



STUDY GUIDE

WHO IS DENNIS PRAGER?

KEY TERMS: PragerU ethical charismatic
principled Jewish goodness

NOTE-TAKING COLUMN: Complete this section <u>during</u> the video. Include definitions and key terms.	CUE COLUMN: Complete this section <u>after</u> the video.
<p data-bbox="99 548 886 583">What prompted the content for Dennis Prager’s first book?</p> <p data-bbox="99 1041 886 1115">What sequence of events led to Mr. Prager’s first speaking engagements?</p> <p data-bbox="99 1539 719 1575">What was Mr. Prager’s first radio show about?</p>	<p data-bbox="946 548 1484 621">What was Mr. Prager like in his younger days?</p> <p data-bbox="946 1268 1484 1341">What enables Mr. Prager to ‘change the way people live?’</p>

DISCUSSION & REVIEW QUESTIONS:

- Towards the beginning of the video, Mr. Estrin notes about Mr. Prager that, “Through his radio show, his writing, and now PragerU, he changes the way you live – for the better. He makes you a better person – a better father, a better son, a better mother, a better daughter. Name another public figure who does that.” What does it mean to make someone a better person? In what ways, specifically, might Mr. Prager’s views and insights make someone better?
- Later in the video, Mr. Estrin explains about Mr. Prager that although formal schooling didn’t suit Mr. Prager well, “...he was always scrupulously ethical and honest. Cheating was rampant at the religious school he attended. So he mounted a campaign against it. You’d think everybody would hate him for that. But they didn’t. He was too charming, too charismatic, too principled. No one could, no one can, remain mad at Dennis for long.” What do you think it means for a person to be ‘principled?’ How do you think the fact that Mr. Prager was honest, ethical, and principled contributed to his later success- despite doing poorly in school early on?
- Mr. Estrin goes on to explain that Mr. Prager’s parents were compelled to take a different approach, and that, “...they offered their second son a deal: he had to be at the Shabbat dinner table every Friday, but otherwise, he was on his own. They gave him a modest allowance and set him loose. Manhattan became his playground. Classical music became his passion. That and all things Russian. He studied them both... on his own.” Of all the things that Mr. Prager could have been attracted to with his freedom in New York at the time, why do you think that he gravitated towards the substantive activity of studying art and culture instead of engaging in drugs, debauchery, and other negative, value-less activities? What is important about the fact that Mr. Prager studied and developed a passion for certain subjects on his own? Explain.
- Later in the video, Mr. Estrin shares with us about Mr. Prager that, “...he was contacted by the Israeli government. They needed someone to smuggle Jewish artifacts into the Soviet Union and smuggle out names of those Jews who wanted to emigrate to Israel. ...real risk was involved. Dennis accepted the mission. When he returned to the US, he was asked by various Jewish groups to talk about his experience. He’s been traveling – 131 countries and counting – and lecturing ever since.” Why do you think that Mr. Prager chose to accept and carry out such an endeavor that involved real risk to himself? What does this example illustrate about life choices and possibilities? Explain.
- Towards the conclusion of the video, Mr. Estrin notes that, “Dennis already had a large audience, but the goal has always been to make it larger. And younger. Because that’s the future. It was from this thought that Prager University was born. An Internet phenomenon, it has vastly expanded Dennis’s reach – both geographically and demographically. Over 300 videos from over 100 presenters and over 1 billion views later with an audience that is mostly under 35, PragerU has changed a lot of minds.” What exactly do you think Mr. Estrin means by ‘younger’ being the future? Why do you think that Mr. Prager and Mr. Estrin feel so strongly about teaching through PragerU? Why do you think PragerU has become such a successful endeavor, and why do you think that it is a ‘phenomenon?’ What do you think a lot of minds need to be changed about, and do you think that a lot of minds are being changed through PragerU? Why or why not? Have any PragerU videos changed your mind about a subject? Explain.

EXTEND THE LEARNING:

CASE STUDY: Dennis Prager

INSTRUCTIONS: Read the article “Fighting for America National Broadcaster and Conservative Warrior Dennis Prager,” then answer the questions that follow.

