FOREWORD REVIEWS THE INDIE WE LOVE.

Foreword Review YOUNG ADULT NONFICTION

The Gender Quest Workbook for Teens: Activities for Exploring Your Gender Identity

Rylan Jay Testa
Deborah Coolhart
Jayme Peta
New Harbinger Publications (Dec 1, 2015)
Softcover $16.95 (168pp)
978-1-62625-297-4

Warm and interactive, this wholly unique workbook fills a gap in the support structure for teens and young adults exploring their gender identity.

The Gender Quest Workbook—by real-world counselors and gender experts Rylan Jay Testa, Deb Coolhart, and Jayme Peta—provides a safe space and an insightful process into exploring gender identity. The workbook itself is for teens and young adults who are questioning their gender identity, for those who are more certain and are looking for help in navigating social situations, or for friends and family members who are looking for ways to understand and be supportive.

Between useful definitions of scientific and social terminology, anecdotes, and thought experiments is space for the quester to fill in answers to questions, make observations, underline important quotations, and draw pictures. After prompts that take the quester through outside-world observations about what gender looks like, the prompts get more personal. Activities gently help the quester build a description of their feelings. There are interview prompts like “Ask a woman you know over 50, ‘what has changed for women in your lifetime?’” There is also a guide for experimenting with gender, like wearing nail polish or men’s cologne, using girls’ shampoo, wearing boys’ underwear, binding your breasts, wearing a stuffed bra, or cutting your hair. This section comes equipped with a “scary scale” to help questers determine their comfort level with each of the experiments.

In addition to working on the vital intrapersonal aspect of the gender quest, this workbook also covers more public things. There are prompts and activities on navigating the choices of names and pronouns, sex and dating, and how to find and evaluate prospective confidants and support providers. The authors make sure to cover numerous aspects of a person’s identity, because gender is only a part of who we are. The workbook explores intersections of gender with race and ethnicity, and safely explores sexual “turn ons” and “turn offs.”

Testa, Coolhart, and Peta break down the exciting but sometimes overwhelming task of exploring gender identity and expression into fun, manageable pieces. This wholly unique workbook fills a gap in the support structure available to teens and young adults facing these questions, and it is a valuable resource to anyone looking to be there for them along the way.

EMERSON M. FULLER (Winter 2016)

Disclosure: This article is not an endorsement, but a review. The publisher of this book provided free copies of the book to have their book reviewed by a professional reviewer. No fee was paid by the publisher for this review. Foreword Reviews only recommends books that we love. Foreword Magazine, Inc. is disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission’s 16 CFR, Part 255.