ForeWord Reviews
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SELF-HELP

Accomplishing the Unaccomplished
Alozie Okwara
CreateSpace
978-1-4700-7124-0
Three Stars (out of Five)

Atychiphobia is an unusual word for a very common problem—fear of failure. We all fail at something, sometime, so why are we so universally afraid of making mistakes? New author Alozie Okwara suggests that instead of hanging our heads in shame, we should practice seeing our mistakes as learning opportunities.

His surprisingly upbeat look at losing, *Accomplishing the Unaccomplished*, offers stories of tragedies turned into triumphs, along with suggestions to help readers face any fiasco head-on and come out smiling.

Although Okwara writes in a conversational tone, as if giving advice to a friend or colleague, his book is not just a collection of motivational speeches. In topically defined chapters, Okwara applies a positive outlook, logic, and common sense to several categories of catastrophe—from rocky romantic relationships to bungled business bets. Presenting his own judgments, bolstered by quotations from leaders ranging from Thomas Jefferson to evangelical pastor Rick Warren, Okwara also proposes solutions to specific struggles, such as techniques for raising successful children and tools for obtaining an appropriate education.

Okwara's ideas cover a lot of ground, and he writes confidently on the psychological and behavioral aspects of success and failure. Much of his advice—consider the role of pride in your decision-making, do a feasibility study before embarking on a new project, and so forth—makes sense but is fairly conventional. Other ideas, such as Okwara's proposed formula for defining a personal time line for change, are more inventive. With his equation for calculating your "Goal Accomplishment Period," or GAP, Okwara shifts planners to a forward-thinking perspective. If you think you're too old to create a successful new business, he suggests, just figure your GAP (life span minus current age), and you may find you have more time for it than you thought.

The instructive parts of Okwara's book—advice, theories, quotations, lists—are written in a clean, straightforward style that makes this 150-page book easy to read in a single sitting. Unoriginal statements like "colleges and universities are places of learning," however, take up

valuable space that could have been used to develop more depth.

Okwara does add dimension to his ideas with illustrative stories of struggling individuals, which he calls “fictionalized case studies.” It’s not clear if these are adaptations of real-life situations or vignettes that Okwara himself generates, but in either case, the examples add texture, particularly the rags-to-riches tale of downtrodden Dave that serves as a framing device. Overly formal dialogue combined with light characterization, though, limits the effectiveness of Okwara’s stories.

The strength of Okwara’s message is that he reminds us that we are not alone in failure, and we are all capable of applying willpower and wisdom to the challenges that come our way. *Accomplishing the Unaccomplished* is a pleasant, if not polished, addition to the self-help shelves.

Sheila M. Trask