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CLARION REVIEW ★★★☆☆ BUSINESS & ECONOMICS

Go Start Something! Live Life on the Edge

Jan Collmer
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Entrepreneur Jan Collmer's passion for business is evident in his practical advice book for those who want to own their own business.

In *Go Start Something! Live Life on the Edge*, Collmer, who started a semiconductor business in 1979 and has lectured in business management programs in Texas universities, shares fifty rules for the budding entrepreneur. In eighteen chapters, he expands on those concepts, recounting examples from his own experiences and other well-known business case studies. The general guidelines will be most helpful to those looking for information about the overall process of starting a business, as Collmer does not discuss any specific industries. Intending for the rules to be a checklist, he primarily focuses on the planning stage of entrepreneurship. In a punchy, conversational tone, Collmer takes on the role of motivator and coach. Using his own successful ventures as a model, he recommends a combination of real-world business experience and some business schooling prior to starting a company.

The first half of the book is inspirational and informative. Collmer's advice is logical and sound, suggesting beginning entrepreneurs seek out mentors, retain control over decision making, and demonstrate a strong work ethic. He also touches on more technical aspects, such as how to set pricing, the need for an arbitration clause in contracts, and maintaining proper cash and inventory. The principles are not discussed in depth, but for more information, he suggests several books and resources that he found helpful as he built his company.

The second half of the book becomes repetitive and less useful. Initially, the "go start something" mantra is encouraging, but he repeats it so many times, it loses its impact. Also, many of the principles discussed earlier, both in the initial list and the earlier chapters, are restated in later chapters, in some cases for the third time or more. Several overused phrases, such as "in my opinion" and "I think," also make suggestions less convincing.

A key aspect Collmer discusses throughout is the risk involved with entrepreneurship. However, the book's subtitle, "Live Life on the Edge," is misleading and contradicts much of the advice he offers. He implies that proper planning can reduce unnecessary risk, and he specifically advises against a reckless approach.

Collmer's *Go Start Something! Live Life on the Edge* offers many tips for avoiding preventable mistakes. He shares his own philosophy of entrepreneurship and identifies the mentality of the successful entrepreneur, providing beginners with a good starting point to create business plans for their ventures.

MARIA SIANO (November 28, 2012)

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