

On the Offensive

I'm not a racist, but ...
You look good, for your age ...
She was asking for it ...
You're crazy ...
That's so gay ...

Have you ever wondered why certain language has the power to offend? It is often difficult to recognize the veiled racism, sexism, ageism (and other -isms) that hide in our everyday discourse. This book sheds light on the derogatory phrases, insults, slurs, stereotypes, tropes, and more that make up linguistic discrimination.

Each chapter addresses a different area of prejudice: race and ethnicity; gender identity; sexuality; religion; health and disability; physical appearance; and age. Drawing on hot button topics and real-life case studies, and delving into the history of offensive terms, a vivid picture of modern discrimination in language emerges.

By identifying offensive language, both overt and hidden, past and present, we uncover vast amounts about our own attitudes, beliefs, and values and reveal exactly how and why words can offend.

Karen Stollznow is an Australian-American linguist and author. She is a Researcher at the Griffith Centre for Social and Cultural Research and was formerly a Research Associate at the University of California, Berkeley. Her books include *Language Myths, Mysteries and Magic*, *Would You Believe It?*, and *God Bless America*. Karen is a host of the popular science podcast *Monster Talk*.

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Prejudice in Language Past and Present

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**For my son, Blade, and his generation, who are the
gatekeepers of tomorrow's language.**

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