- What did Mr. Prager write in his high school diary that he wanted to do? What has Mr. Prager always sought? How many radios were listening to Religion On The Line at the time that the show was looking for a new host? Who was the only clergy that Mr. Prager agreed with? Why is there a verse from the Torah on the Liberty Bell? How does Mr. Prager define conservatism? Why is Mr. Prager conservative? What does Mr. Prager state is the ‘American Trinity,’ and what does he say has been lost about it? Why was this country founded to have small government? What kind of nation does Mr. Prager think we should be? How much hope does Mr. Prager see for the nation’s future? Why does he still fight for America’s future? What does Mr. Prager see in his youngest audience? How many emails does PragerU get from people who have watched the videos and changed their minds?
- What do you think the summary of Mr. Prager’s life illustrates about Mr. Prager’s character? Why is character so important? Why do you think that Mr. Prager finds happiness and morality to be so important? Why do you think that values are so fundamental to Mr. Prager’s paradigm?
- What do you find extraordinary about Mr. Prager? Is his story and/or his work inspirational to you? Why or why not? What do you want to do with your life that is meaningful? Explain.



QUIZ

WHO IS DENNIS PRAGER?

1. Dennis barely spoke a word until he was _____.
 - a. almost 3
 - b. almost 4
 - c. almost 5
 - d. almost 6

2. In a class of 110 high school students, he graduated number _____.
 - a. 1
 - b. 2
 - c. 82
 - d. 99

3. Every book Dennis has written is still in print and still selling.
 - a. True
 - b. False

4. Dennis Prager was contacted by the Israeli government to smuggle Jewish artifacts into _____.
 - a. Somalia
 - b. Iran
 - c. Spain
 - d. the Soviet Union

5. What was the name of Dennis Prager's first radio show?
 - a. The Dennis Prager Show
 - b. Religion on the Line
 - c. For Goodness Sake
 - d. None of the above.



QUIZ - ANSWER KEY

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<http://www.risenmagazine.com/dennis-prager/>

Dennis Prager



Fighting for America National Broadcaster and Conservative Warrior Dennis Prager

Inspiring others to do the good – this simple yet profound admonition is the mission statement of national broadcaster, best-selling author, and conservative warrior Dennis Prager. While renowned as one of today's most popular talk show hosts, for many of his listeners and fans, his most important role is actually that of moral compass. Millions each week take comfort in knowing there is a strong and passionate voice cutting through the clutter, reminding us of what is right and what is wrong, in a world where the distinction seems to be disappearing every day.

As with many successful and honest people, Prager will be the first to recognize the role that both luck, and hard work, has played in his life. While his journey is certainly unique, there are important lessons from his adventures that all can benefit from. Now, 30 years after his first broadcast began, *Risen* sat down with Prager to learn more about his career path, politics, and his popular podcasts.

Interviewed exclusively for Risen Magazine in Los Angeles, California

Risen Magazine: You've had a long prestigious career with bestselling books, and a 30-plus-year career in radio, do you ever stop and wonder, "*How did I end up here?*"

Dennis Prager: I always do. In fact, everyday I am grateful for it. I'm even more grateful as the years go on, because one of the lessons of life is that very rarely is professional success of long duration. This is something I try to tell young people because it's inevitable. You think that when you're successful it's going to last forever. That's why stars spend all their money—they just think it's going to keep coming in, and then they're broke. So the longevity of my success is something I don't take for granted at all. To ensure your success you have to be better today than you were yesterday. The moment you begin to work by inertia, it is the beginning of the end of your career. Finally, a lot of people want your job and it's especially true in my profession. So I actually think about this question all the time.

I have ended up where I wanted to be. I wrote in my diary in my junior year of high school and I said I know exactly what I want to do; I want to influence people to the good. And I have been staggeringly fortunate to do exactly what I have wanted to do for all these years. I have never sought power, that's why politics don't appeal to me. Instead I've always sought influence, through the written word, spoken word, and now video.

RM: Not many 17-year-olds know what they want their life's mission to be, however you were different in some other ways too. You often reference a trip to Europe, and specifically Russia, that had a profound impact on your development. What actually happened there that set you on this path?

