

Clarion Review ★★★★★

SELF-HELP

Pause, Rewind, Play: Old Rules for a New World

Rocco Manfredi

Friesen Press

Hardcover (79pp)

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Pause, Rewind, Play is an optimistic self-help book that encourages reflecting on one's past, growing from it, and working toward a brighter future.

Rocco Manfredi's meditative self-help book *Pause, Rewind, Play* encourages audiences to reevaluate what makes their lives and work meaningful.

Introducing its "rules for a successful life," the book builds upon a series of anecdotes from Manfredi's personal life and his real estate career. Its rules include maxims like "We do not choose to lead, yet we do lead by our example." It suggests a three-part method for achieving personal and career success, involving pausing to consider the past, reflecting on the present, and moving forward into the future.

The first directive—pausing to consider the past—is presented as important for discerning how a person became who they are, while the second portion—focused on the present—is centered into terms of ongoing self-reflection, and is most concerned with Manfredi's own story. More accessible to general audiences are the book's encouragements that they too live in the present, "where the past doesn't limit your possibilities" and "where your concerns for the future don't create fear and uncertainty for an unknown tomorrow."

In the course of its work, the book digs into everyday ideas about hard work and success to unearth deeper meanings. It then repackages its notions: perseverance, for example, becomes "the one common characteristic of those who realize their goals," while hard work involves "having a clear view of what you want to accomplish and then sticking with it until you achieve it."

While such observations aim to refresh their concepts, their takeaways remain familiar. The book is more intriguing when it stops to muse about why its traditional ideas matter. It probes common concepts, hoping for "moments of epiphany." Thus the adage against judging people by their appearances is evaluated through the story of Manfredi mistaking men in working clothes for loiterers and later finding out that they were, in fact, the company's owners. He uses that moment to reevaluate the roles of judgment and the pitfalls of hasty decision-making. Such interrogations are genuine and earnest, as are Manfredi's accounts of struggling to start a family, of his childhood friendships, and of his experiences selling real estate. But they are also stream-of-consciousness in their construction; they meander and are unfocused.

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JEREMIAH ROOD (August 4, 2022)

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