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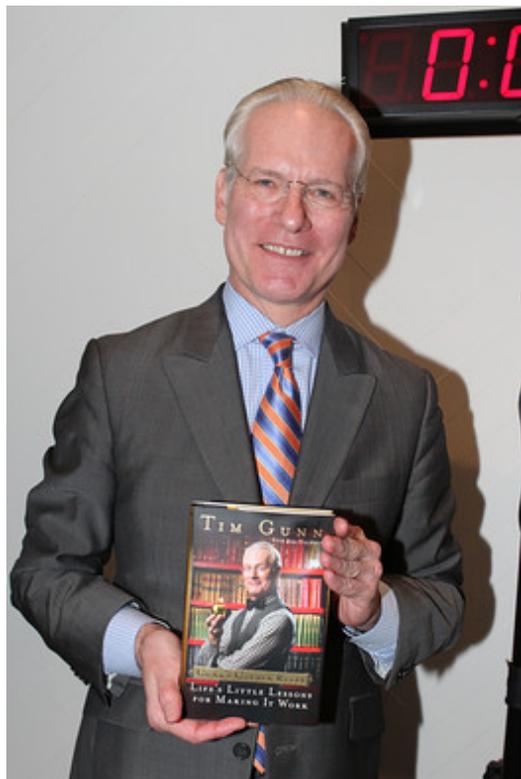
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SPEAKEASY

## Tim Gunn on His 'Project Runway' Blow-ups, Signing Bobble-Heads, and Letting His Mother Buy Him Underwear

By DAWN FALLIK

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GETTY Tim Gunn with his new book.

In his new book, “Gunn’s Golden Rules: Life’s Little Lessons for Making It Work,” Tim Gunn doesn’t hold back. Forget the reserved mentor you see on “Project Runway.” From spoiled children to snotty designers to his love life (or lack thereof), Gunn — who’s been roasting celebrities from Vogue editor Anna Wintour to “Gossip Girl” co-star Taylor Momsen all throughout New York’s Fashion week — lets all the threads fall where they may, without regrets. But he still kind of hopes his mother doesn’t read it.

**In your last book, it was about being style mentor. In this book, are you trying to be a sort of humanitarian mentor?**

I wanted to present an antidote to the profusion of bad behavior that surrounds us.

**In your book you talk about some really specific instances where people behaved poorly. Any response?**

I received a gorgeous box of stunning chocolates and a note of apology from Padma Lakshmi (the Top Chef host who asked Tim Gunn to recommend a jewelry designer and then didn't follow up.) Old wounds are healed. She said that it just slipped her mind and she was between assistants. It was the loveliest note.

**You settle a lot of scores in the book with past Runway designers, such as Jay McCarroll and Kenley Collins. Why?**

I do a lot of fashion shows as part of my job at Liz Claiborne (where he is chief creative officer) and we do a Q & A and those questions come up. The main motivator wasn't to dredge up the past but to answer the questions. It amazes me the memory that people have.

**This book is more of a memoir and there are some really personal details. Was that your goal?**

I finished and then I thought, "Do I really want this out in the world?" " And at the same time, no fewer than three journalists said to me that no one really knows anything about you. On TV it's as though you constantly have your guard up. And I thought, this is a sign this book needs to be published.

**This season on "Project Runway" and in this book you're more... confrontational? Why?**

I was always like that. It's just that this season, with the 90-minute format, there's the opportunity to hear more of what I say. The show makes it seem like I'm in and out of the workroom in 10 minutes but I'm constantly there. I will say that the designer lounge blow-up (in which he told Team Luxe to quit letting Gretchen bully them) was unprecedented. I was so disappointed in the outcome and in their collaborative interaction.

**Is there just a lot of drama with the designers this season?**

There's another big explosion coming where I actually had to get out of my bed and come in. I should have stayed in my pajamas. I pretty much had to pull the designers off of Michael (Costello). He's very timid and has a lot of insecurities but he's a sweet guy.

**Does your mom really still buy you underwear and socks?**

Yes, and the underwear is the wrong size. Maybe she thinks my brighties are too

tightie. She hasn't read the book, but she's been desperate to get her hands on it. I've been in denial about it, but I don't want her to read it. ... But I couldn't let my concern about her critiques impact what I was writing. So much would have gone away and it would have been a hollow vessel.

### **When is the last time you sewed a garment?**

It was a long, long time ago. I think it was a Halloween costume for my niece. It was a witch. I do things like hem a pair of pants, I do my own tailoring but I wouldn't attempt a jacket.

### **What do you hope people take away from the book?**

I hope that people are a little more thoughtful about themselves and their place in the world and how they navigate in it. Then the book has been a success. And I hope they realize that I'm like everyone else. I have my flaws and my issues, past and present and who what will happen in the future. I want people to know I'm vulnerable too and each one of us is.

### **What do people ask you to write in the book?**

Gunn: Oh all sorts of things like "Forgive me for not marrying you!" and "I promise you're next!" If it's remotely lewd, I won't write it. But they ask me to sign all sorts of things from my CD to my bobble head. I'll sign almost anything.

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PROJECT RUNWAY

TIM GUNN

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