



Clarion Review

Autobiography & Memoir

Simple Wisdom: Extraordinary Life

Teresa Rogers

Lulu

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Three Stars (out of Five)

Teresa Rogers, a successful business owner in California, wrote *Simple Wisdom, Extraordinary Life* as a tribute to her mother, Joyce Ann, who has been an inspiration in her life. Rogers' emotionally charged and deeply sincere book is fewer than fifty carefully written pages in length, and it has more than a dozen somewhat grainy, but touching family photographs.

The first half of the book shares the details of Joyce Ann's life, including her poverty-stricken childhood and marriage, at age fifteen, to Rogers' father, an abusive alcoholic. This section includes several harrowing descriptions of the author's childhood in a seriously dysfunctional home. To her credit, Joyce Ann was able to send Rogers to a boarding school, ensuring that her daughter missed some of the worst of her husband's unrelenting physical and mental abuse. Joyce Ann eventually left her husband, remarried, and had a semblance of happiness until a series of family deaths and illnesses left her physically debilitated and depressed.

The second half of the book contains the meat of *Simple Wisdom, Extraordinary Life*, as Roger's recounts four life lessons her mother instilled in her that helped her to succeed in life. The four lessons are: "Choose your friends wisely," "get an education," "never get yourself into anything you can't talk yourself out of," and "you have fifteen minutes to feel sorry for yourself, then get off your butt and do something about it." Rogers shares anecdotes from her life that underscore the positive effect each lesson had on her development. She also discloses emotionally painful memories of cruel and hurtful comments and behavior by her father, related to each of the four lessons, that she struggled to overcome. For example, under the lesson about self-pity, Rogers writes: "Ever since I can remember, my dad made fun of my curly hair. It hurt my feelings, and I felt so bad that I wore a hat to cover my curls. My mom told me I could feel sorry for myself and let his comments affect me, or I could let them go."

While Rogers has done an excellent job writing about her mother's life, her book is unlikely to find a wide audience beyond her friends and extended family. Yet *Simple Wisdom, Extraordinary Life* could be helpful to those seeking an inspiring memoir about overcoming adversity.

Patty Sutherland