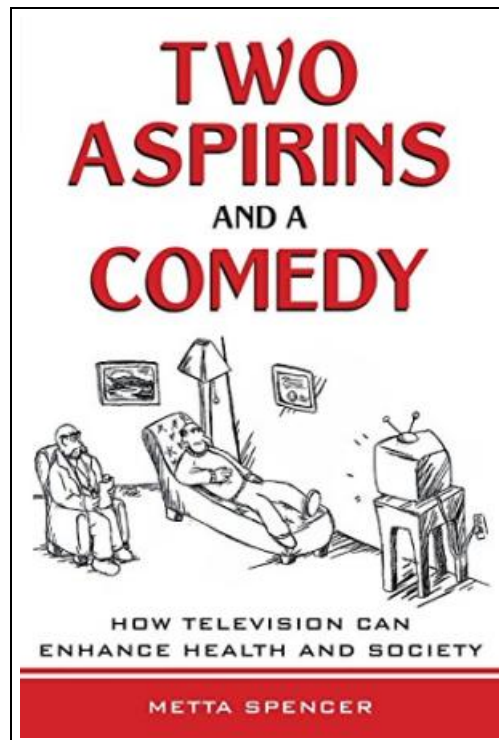


Two Aspirins and a Comedy How Television Can Enhance Health and Society



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(Brannon Koch)

TWO ASPIRINS AND A COMEDY HOW TELEVISION CAN ENHANCE HEALTH AND SOCIETY

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Paradigm Publishers. Paperback. Book Condition: New. Paperback. 336 pages. Dimensions: 8.8in. x 5.9in. x 0.9in. Can television become a positive force in society? Can socially conscious entertainment change the world? *Two Aspirins and a Comedy* asks these questions and offers surprising, unconventional answers. The historic social and political effects of such books as *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and such films as *Gandhi* led sociologist Metta Spencer to delve into the power of entertainment to influence society - too often for the worse, but potentially much for the better. She identifies examples of socially constructive TV dramas. She shows how mass entertainment productions can enhance our emotional well being and social sensibilities, as well as point out promising solutions to global issues; and even inspire us to become activist. *Two Aspirins and a Comedy* identifies entertainment as a public health issue. Our vicarious emotions, based on our empathy with fictional characters, actually harm or restore us physically. Spencer cites research proving that watching a funny movie will relax the blood vessels by 20 percent, whereas watching the battle scene from *Saving Private Ryan* will constrict them by 35 percent; these effects last for hours. Life expectancy is extended several years both by love relationships and by frequent sex. People who are temporarily short of such relationships often make up the deficit vicariously by empathizing with characters on the screen. Indeed, great storytelling, especially in prolonged serial TV dramas such as *Northern Exposure*, can impart wise lessons, stimulating personal growth and fostering a culture of peace and social justice. One cannot form an intense bond with a stranger who is encountered only briefly, but can with a series that lasts years. When we develop affection for characters, they may influence our opinions. Powerful soap operas are inducing people in developing countries to enroll in adult literacy...

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