

The Neo-Generalist: Where You Go Is Who You Are

Kenneth Mikkelsen

Richard Martin

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Highlighting the stories of modern-day jacks-of-all-trades, this is a study with depth.

Kenneth Mikkelsen and Richard Martin's *The Neo-Generalist* is a breakthrough work, with research that is conducted on a global scale and identifies and defines the contemporary "jack-of-all-trades."

Leonardo da Vinci, often held up as a symbol of remarkable versatility, was a testament to the concept of the "Renaissance man." This invigorating study of multifaceted individuals shows that the modern-day da Vinci still exists in the form of the "neo-generalist."

A neo-generalist is "both a generalist and a specialist ... adaptive, responsive, catalytic." By calling attention to this neo-generalist persona, the authors debunk the negative perception of a "jack-of-all-trades, master of none," positing that such a person "can often become master of many trades."

The Neo-Generalist deftly mixes its theoretical viewpoint with concrete examples, most of which are distilled from extensive interviews. The stories told are far from uncomplicated; rather, they illustrate the complex and often circuitous route that many neo-generalists take in their lives and careers. Dolly Garland, inspired by Leonardo da Vinci, lived in multiple countries, obtained multiple college degrees, and decided to pursue multiple avenues of interest; "she wants to have a collection of experiences, not regrets."

Dolly is just one of numerous intriguing people whose stories are woven throughout the text of this illuminating book. Alongside their stories come perceptive observations, work that compares and contrasts contemporary neo-generalists with historical figures, and citations of other relevant works.

The Neo-Generalist is an important book that studies a unique type of individual and intentionally draws no definitive conclusions. Like the neo-generalist who is always seeking answers, the authors conclude, "What we have offered here is nothing more than a contribution to the discussion." It is a contribution, however, that should be acknowledged and celebrated by all for its breadth and depth.

BARRY SILVERSTEIN (March/April 2017)

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