

Missing

BOOK REVIEW

Brookfield, S. (2015). *The skillful teacher: On Technique, Trust, and Responsiveness in the Classroom* (3rd ed). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Reviewed by DAVID NELSON, VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY

Every now and then there is a book that lands in your lap at the right time. *The Skillful Teacher* was what I needed after a semester of scratching my head and wondering what I could do to improve the classroom for me as well as for my students. Stephen Brookfield presented different ways of thinking, improving, and learning for both students and teachers. Throughout the book Brookfield's invitational voice is straightforward and filled with vignettes from his teaching experience. He provides the reader an authentic and honest perspective on teaching and the difficulties that comes with it. It opens up discussing how teaching is really muddling through the experiences of a day, week, or a semester of teaching and this provides a catalog of knowledge on what works and what doesn't in the classroom. This is done by illustrating practical ideas that can be implemented into any class or topic.

The book provides ideas that can be applied so that class discussions will resonate with the students. Brookfield suggests using a critical incident questionnaire to gauge how the class is progressing from the students' perspectives. The data collected from these questionnaires help find patterns or issues that can be addressed. For example, if students do not grasp how to properly organize an informative speech I would know to go back and cover that material. Another idea he suggests is doing a three-question learning audit to help assess what the students learned that week. This activity would help teachers understand students' strengths as well as what worked well that week in class. There are several other simple exercises that are quick and helpful in creating classroom discussion and enlightening learning for the student as well as the teacher.

Teaching is situational, and each class presents its own problems that arise throughout the semester for both the instructor and the student. The author addresses this perspective throughout the book by providing a philosophy that teaching is not a science but an art, and to be successful there are many factors that need to be considered. The book provides plenty to think about how to become a better teacher. The most engaging statement made in the book is not to trust everything read within the book. Brookfield brings his perspective and experiences that are unique to him. What the reader needs to consider is that what has worked for him might not work for them, but he provides ideas that are worth considering and applying in the classroom.

Missing

BOOK REVIEW

Danner, J., & Coopersmith, M. (2015). *The other F word: How smart leaders, teams and entrepreneurs put failure to work*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley & Sons.

Reviewed by PHILLIP VOIGHT, GUSTAVUS ADOLPHUS COLLEGE

The opening line of John Danner and Mark Coopersmith's *The other F Word: How Smart Leaders, Teams and Entrepreneurs Put Failure to Work* promises to make readers better leaders by helping them "tap into" the phenomenal resource of failure that is "all around them" (p. 1). In what follows, Danner, a management professor at Berkeley and Princeton, and Coopersmith, a senior fellow at Berkeley's Haas School of Business, describe the primary reasons that failures are often ignored as potential "teaching moments" and provide a useful set of practices that can be adopted by almost any organization to more effectively mine the resources of failure.

The authors define failure as "a mistake or unwelcome outcome that matters" (p. 29), and they are quick to point out that the book is not an academic text. While they "hope that it will be used in classrooms worldwide," it is written in plain prose and is intended to be accessible to laypeople (p. 3). In addition to academics, the book is sure to be of interest to business leaders, managers and anyone charged with strategic planning responsibilities on behalf of a complex organization. It would certainly be useful required reading prior to a board retreat, or an annual planning meeting, as many of the examples discussed are applicable to a wide variety of organizations. For forensic coaches, the book would be most useful for preparing students for debate and extemporaneous or impromptu speaking, as it highlights a number of ways that policy and business failures can be refashioned as successful learning opportunities.

At the outset, it's important to understand that not all failures can be put to work. Failures resulting from natural disasters, from unpredictable external events such as wars or terrorism, or from intentional malfeasance by key employees may only point leaders towards better dashboard indicators. One could purchase better insurance, perhaps, but a failure triggered by a wildfire offers few additional lessons. Likewise, the authors take pains to assure readers that they are not apologists for failure, and that the process of analyzing failures doesn't mean that employees who are incompetent should be tolerated. The key, they argue, is establishing an organizational culture that neither treats failure as a taboo subject — never to be discussed openly, nor celebrates failure by tolerating mediocre performance by key employees. Equally mindful of the risks of creating an organizational culture that is obsessed with failure, the authors point out that

the best failures to learn from are someone else's.

