ForeWord Reviews
Clarion Review

SELF-HELP

9/11: Pentagon: Leadership Strategies of Survival
Trina Hines
978-1-4389-1357-5
Two Stars (out of Five)

This book contains a set of fifteen strategies designed to help leaders facing crisis. Written by Trina Hines a motivational speaker leadership coach retired US Army First Sergeant and former Pentagon leader it contains many elements that both military and civilian personnel can draw upon to become more effective at handling life's challenges. Leadership happens at all levels of course so the advice is not just for managers and executives but for anyone interested in the subject. Principles discussed include strategic thinking self-evaluation seeking mentorship being a good role model acting diplomatically making tough decisions flourishing with humility and finding a role for faith in one's life.

The book begins with a diary of influential events that affected the author's life. It then morphs into a description of leadership principles and ends with more details about Hines' leadership style. While there is a certain power in storytelling that is vital for good writing of most any type the construct of this particular book seems disorganized. In essence it is half biography and half business book—attempting both without succeeding at either. The narratives would have been far more powerful if they had been arranged to support the survival strategies described later on.

A key audience for this book is business executives; this demographic generally appreciates the classic "tell 'em what you're going to tell them tell 'em and then tell 'em what you told them" approach. That layout effectively sets the stage makes it easy to understand the context of what follows and wraps up strong with a summary of critical points. This structure would have made the book more successful.

While most of the essential elements of crisis leadership are in place within these pages they aren't discussed with enough depth for most readers; some elements are given a mere one or two pages. Faith is ostensibly one of the key attributes that allowed the author to deal with traumatic events such as when Flight 77 hit the Pentagon and passed through her office. The section on faith itself however is only four pages long and less than profound. Unfortunately it is not supplemented particularly well by any of the various anecdotes earlier in the book. One

particularly odd vignette conveys a conversation between the author and a pregnant female soldier who was unmarried and had no family in the area. Hines relates that she decided to accompany the woman to the hospital but the incident comes across as an obligation that was fulfilled rather than something done from the heart.

All in all the author has led a fascinating life and she tells some interesting stories in her work. The book may be worth reading on that point alone even if it doesn't hold up as a self-help book.

Lawrence Kane