

How Will You Handle It?

Jeffery Cooke

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How Will You Handle It? effectively delivers many commonly asserted, but undeniable, truths about achieving success.

In his often engaging *How Will You Handle It?*, Jeffery Cooke works to provide inspiration and psychological tools for overcoming professional and personal challenges both large and small in order to achieve success.

The book's main theme is the power of a "can-do" attitude. This particular treatise, while it is clearly reminiscent of numerous inspirational self-help guides that have come before, is an always heartfelt effort to identify and clarify strategies for facilitating positive thinking. Topics include recognizing the teaching moments inherent in setbacks; the danger of being put off by, rather than attracted to, risk; the uselessness of blaming others for failures; the vitality of constant self-motivation; and the importance of improvisation in the face of changing obstacles.

The book contains numerous entertaining personal stories of hard-won lessons, gathered while Cooke navigated life from a rural Kansas boyhood with an alcoholic father to an extended Air Force career, two marriages, an Amway distributorship, and eventually a GM dealership in New Mexico. Cooke's familiar, anecdotal approach helps move the text along at a healthy, sustained cadence. The prose reads easily. However, most of the recommendations here, while they are valid, have a familiar ring. Many quips are borrowed, mostly without credit, from moguls and innovators of the past. There is also some redundancy.

When addressing religious values, Cooke's message is limited by his focus on Christianity alone, proselytizing to the exclusion of those who might hold other faiths. The book's treatment of political philosophies takes a more ecumenical tone, citing the importance of recognizing shared goals common to all aspects of the political spectrum and applauding those presidents, such as Kennedy and Reagan, who are seen as succeeding at uniting people across party lines to achieve meaningful results.

When addressing self-realization and visioning for success, the philosophy of the book seems to get stuck in neutral between two conflicting recommendations. Cooke suggests that naysayers be ignored and avoided as sources of negative energy, but he also recommends listening to and acting on negative feedback, with little guidance on how to differentiate between these two factors.

Near the end, the book delivers a seemingly off-topic rant about myriad negative images and messages promulgated on daytime television. This topic does not fit well with the core subject of the book, and it proves a distraction. Another section meant to explain why one should not harbor regrets includes a long list of regrets harbored by the author.

Throughout the book, typos, grammatical errors, and run-on sentences prove to be a distraction, and some claims would benefit from citations.

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EDWARD RENEHAN (June 12, 2017)

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