

Empowered: Original Inspirational Quotes for Life, Love, and Laughter

Andrea M. Campbell

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Empowered's brisk and substantive adages are designed to inspire readerships with upbeat notions about love, life, and laughter.

Andrea M. Campbell's *Empowered* compiles inspirational quotes to impart life lessons and inspire reflection.

Assembling 120 aphorisms that it attributes to divine inspiration and that are designed to lead to soul-searching, the book also includes dozens of questions as prompts for considering its notions on a deeper level. The dicta are divided into general sections—life, love, and spirit—with the heaviest emphasis given to leading a worthwhile and fulfilling life.

Designed in a way that invites both slow and methodical consideration and casual, quick reading for fast encouragement, the book is packed with digestible nuggets of wisdom that stand up to multiple readings. Evocative photos—of droplets of water suspended in the air and majestic mountain ranges, of photographers on the edge of skyscrapers, or of a girl playing the violin—accompany each quotation, elevating the text. Some of the accompanying graphics are less lush, including word clouds.

Though the entries are enlightening, some engage in platitudes, for example discouraging throwing stones at glass houses or encouraging letting go of baggage. Others are unsubtle, and there are instances of dismissiveness when it comes to challenges like despair that will prove unhelpful to certain readers, especially those facing mental health challenges.

The book's takeaways are more original, as are its quotes that promote general wellness concepts, including gratitude, generosity, and engagement with the world. Many of these could become mantras and sources of meditation.

At its most original, the book dismantles clichés, asserting that “silence is not golden where injustice reigns.” It is witty and insightful in places, particularly where it avoids familiar notions. Animal metaphors, such as about pigs wallowing in mud and needing no analysis, are incongruent in their folksiness. The book's heavy wordplay is sometimes clever, but sometimes awkward, as with an injunction to “embrace life's ups and downs, for when you flatline it's all over.” Puns are frequent, and the book's sports analogies will not speak to all.

Still, the total package is coherent and approachable, and there's something here for everyone. The text is generally consistent, particularly when it comes to its upbeat tone, and its efforts to elevate spirits and conversations are motivating.

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JOSEPH S. PETE (February 27, 2020)

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