The book is tightly organized and contains an excellent index as well as research notes. The first several chapters begin by convincing readers that failure is quite common in organizations large and small, new and established. Danner and Coopersmith then establish the "facts" of failure — including the role that career stigmatization of those who fail plays in magnifying failure (who wants to hire a new CEO who has just publicly failed?), the difficulties organizations face in owning up to past failures, and the way that fear of failure and memory act as "force multipliers" to complicate decision making and increase the likelihood of policy, market or strategic failure. Most start-ups, restaurants, and new businesses fail, as do most mergers and acquisitions. Although none of their examples are particularly surprising, the authors provide valuable insights into the chief causes of failure that would be interesting to anyone with management or strategic planning responsibilities. Citing the well-known case of Kodak, for example, the authors point out how the company had stumbled onto the keys to its survival early on in its slow descent to bankruptcy, but the company "could not see past its current business model and ongoing decline" (p. 104).

The next sections of the book identify specific roles that good leaders need to play in various types of organizations. To minimize failure in a start-up, for example, leaders need to adopt the role of the "passionate convincer," while established companies are most in need of "confident jugglers." At the conclusion of each chapter, the authors provide several key takeaways. Unfortunately, they are sometimes worded in motivational consultant-speak, (for example, "Build your tomorrow culture today," p. 65), which sometimes undermines their impact. Likewise, readers may roll their eyes when encountering suggestions such as: "Pronounce the word failure s.l.o.w.l.y. What do you hear? Fail your" (p. 115). Despite occasionally troubling prose, however, those who follow the book to its conclusion will find the reward well worth the effort.

By far, the most useful portion of the book are the analytical and strategic planning exercises that Danner and Coopersmith provide. These exercises are spread throughout the book, and many could easily be adapted for classroom use in a small group or organizational course. Others could be used directly in departmental, programmatic or institutional strategic planning exercises. Early in the book, for example, they provide a simple questionnaire that helps assess an individual's "Failure Leadership Profile," and follow with an analysis of how leaders can better prepare themselves to make use of the potential opportunities that failure provides. In another helpful exercise, each member of a team is asked to answer the question, "What has to be true?" in central areas of an organization's operations (business model, timing, finance, customers, competitors, etc.) in order for the organization to thrive (p. 61). Near the end of the book, the authors provide an incredibly simple planning exercise that helps

leaders understand their organizations through the eyes of competitors and, importantly, to understand where their organizations are most vulnerable (p. 127).

One additional feature of the book is worth mentioning: it concludes with a final exercise that the authors call a "Failure Report Card." The report card can be used to assess the degree to which leaders have internalized the lessons contained in the book, and the authors make copies of the test available electronically to anyone who submits their email address and the book's ISBN number. Whether for classroom use, or as the final element of a strategic planning retreat, having access to the electronic version of the assessment tool would be useful.



Missing

BOOK REVIEW

Epley, N. (2015). *Mindwise: Why we misunderstand what others think, believe, feel, and want*. New York, NY: Vintage Books.

Reviewed by PHILLIP VOIGHT, GUSTAVUS ADOLPHUS COLLEGE

Nicholas Epley is the John T. Keller Professor of Behavioral Science at the University of Chicago's Booth School of Business, and his new book *Mindwise: Why We Misunderstand What Others Think, Believe, Feel, and Want* offers readers a fascinating introduction to behavioral economics. Like *Freakonomics*, Epley's book shatters commonly held assumptions about our ability to understand one another, and it provides insights into empathy, intuition, stereotypes and the importance of experience in formulating accurate impressions of the world. The book is particularly interesting to students and practitioners of political communication, polling and theoretical persuasion, but it also offers valuable insights into interpersonal communication, conflict resolution, and gendered differences in communication.

Epley believes that the brain's greatest attribute is its ability to "think about the minds of others in order to understand them better" (p. xi). Armed with such knowledge, he suggests, humans are able to target persuasive appeals, resolve conflicts, recognize and comprehend differences, and adapt socially to environmental cues and stimuli. These abilities, in turn, rendered humans "uniquely smart" as a species and facilitated the rise of large complex societies. This perceptual gift, however, is also the mind's greatest weakness, as it leads to a number of common and predictable cognitive biases that, when unrecognized, produce persuasive appeals that are not only ineffective, but often counterproductive.

