her more conservative. The subtitle of the book, *How the Left Is Killing Free Speech*, and her choice of a publisher, Regnery, suggest that this is a radically right-wing book. It is not at all that. It is simply a plea for common sense. Here, already before she has started, her point is made. Liberal orthodoxy has so defined the spectrum of thought in modern America that simply to question it, which is all she really wants to do, is to brand oneself as a right-winger. Miss Powers is a USA Today contributor and a Fox News contributor. These are both centrist mass outlets, conservative mainly in the sense that they are often smeared as conservative. At 36 she is relatively young. She does not make many historical references. Let me start out with a few. Saul Alinsky wrote the book on smearing conservatives. He called it *Rules for Radicals*. (NB: I included his rules as the 8th comment below.) The techniques that Miss Powers describes have been used by propagandists for all of my lifetime. I live in Ukraine, and note with chagrin that Russia is extremely effectively applying most of the techniques that she describes in order to vilify Ukraine and turn the Russian people (and American and European libertarians!) into unthinking supporters of Vladimir Putin. The illiberal liberal camp, her word, champions pet issues which will be familiar to any reader of this review. On the social scene they advocate feminism, same-sex marriage, and racial equality. In public policy they believe in Obamacare and have a dogmatic belief in global warming. They do not argue. They assume the correctness of their positions, and use all of Alinsky's nefarious techniques to demonize, discredit, disorient and delegitimize their opposition. Powers' examples are in large part from her own life. She refers repeatedly to Fox News. It is a favorite bete noire of the liberals. They delegitimize it, calling it not really a news organization. They accuse it of constant, unremitting bias. They invent cute names for it like Faux News. And yet it thrives! The beast thrives! The American people are not dumb, and they are becoming inured to the unrelenting propaganda attacks. The book is very strong on examples concerning women and women's issues. She talks about the so-called "rape culture" on campus and the feminists' vicious attacks on people such as columnist George Will who question the statistics that they drag up to support their case. She points out the hypocrisy of women who attack other women simply because their politics are not in accord with progressives. They question the very femininity of women on Fox, calling them blonde bimbos and sarcastically questioning whether they are really women, or men masquerading as women, or female robots controlled by men. They use every device that they can muster to delegitimize the people, without addressing the arguments that the people

make. Second to the feminists is her attention to the gay rights lobby. They absolutely will not brook dissent, any deviation from the party line. Even fellow homosexuals can be brutally attacked when they advocate, for instance, tolerance of other points of view. Although race is a subtext in many of the arguments, Powers generally steers clear of race issues. She tackles Al Sharpton in the sphere of sexism. She has a chapter covering the supposed rape that never happened at the University of Virginia (the Rolling Stone fiasco), Duke University (the lacrosse players) and New York University (the Tawana Brawley case). Going back in history, she does recount the treatment of Democratic stalwart Daniel Patrick Moynihan when he questioned the pernicious effect of single-family upbringings within the black community. Besides George Will, other personalities she cites frequently include Jeb Rubinfeld of Harvard, a lawyer who frequently challenges the legality of many of the illiberal liberals' positions. He is, incidentally and not mentioned, the husband of Tiger mom Amy Chua. Powers talks about what happened to the chief executives of Chick-fil-A and Mozilla when they made statements and political contributions to support a traditional definition of marriage. She spends a page on Steven Pinker, the Harvard/MIT professor who has been very brave and eloquent in his defense of academic freedom. I recommend Pinker's book *The Blank Slate* for a description of how not just conservatives, but honest scientists are abused by people when their science might reveal things that the liberals don't want brought to light. As an example, she cites the treatment of a famous scientist, Lazar Greenfield, who wrote an article which came to the conclusion that women who have unprotected sex seem to get a mood elevating experience which is not shared by women who have sex with condoms. His conclusion was that there is something in semen that elevates women's moods. The feminists took offense and got this eminent scientist fired. Quite a bit of the book focuses on campus life, especially the enforced political correctness on American university campuses. She says that conservatives have a difficult time being accepted. They are not accepted as commencement speakers, they are shouted down in classrooms, they are denied tenure and sent elsewhere. I will say amen to that. I attended the graduate school of education at the University of Maryland starting in 2004, on a free tuition program for senior citizens. The professors were almost universally hostile to this experienced, older straight white man; the students split between being aggressively hostile and simply curious that a person such as me might exist in the world. Rather than fight the educators, I switched to a PhD program in statistics, where facts matter. I can speak with authority about the magnitude of the problem on campus ten years ago. In this connection I recommend an excellent book by David Gelernter, Unabomber victim and Yale professor, *America Lite*, offering his analysis of how the radicals took over American

