**Clarion Review**

Self-Help

**Maximizing Me: 30 Lessons on the Journey to Self-Empowerment**
Hart Cunningham
Aslan Publishing
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Three Stars (out of Five)

"Plans are only good intentions unless they immediately degenerate into hard work." — Peter Drucker (1909-2005)

*Maximizing Me* is concerned with the controllable causes of short-circuiting careers and personal lives. It counsels goal-related thinking tenacious determination and work toward a unified self. Cunningham uses examples of those who have learned to stick with unpleasant but necessary efforts such as cyclist Lance Armstrong. He levels with readers by stating that instant gratification isn't going to lead as far as facing one's shortcomings head on: "If you love what you are doing all-out engagement comes easily. When your enthusiasm is less than robust try loving the process itself—the satisfaction that comes from being alert unselfconscious and totally absorbed in the present moment."

The book is divided into short lessons on aspects of individual development. Each lesson is followed by a brief summary of the main points and a suggested exercise. Some exercises are more imaginatively hatched than others. A motivational quotation leads each lesson. The sources are broad ranging from Martha Graham and George Burns to Ben Franklin and even the rarely inspiring Richard Nixon: "Defeat doesn't finish a man quitting does."

Modeling behavior is favored and the study of successful people's biographies is recommended as a way to glean further guidance. [Thomas Edison:] "Many of life's failures are people who did not realize how close they were to success when they gave up."

The prose aims for simplicity. Cunningham writes as an instructor who has learned much of use to pass on but is still experiencing his own evolution. Some passages slip from an appropriate timbre of confidence into off-putting ego: "The mere fact that you are reading this book tells me that you have advantages over 90 of the people on this earth."

However the best-written lessons really have something to offer. One gem entitled

“Forgive Yourself” appears close to the book’s end but it would have done more good ordered near the beginning as a slate-clearer. Here the author comes up with exactly what is needed for the most likely readers—people who have already experienced substantial failure or committed major mistakes.

Hart Cunningham is a former student of the iconic management theorist Peter Drucker and reflects a substantial amount of Drucker’s later teachings in this book. He currently serves as the CEO of Juvio a computer technical support and sales organization based in Tempe Arizona.

As it is unrealistic to attempt to fix or adjust all areas of the self in a short span readers who intend to follow through may do best to consider the lessons one per day or spread over an even longer interval. In the crowded self-help field Cunningham offers a mixed product that is partly familiar and partly innovative. Dissatisfied business people who are ready to make a sustained effort at overall reinvention will get the most out of *Maximizing Me*.