ForeWord Reviews
Clarion Review

SELF-HELP

The Journey of Women after 40
Liana Kallierou-Xylas
Eyanthia Allen, translator
Maretta Nikalaou, translator
AuthorHouse
978-1-4567-9381-4
Five Stars (out of Five)

"The greatest desire of any woman must be the realization of her dreams and the rejection of limitations on her abilities to achieve her goals…I believe that contemporary women have begun to recognize the power of middle age; to realize the beauty of this stage of life." This opening statement from Liana Kallierou-Xylas, a clinical psychologist in Greece, well defines her own goal in creating this book: to give women the encouragement and the emotional and intellectual underpinning to get where they want to go, whatever their age.

The book draws from many sources (there is a four-page bibliography) and includes personal statements from women ages forty and older. Starting with a chapter on general human development, it looks at everything from the quest for immortality to the realities of menopause, retirement, old age, and death. For example, she writes that, "sixteen-year-old children may legally divorce their parents. A thirty-year-old man may still be living at home with his mother while a forty-year-old woman may have just given birth to her first child…No other civilization in history…has enjoyed such a high quality of mature life as in modern industrialized societies."

Women should no longer "consider our bodies as 'done deals'" or ignore the opportunities that older age offers, writes Kallierou-Xylas, whether it be to return to school or find a new mate. She also notes that the chance to connect with grandchildren and to inspire them (especially the girls) by being an example of a self-actualizing senior is a new frontier that may evoke deep emotions heretofore unrealized.

Sara, an eighty-year-old German physical therapist says of her sex life, "It is as enjoyable as it always was." Vana, a Greek former artist, declares, "I am not interested in the gravity that pulls me down to earth…a fallen breast, or my cellulite. To live through social changes is without a doubt like seeing a new work of art."

Not all the women included in Kallierou-Xyla's book are so positive. Some relate feeling

depressed or even suicidal, as well as experiencing poverty and physical limitations. Because she believes that there are many indicators that consciousness survives physical death, the author urges readers not to fear or deny the inevitable, but to embrace it after living a fulfilling life.

The Journey of Women after 40 has been expertly translated, and the author's ideas are presented in an orderly, nearly seamless way. The engaging case studies offer lessons about how to care for oneself physically and emotionally. The book would make an excellent addition to a "women's issues" library shelf and a fine gift to one's older women friends and for a man trying to understand his significant other. The message is simple and welcome: Today, women live longer in the developed world, so they should make the most of it.

Barbara Bamberger Scott