academia starting in the 1950s and the power they now have. What purpose does this book serve? Miss Powers does a good job of documenting a situation that exists. She has an extraordinarily extensive biography, and I can offer one as well, all of which document the same thing as it has occurred not only for all of her lifetime, but even over all of my lifetime. Telling people about it, however, does not change much. It has been done many times before. She offers a large number of examples of the illiberal liberals turning on their own. As mentioned, the homosexuals who advocate tolerance of other points of view; feminists who are willing to listen to the pro-life arguments; people who would actually invite students to listen to opposing points of view; reporters who honestly investigate the sins of not only the Bush administration but the Obama administration. One would hope that some of these liberals might be chastened. They might become frightened for the future of America, and speak up against the abuses that they suffered at the hands of other liberals. Sadly, this is not usually the case. They simply learn to shut up. That is the precisely message that the illiberal liberals want to spread "shut up if you know what's good for you." Where does it go from here? I think one needs a broader perspective on society than simply these media oriented issues, social issues. This liberality has destroyed higher education. See Dinesh Dsouza's "Illiberal Education" for the definitive work on higher education. Diane Ravitch, though somewhat disparaged by Powers in this book as a doctrinaire liberal, did a pretty good analysis of the school bureaucracies in "Left Back: a Century of Failed School Reform." This liberality has moreover destroyed the economy. Conservative voices, dissenting voices have not been allowed in economic policy. This is true not only in America but the whole developed world. It is uncontroversial to claim that the levels of public debt worldwide in 2015 far exceed any historical record. It is becoming increasingly less controversial to claim with horror that it will end badly, in a prolonged recession and social turmoil. Although Powers does not make the point, the feminist and GLBT movements have severely undercut white and Asian America's ability to reproduce itself. There will never again be a generation nearly as large as the baby boomers, and the following generations are simply unable to support them with the generous benefits they have voted themselves in terms of Social Security and Medicare. Something has to give. In summary, Powers book is not going to solve the problems, but it does a great job of documenting them. When the problems solve themselves, in whatever ugly fashion they choose, her book will have turned out to be prescient. A five-star effort.

A well-documented compendium of the "illiberal" attack on free speech on today's campuses and the new culture that seems to promote an

attitude that is both self-absorbed and narcissistic. These individuals decry any situation that they may encounter where differing opinions may be debated; because their feelings may be hurt and as such make them "feel bad" about themselves (defined as "hurtful" encounters or instances of a "microaggression") "feel bad" about themselves (defined as "hurtful" encounters or instances of a "microaggression"). In response, rather than vigorously debating the ideas, comments, proposals, policies, or actual facts in question, they flail terms against their interlocutors such as "Racist", "Hater", "Bigot", "Misogynist" etc. in order to shut down debate and delegitimize the opposing views (of course these instances of school yard name calling are not classified hurtful or instances of microaggressions).

This book is great I have one exception that at the end of each report to show the illiberal left's actions the writer stated that fact over and over and that was distracting to all the information she brought forth that was truly really mind boggling. It is down right SCARY that a liberal woman points the public's eye to the outrageous actions of these people. After reading this book I will do everything in my power to have all people I know read this book but will not allow my grandchildren to attend and liberal state universities. I am not a struck fundamentalist but I would rather they go to a Christian college than attend any schools in this book. I commend the author for her bravery and her truthfulness. I am sure she also like others have been attacked for pointing out these disturbing truths

In her book, *The Silencing*, Kristen Powers (who calls herself a liberal) lays out a true picture of how the left in our country is trying to shut down conservative speech. She calls these leftists illiberal because they do not respect ideas that conflict with their ideology. They claim to be for tolerance but in reality they are intolerant of opposing beliefs. Powers gives many examples of the tactics used to stop dialogue. She holds up a mirror for liberals to see themselves and hopefully return to true liberal principles of open-mindedness and reason. I highly recommend her book.

A compelling read that I believe everyone should take a look at as it becomes more apparent that news media outlets are becoming nothing more than mouth pieces for their chosen ideologies

Liberals, moderates and conservatives should be impressed with the book, yet alarmed at the

message Powers is sending. Stifling free speech if others don't agree with one's political views is a major concern in today's America, and Kirsten's book reveals just how troubling a phenomena this has become, especially on college campuses. A must read!

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