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Clarion Review

Useful Information for Everyday Living: Everything I Wish I Knew When I Was Younger
Michele Sfakianos
AuthorHouse
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Three Stars (out of Five)

The challenges of the young adult are unique and can be very overwhelming. Independence is a wonderful thing, and setting up a first home, buying a first car, and even having a first baby can all be exciting and deeply gratifying. None of these things however are easy or instinctive. There are pitfalls that can accompany every first step, and knowing what they are and how to deal with them can seem impossible. Even very minor tasks—cooking a meal or doing the laundry—require training, and many young people begin their lives without ever having been given the opportunity to learn such basic life skills. In *Useful Information for Everyday Living*, author Michele Sfakianos sets out to provide some very basic information to help individuals who are in the process of establishing adult lives. Ms. Sfakianos is a registered nurse and a licensed real estate agent. She is also a mother. She draws on the knowledge and skills she has learned in each of these roles to provide common sense advice and guidance for taking a number of first steps towards independence.

There are twenty-two chapters in this book, each one covering a unique topic such as cleaning a home, buying a car, and eating healthy. Each chapter consists of a set of lists on how to accomplish these tasks. For example, the chapter on cleaning the home offers these tips for closets:

? Keep floors free of clutter.

? Stack items on shelves carefully—do not over stack.

? For linen closets, stack towels, washcloths, hand towels and bed sheets in separate piles.

? Make sure you can close the door!

The advice the author has provided is quite sound, and most young people will learn something from this book. However the book is limited in its usefulness. There is no index, and the author's organizational choices are not always obvious. Additionally, the author included chapters on health and nutrition in the chapter on school-aged children. Her background as a nurse is clear in these chapters and the information provided is some of the best in the book.

However, her target audience is young adults and so these chapters feel out of place. Finally, the usefulness of the book may be limited as the information here can all be found in other sources. Reference books and web sites with this sort of advice abound.

Ms. Sfakianos has put a great deal of thought into this book, and her varied training and experience give the book authority—she clearly knows what she is talking about. Ultimately, young adults in the process of beginning their own lives will find something here to help them avoid making costly or painful mistakes.

Catherine Thureson