DP: Well, my life is so atypical. There's almost nothing to be learned from it, because it really is so unique. At the age of 20, I was in England studying. It is an unbelievable series of events. I was given this award, out of thousands of sophomores at Brooklyn College that landed me an all expenses paid year abroad to study. If I didn't get that, nothing else would have happened. During my junior year in England, I got to visit Israel during the Passover holiday. People who knew me, they knew I was somewhat linguistically gifted. I know Hebrew and Russian. Hebrew I have studied since I was a child, because of Hebrew school, and Russian I picked up in college. I just wanted to learn Russian. So the Israeli government sent me for four weeks into the Soviet Union. They used to send Israelis, but the Soviet Union broke off relations with Israel the year before. So they were sending young foreign Jews into the Soviet Union to smuggle Jewish religious items in, and to smuggle names of Jews that wanted to leave, out. It was somewhat dangerous. Where were they going to find someone who spoke Russian and Hebrew? It was a good fit for them. So here I am, at age 21, being sent into the Soviet Union. I mean, can you imagine that? It's mind blowing. That trip had a profound impact on me.

RM: What happened when you returned?

DP: I came home to the United States and I immediately started lecturing on what was happening in the Soviet Union because almost no one had been there and knew what was going on. Here I am, lecturing at 21 years old and then by 23, 24 years old, I started lecturing on other subjects besides the Soviet Union. The rest is history. I started writing books, lecturing more, came out to California, and it all began there. It was an amazing thing for me in my twenties.

RM: So how then did you get into broadcasting?

DP: There was a show in Los Angeles on ABC radio on Sunday evenings—which you probably don't think of radio as being a big thing—but this show was the most popular show in southern California. If you get a two rating in radio, you are considered a hit. This show had a 40 rating. Half of all radios on in southern California were listening to that show. The show was called *Religion on the Line* and coincidentally they were looking for a new host. The show had no ads and featured two hours where a priest, a rabbi and a minister—they had different ones each week—came together and talked. What did they need in the new host? The criteria were: the person could not be a member of the clergy, they could be in one religion specifically, but they had to know about religion and how to speak. So the head of the station spoke to the woman who was the head of the Los Angeles Board of Education, who was a close friend of his, and he said, "*Do you know anyone like this?*" She had just heard me speak at the Jewish Institute I had come out to direct and so she said, "*I met this kid who knows how to speak and knows*

religion, let's try him out." Half way through my first night hosting, I was slipped a little note that read, *"Tell them [the audience] you'll be back next week."* It was one of my happiest moments.

RM: You have expressed immense support for Christians, yet you do not call yourself a Christian. How did this develop?

DP: It actually developed during the show. First off, I really liked the Christian clergy. I liked them as human beings. Secondly, I was amazed at how often we agreed. I'm a religious Jew, not Orthodox. You would think I would agree with the rabbi most of the time, but the truth was I only agreed with the clergy with whom I shared traditional religious and social values. It could have been the rabbi, it could have been the priest, or the minister... it had nothing to do with their religion or their theology, it had to do with their values. And I found myself in sync with the Christians who came in.

By then I was already immersed in what America is about, and America was founded by Protestant Christians who are unique in Christian history, unique in world history, and they created the greatest country that has ever been developed. Their notion that God wants us to be free was a revolution in human history. We are jettisoning the values of these founders at our great peril. The greatest country on earth was founded by these Protestants—but not European Protestants, even if from Europe—they were American Protestants. They were the first people who could be called Judeo-Christian. They were rooted in the Old Testament. That is why there is a verse from the Torah on the Liberty Bell. Our nation is steeped in Hebrew culture and the further we drift from these Judeo-Christian principles, the greater peril we will face as a nation.

RM: Politically, you are a very passionate conservative. What keeps you conservative? What keeps you convinced of our need to fight for "the Right"?

