

## The Tenacious Pursuit of Peace: Where to Go When Success is Not Enough

**Madeleine MacRae**

Weeva

(246pp)

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*Modeling the continual pursuit of self-knowledge, The Tenacious Pursuit of Peace is an inspiring self-help text.*

Entrepreneur, author, motivational speaker, and corporate strategist Madeleine MacRae's encouraging self-help guide and memoir *The Tenacious Pursuit of Peace* encourages looking beyond conventional standards of achievement to find individual spiritual balance.

Naming the skills that successful leaders often develop alongside their business acumen, this is a book that seeks to help people become perceptive communicators. It asserts that self-knowledge allows people to "start from within." MacRae models this with her stories about self-examination after the death of her father in 2020 alongside other "hard stories" about emerging from experiences with rejection, trauma, and doubt.

Even MacRae's stories about graduating as the valedictorian of a Catholic boarding school are not without their related conflicts (she recalls showing too much "pride" and ambition). Often, such interrogations become quite intimate and revealing, as when MacRae reevaluates her first sexual encounter as an instance of rape, or when she explores her troubled partnership with her son's father and past tendency to seek out "emotionally unavailable" men. Catholicism is at the book's center, too, addressed in resonant, wry, and reflective ways. Regrets are expressed regarding adulterous romantic involvements, and the book asserts, "God will always remain my beloved."

Elaborate interactions with therapists, life coaches, and practitioners of feng shui and Human Design are also covered. While such stories are present to inspire others to process their own pain and repressed memories and, if needed, pursue appropriate psychotherapy, the bridges are sometimes loose, as where chapters conclude with uplifting yet indistinctive phrases like "You must begin where you are because where you are is exactly the right place to begin," or with familiar advice such as to take a Myers-Briggs assessment.

Though the book's general tone is supportive and caring, its focus on MacRae's own life—and its recommendations to follow up with additional relevant materials on MacRae's website—leads to a self-promotional dynamic rather than the work creating a more neutral, reflective space. Further, some of the book's inspiring quotations are insufficiently attributed. And overly familiar self-help concepts dilute the book's individuality, as with recommendations to let go of past hurts, practice positive affirmations, and incorporate gratitude into one's daily life. At times, the book's language becomes too exaggerated as well, as when MacRae writes about sharing the "journey beyond" her "glittering wall of success."

The candid self-help text *The Tenacious Pursuit of Peace* uses a personal story of healing to encourage others toward self-improvement.

MEG NOLA (May 9, 2024)

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