



Clarion Review

Self-Help

Change: A Necessary Journey

Jeanann Widman

BookSurge

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Three Stars (out of Five)

Change is difficult. Fear of the unknown, uncertainty about how to behave, and sorrow over the trauma of what has transpired, can all combine to leave even the most well-adjusted person feeling depressed. In *Change: a necessary journey*, Jeanann Widman explores the many ways that people can embrace change.

When Widman retired and moved with her husband to a new community, she found herself struggling. Her grown children were farther away, the home where she had made a lifetime of memories was gone, and the job that had structured her life was over. She tried to occupy herself with a variety of activities, but found that she was growing depressed. Eventually, she found her way back to happiness, and in this book, she shares the secrets to her success. She states: “This book is designed to help the reader understand the many facets of change during retirement, including key issues of aging, purpose, when to retire, and finding passion in life. Another important insight into change is that it occurs throughout life beginning at birth!”

Widman offers sound advice. She writes of keeping the brain vibrant by engaging in activities that offer intellectual challenge, learning to manage time which may suddenly be too abundant, and the importance of finding a purpose that will make a difference in the world. This advice is based not only on her personal experiences, but also on an impressive amount of research. She frequently refers to academic resources and includes a complete bibliography.

Unfortunately, the book has problems. The author's writing is rough and in need of editing. For instance, here she writes about a job she had as a library page: "Although I should have realized, when I was interviewed for the job, that it was 'physical' work and I was not to talk to the public while shelving books, because, a page's advice to the library patrons, might not be accurate."

Additionally, much of the second half of the book diverges from the central point of managing change. Rather than discussing change in retirement, she offers discussions on a variety of topics. She relates a lengthy story about a home she owned with her husband, where the nearby traffic was more than she felt was acceptable. She states that her purpose in sharing this story (which is nearly ten pages in this 104-page book) is to help illuminate the importance of careful decision making when purchasing a home, but it reads more like a personal rant. She then goes on to discuss the green movement and finding passion in life. These last discussions are interesting, and certainly valuable, but they do not directly address the idea of dealing with change.

In final analysis, the book has genuine merit. Despite problems with the writing and focus, the author is able to effectively communicate her ideas. She shares well-researched information that may help some readers as they face retirement.

Catherine Thureson