Epley begins by describing the inherent difficulty of correctly understanding the mind of another. Because "other's inner thoughts are revealed only through the facade of their faces, bodies and language," observers are left with imperfect data upon which to base our conclusions (p. 7). Further complicating the matter is the natural tendency to assume that that our individual perspectives, experiences, knowledge and biases are universally shared and that we can understand the motivations of others merely by analyzing their actions. Even asking others offers little guidance. "No psychologist asks people to explain the causes of their own thoughts or behaviors anymore," Epley notes, "unless they're interested in understanding storytelling" (p. 30). While people can identify *what* they are experiencing, they are ill equipped to explain *why*.

Epley suggests that universalizing human experiences by assuming everyone thinks, feels and believes exactly as we do is just as danger-

ous as its opposite — anthropomorphizing experiences or attributing internal thought processes where none exist. He points out the dangers of stereotypes, but notes surprisingly that stereotypes about majority groups are generally more accurate than those about minorities or members of groups that are infrequently encountered because “larger groups provide more observational data” (p. 125). Ultimately, noticing differences between groups is not problematic, but defining groups based on those differences leads to poor decision-making.

The most surprising portion of the book deals with the inability of people to accurately understand the internal thought processes of intimate acquaintances and members of the opposite sex. Backed by empirical research, Epley suggests that while men and women were generally accurate in predicting the direction of opinion of members of the other group — such as whether or not members of the other group would support capital punishment — they failed miserably in understating the degree of opinion. “The typical effect sizes on those tests of empathy or mind reading are around .2,” Epley states, meaning that “the differences among men and women were far larger than the differences between them” (p. 131). Similar effects were found in studies of liberals and conservatives. While members of each group were relatively successful in predicting the other group’s opinion on, for example, abortion, they were completely unsuccessful in estimating the degree to which opposing opinions were held. Often, they overestimated the intensity of the opinion by a factor of three. His findings echo other recent studies in political science that suggest members of Congress substantially overestimate the conservatism of voters in their districts, as do most primary candidates. Such errors, Epley concludes, lead to blunders and mistakes in judgment even when attempts are being made to bridge differences. In addition, these miscalculations pose serious challenges to conflict resolution and magnify the current politically polarized environment.

By the end of the book, Epley has presented a convincing case that almost makes it seem as if we are doomed to a state of permanent ignorance and misunderstanding. Given these inherent weaknesses in human ability to comprehend the internal thought processes of others, what hope is there for targeted persuasive appeals? Fortunately, Epley offers two suggestions for increasing the accuracy of the process: First, all parties must engage in empathetic listening and must also be absolutely clear and transparent in communicating what they are feeling and experiencing. “To really enable someone to understand what’s on your mind, you not only need to be clear, you need to be painfully clear. If you’re getting someone’s perspective, you not only need to listen, you need to verify that your understanding is correct” (p. 180).

His second broad suggestion is that there is no substitute for actual experience. Rather than focusing on efforts to imagine the perspectives of others (a process Epley feels is ultimately doomed to failure and frequently counterproductive), we must strive to actually experi-

ence “the other.” If you don’t know what it’s like to be poor, depressed or disabled, no amount of “perspective taking” is likely to improve the accuracy of your guesses. He cites the powerful example of radio talks how host Erich Mueller, who was convinced that waterboarding wasn’t bad enough to be considered “torture.” Agreeing to go through the procedure for the benefit of his listeners, he reversed his opinion after just seven seconds. Experience, it seems, clearly matters.

Perhaps the most disappointing element of the book is Epley’s failure to offer much guidance for the vast majority of situations where an advocate is unable to carefully question the other party in an attempt to discern the direction and degree of their opinions. In most conflicts, campaigns or relationships, it may also be impossible or impractical to “gain experience” in the way that Epley suggests. One might have hoped that he would extend his analysis to uncovering more accurate methods of conducting public opinion surveys or designing targeted behavioral observation analysis, but alas, he did not. Despite these limitations, Epley’s book is well written and researched. It would be an excellent supplementary reading for a mid- or upper-level interpersonal communication, persuasion or conflict resolution course.



Missing

BOOK REVIEW

Gallo, C. (2014). *Talk like Ted: The nine public speaking secrets of the world's top minds*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press.