DP: A conservative "conserves" what is good. I'm a conservative in music, because the greatest music was tonal. And when they developed atonal music, it was like what moral relativism did to morality. When you have no code or absolutes you have nothing. Tonal is absolute. C and C sharp are dissonant. If you don't have harmony or melody you don't have anything. I want to conserve what is good. I conserve because if it's great, I want to keep it. I have no desire to change for change's sake; I'm not bored. I'm convinced boredom is a deep problem and a deep part of the progressive mindset; there is always a need for change. I'm not bored with Beethoven, Bach, Mozart and Haydn. I want what's great, not what's new. Maybe in technology the newest is the greatest... but not necessarily with everything else. That is why I am a conservative.

RM: Speaking of new, what has shifted in our culture, and specifically politics in this country, that you have seen over the years?

DP: Look up *Roy Roger's Rider's Rules*, I think it's from the 50s. He has ten rules for kids. They are so beautiful, and they would be so laughed at today by the elite. *"Love God and love your country"* was one of them. They were beautiful back then to progressives. Another was, *"Take care of the weakest among you."* We've lost it. In the sense that I put it, we have abandoned the American trinity: Liberty, In God We Trust, and e pluribus unum. We have dropped liberty for the sake of material equality. We have dropped In God We Trust; secular society is now the ideal. And we have multiculturalism instead of "out of many, one;" let's celebrate where you are from, not your Americanness. The antithesis of what America was founded to do.

RM: What keeps you up at night? What gives you peace about the future? Where do you see signs of hope?

DP: Thank God I actually sleep at night. I am profoundly worried about the country and the world. If America weakens, cruelty increases. I care more about cruelty than carbon emissions. I'm worried on every level. This country was founded to have small government because it believed people should take care of

each other, not the state. People should be free, not run by the state. We should be a God-centered nation, and all of this is leaving fast. Immigrants should be Americanized. The point of the whole public school experiment was to Americanize the immigrant. Now instead it is, *"Tell us where you are from and we'll just celebrate where you are from."* You don't need to become American. There are colleges that don't want a United States flag flying on their campus; that is worrisome.

Frankly, I don't see much hope. We need to be grown up about this. I fight not because I'm optimistic; I fight because I am obligated to do so. I was given the greatest country in the world, and I'm obligated to fight for it for my children. I have no choice. The guys who stormed Normandy beach didn't think they had a great chance, but they knew what they had to do. They gave their lives. I don't have to give up my life, no one is asking that of me; I'm asked to devote my life. So this notion that people will only fight if they are optimistic sickens me, actually.

Who would fight the good fight then? You only fight when you win? Do any athletes do that? That's a terrible notion. I'm not optimistic; that's why I fight so hard. But there are not many optimistic signs, to be honest. I don't patronize my audience. If there is reason for hope I say it. That doesn't mean there isn't any hope. Ironically with the very youngest I see real openness to an articulated conservatism.

We have 40 million views on PragerU [the online educational site Dennis Prager started in 2009] which is enormous. I think it's the most widely viewed Internet site in English for educational videos. And to my amazement, the largest single demographic is under 35 years old. That is very optimistic. I see it on my radio show; there has been an incredible spike in young callers under 35. So the trick is to reach them. The pessimism stems from concern that we won't reach enough; the optimism comes from evidence that when they are reached, they can be influenced.

RM: Speaking of PragerU, what led you to start this website where every class is just five minutes long?

DP: It was Allen Estrin, my dear friend and producer of my radio show, and when he first proposed it, I thought it was a joke. *"No, no,"* he said. *"Five minutes at a time, courses by the best thinkers."* I said, *"Okay, let's give it a shot. Why not?"* And it's gone beyond what I ever could have imagined. I find it hard to believe. And it's all over the world as well. We get some of the most prominent thinkers in America asking if they can make a video because they know it's a great way to get their ideas out [to a massive audience]. To their credit, we have Pulitzer Prize winners, professors at Ivy League colleges, some of the biggest names on TV, and they allow us to edit them, because we only have five minutes and every sentence matters. So there is a tremendous amount of work that goes into every video. We have many teachers showing these courses to their students. We have thousands of emails from people that have watched videos and changed their minds. You know, we even have a PragerU chapter in Rio de Janeiro...that's a great feeling.