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Tipping Guide for Gratuitous Folks

Milan E. Wright
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Tipping Guide for Gratuitous Folks goes a long way toward meeting its goal of helping readers develop a "tipping persona." Whether generous or stingy each tipping decision should be based on reason but is often spur-of-the moment and intuitive. Milan E. Wight provides an interesting collection of writings on this topic one that should not lend itself to almost 300 pages but does. Through several personal interviews the author helps the reader understand why people should tip why people do tip why some people are loathe to tip and what makes a few people overtip. He discusses conventions surrounding tipping for several types of service employees as well as tipping conventions around the world offering especially interesting insights into the culture of tipping behind the Iron Curtain. He then outlines the legal implications of tipping in one long dreary chapter.

The middle of the book presents multiple "conversations with tipped employees and employers." These interviews with waiters waitresses and restaurant owners offer some background about why people choose a tipping persona what it feels like to be "stiffed" by a customer the everyday life of a server and many other stories that provide background for the whole tipping issue. Yet these stories tend to be tedious repetitive and boring for the reader. They are accompanied by photographs and ungainly drawings by an illustrator suspiciously named "Milano."

In later chapters the author becomes the editor and provides a series of articles from the popular press about tipping. For the most part these articles are helpful because they provide multiple perspectives. However a few are perplexing. For example the article on tips for traveling with teenage grandchildren is not about tipping at all. At the end of the book Wight wraps up with a section on tipping resources and writes a one-page summary of the entire content of the book.

The organization of *Tipping Guide for Gratuitous Folks* is clear though the author jumps around quite a bit within each section from one topic to the next. Additionally several grammatical punctuation and editing errors detract from the message of the book and the author's third person stance is awkward. Finally information from the "Gratuity Ingenuity" Web site appears directly lifted from internet resources and its purpose in the book is ambiguous. Despite these drawbacks Wight has rendered an interesting light-hearted publication for anyone who is trying to figure out how much to tip.
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