Reviewed by PHILLIP VOIGHT, GUSTAVUS ADOLPHUS COLLEGE

In the tradition of Dale Carnegie, Carmine Gallo's *Talk Like Ted: The Nine Public Speaking Secrets of the World's Top Minds* offers readers a research-based practical guide to effective speaking. A former CNN and CBS anchor and best selling author, Gallo's book should be of interest to anyone teaching or studying persuasion. Written primarily with a business or professional audience in mind, his focus on "TED Talks" (Technology, Entertainment and Design) is a refreshing alternative to the public address orientation of most speechwriting textbooks. Moreover, his coverage of PowerPoint best practices is useful for anyone seeking to improve classroom or business presentations.

Broadly divided into three sections — constructing emotionally compelling appeals, designing novel content, and leaving memorable impressions; Gallo demonstrates the efficacy of nine specific public speaking techniques by referencing many of the most celebrated presentations in the TED Talk archives. Although the content at times seems elementary — the first "secret" is a lengthy chapter about the importance of being passionate about the subject, for instance — the book's extensive use of examples and its citation of recent research in the field is ultimately worthwhile for even the most experienced coaches or competitors.

Written in simple and uncomplicated prose, Gallo's book is a relatively easy weekend read, and none of the nine "rules" are particularly earth shattering. In addition to being passionate about the subject, for instance, Gallo exhorts readers to tell effective stories, speak conversationally, include novel content, deliver "jaw dropping" moments, use humorous appeals, keep presentations brief, create mental or multi-sensory images and convey a sense of authenticity. Readers would be mistaken, however, to simply glance at the nine "secrets" in the table of contents, and then skim one or two of the chapters hoping to glean useful advice. Gallo's genius is his ability to present concrete examples from which readers can draw useful generalizations.

Those looking to simply memorize a set of specific precepts or injunctions might also be disappointed. Gallo's "rules" are nuanced, contextual and at times even contradictory. Perhaps the interdisciplinary nature of TED Talks, the vast diversity of its speakers, and the enormous range of subjects covered mitigates against a "one size fits all" set of approaches. In any event, Gallo seems more interested in

helping speakers master a set of personally effective techniques. A case in point is the section describing the appropriate speaking rate. After noting the advice of several information cognition studies and identifying the typical delivery rate for audiobooks at 150-160 words per minute, Gallo commends the slightly faster 190 word per minute rate employed by Bryan Stevenson in a memorable TED Talk. He almost immediately contradicts this advice, however, by praising Anthony Robbins' much faster 240 word per minute rate. Both talks were outstanding and each was successful in reaching its audience. The difference, he suggests, lies in Robbins' extremely energetic physical delivery style, and his infrequent use of visual information, versus Stevenson's use of the dramatic pause as a storytelling technique. What emerges is a more sophisticated understanding of each speaker's natural strengths, of the range of things that audiences will accept, and of the primary importance of speaker authenticity.

In addition to the nine public speaking "secrets," the book contains at least two other sections that coaches or competitors might find particularly interesting: First, Gallo provides useful advice regarding the advantages of videotaped practice sessions, and honest analysis and critique. He includes a sort of "speakers diary" of the real world process that Amanda Palmer used to draft, practice, revise and ultimately master a popular TED Talk in 2013. This section could easily be formalized into a videotaped squad practice and peer feedback mechanism with assigned prompts and built-in opportunities for assessment, evaluation and reflection. Portfolios containing the residue of such work would also be enormously valuable for instructional purposes and as a means of demonstrating student mastery of specific institutional learning outcomes.

The second useful stand-alone section for educators is the brief analysis of gestures and body language contained in Chapter 3. In addition to describing common gestural problems and solutions, Gallo provides transcripts of three very different speakers that match their spoken words with the gestures they employed. Educators could easily locate video clips of the specific speeches (one by Colin Powell, one by Ernesto Sirolli and one by Jennifer Granholm) and use them to supplement the often dry discussion of a speaker's use of appropriate gestures and body language.

