Clarion Review

Self-Help

Things I Say to Myself
Dale Andrews
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Four Stars (out of Five)

Gary “Dale” Andrews describes himself as a Christian mystic who has worked in a number of roles, including as a minister, counselor, and non-profit CEO. In his “twenty-five years of college,” he embraced everything from languages and public administration to political science and theology. Along the way, Andrews developed an interesting, life-enhancing habit: he starts each day with a one page written statement that he uses as a self-motivation tool.

This massive book (610 pages) is a collection of those missives and, as such, provides insight into the man who wrote them as well as inspiration for anyone who reads them. The writings are not organized into chapters, groups, sections, or even themes—each stands alone as a little philosophical nugget. However, the randomness of the collection is an asset rather than a liability because it provides the reader with the ability to flip through the pages and pick out any entry at any time without contextual limitation.

From a broader perspective, the essays are really about the manner in which one approaches life. For the most part, Andrews is a true optimist, and he often injects a good dose of humor into his essays. His observations are based on self-reflection, but his ability to express universal truths makes the content of the book meaningful. Andrews has a rare gift that allows him to write in simple yet eloquent terms about human emotion, interaction, and reaction.

The reader will likely be tempted to highlight many of Andrews's pithy observations, including such memorable statements as: "The familiar will keep you feeling secure, while the unfamiliar will give you the opportunity to see life from a new perspective." "Worry is a sign that you have not fully made friends with the most powerful gift you have – your imagination." "Security, like control, is a bit of a paradox. The more you seek it, the more you lose it." "A sense of the temporary will do amazing things to keep you focused on what is important." "The greatest poverty is worrying about what we have."

The author does invoke the teachings of Jesus, and he references God frequently. Yet, the insight he shares is just as applicable to devout and non-religious readers alike. In essence, Andrews acts as a kind of armchair spiritual adviser, offering a view of life's challenges that is centered around being spiritually grounded.

This is a book that is clearly meant to be digested in tiny bites. However, whether one consumes a little or a lot in one sitting, *Things I Say to Myself* is sure to satisfy the reader's spiritual appetite.

Barry Silverstein