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Clarion Review

Self-Help

Forgiveness: The Mystery and Miracle
Annette Stanwick
Elissa Collins, editor
Rod Chapman, editor
Heart Message Publishing
978-0-9783545-0-3
Five Stars (out of Five)

> *Forgiveness is the fragrance that the violet sheds on the heel that has crushed it.*

—Mark Twain

Most self-help books are found to be lacking. They tend to leave people feeling lost and cold and incomplete because they cannot identify with the jargon that is meant to provide enlightenment and comfort. Some readers become addicted to purchasing self-help books. They hope that the next book they buy will magically erase all of their problems. Like any addiction self-help books become wasted investments of time money and emotion. Because bookstore shelves are saturated with these so-called self-help books it is hard to recognize one of such high caliber as Annette Stanwick's book *Forgiveness*.

In March 1999 Annette Stanwick was informed that her brother Soren was brutally murdered. After her initial feelings of horror and denial she wanted to know who murdered her brother and why. Her anger increased and she became obsessed with the idea of finding the killer. She began to experience nightmarish images and flashes in her mind of representations of Soren's murder. Stanwick and her husband realized that she needed help. Through counseling meditation and prayer Stanwick attained the forgiveness that was instrumental in healing what she calls "woundedness." She writes "Healing cannot just be theoretical rhetoric. Healing has to be an experience if it is effective…Grieving losses may cause anger to surface fears to rise and tears to flow but these are essential components if healing is to be successful."

Stanwick shares biographical information in each chapter and gives the reader a chance

to use the information in the end sections of the chapters called “Personal Application” “Exploration” and “Prayer.” Her faith in God is genuine. She believes that she cannot be an agent of healing without His guidance. Even when she finally confronts her brother’s murderer she asks God to help her to forgive him. She writes “I felt God’s heart beat of forgiveness deep in my own soul…acceptance and forgiveness had permeated and infused every cell of my body. I felt love pouring over me like soothing fragrant warm oil.” Readers will find her faith refreshingly reassuring. With her nursing background education personal experiences and leadership abilities Stanwick has written an inspirational book for readers who are dealing with any type of loss. There is no guile or hidden agenda within her book. She makes no promises and doesn’t sugarcoat the difficulty involved in any type of forgiveness.