Although Gallo's table of contents is perhaps less useful than one might have liked, he makes up for it by including a relatively detailed index and by providing an extensive list of works cited. My favorite take-away from the book was the recitation of a "jaw dropping" moment in a TED Talk about malaria delivered by Bill Gates. He began by taking the lid off of a large jar and releasing mosquitos into the room before informing the audience that, "Malaria is spread by mosquitos. I brought some here. I'll let them roam around. There is no reason only poor people should be infected" (p. 136). Gates then left the audience in squirming discomfort for several minutes as he went on with his speech before informing them that the mosquitos were

harmless. I often find myself bored reading public speaking textbooks, but examples such as these perfectly conveyed the author's message in a succinct, memorable and delightful way.



Missing

BOOK REVIEW

Heinrichs, J. (2013). *Thank you for arguing: What Aristotle, Lincoln, and Homer Simpson can teach us about the art of persuasion*. New York: New Rivers Press. [revised and updated edition]

Reviewed by TOMEKA ROBINSON, HOFSTRA UNIVERSITY

Persuasion is everywhere. From the foods we eat to the brand of toothpaste we prefer, persuasion is all around us. However, many do not understand what persuasion is or how it functions. Jay Heinrichs' (2013) latest edition of *Thank You for Arguing: What Aristotle, Lincoln, and Homer Simpson Can Teach Us About the Art of Persuasion* provides a witty, clever, and engaging explanation of argument.

The author strives to provide clear and relatable examples and tips for the use of argument in everyday settings. While the book is 28 chapters long, the flow of each chapter allows it to read more like a novel rather than a textbook. The first chapter provides the introduction to what argument is and how it surrounds us everyday. The author takes us through a journey of attempting to go an entire day without using any persuasion. While he fails in this attempt, his entertaining way of explaining why escaping persuasion is futile draws the audience into the text and provides a nice synopsis and outline for subsequent chapters.

Chapters 2-13 center on building offense plans. From goal setting to gaining the higher ground, this section provides a clear justification of how to move from fruitless argumentation to winning strategies. While some of the tips, like "how to seduce a cop" (p. 18-20) and "how to manipulate a lover" (p. 21-23), may raise a few eyebrows, Heinrichs is a rhetorician and grounds all of his tips within sound teachings. However, some of the drollness went a little too far for my tastes.

Chapters 14-17 cover establishing defense tactics. In this section, Heinrichs focuses on spotting logical fallacies, building trust, and detecting persuasion. This section was one of my favorites as it reads more like a well-written debate case because the author provides substantive evidence to support every claim that is offered. While Heinrichs still uses humor to advance his points, the examples felt much more authentic.

Chapters 18-28 enhanced the contentions raised in the preceding chapters by giving advanced offensive and agreement strategies. In these chapters, the author discusses how to speak the audience's language and "spot[ting] and exploit[ing] the most persuasive moments" (p. 260). The tools provided in these sections illuminate the vital devices that other persuasion texts seem to either gloss over

or miss entirely.

Overall, *Thank You for Arguing: What Aristotle, Lincoln, and Homer Simpson Can Teach Us About the Art of Persuasion* offers a unique perspective to the use of argument and persuasion. While the overuse of humor and toolboxes throughout the book were not my favorites, by using contemporary examples and an engaging writing style, this book would bode well within any persuasion classroom.



BOOK REVIEW

Hertenstein, M. (2013). *The tell: The little clues that reveal big truths about who we are*. New York: Basic Books.

Reviewed by NINA-JO MOORE, APPALACHIAN STATE UNIVERSITY

The Tell: The Little Clues that Reveal Big Truths About Who We Are is an interesting venture into the study of nonverbal communication factors from a position of someone who is not a communication scholar. Hertenstein is a member of the Psychology faculty at DePauw University, and his approach to looking at this topic was more as a consumer of nonverbal messages – “the tells,” as it were – than as a scholar of the discipline. If you are looking to read a scholarly book on this topic, this would not be your best choice.

Hertenstein begins his foray into this topic by discussing many situations where we really do seek to see the messages that are being sent to us that are either subconscious messages or unconscious messages. Most notably, he begins the discussion with an example of his own son, whom he and his wife thought might be emitting some of “the tells” of being on the autism spectrum. Clearly, a parent would have an interest in such a topic. He even includes a chart of “the tells” to look for when trying to determine autism in a young child (p. 18). If I were a parent I would most definitely be watching for any signs of autism, especially knowing its prevalence in today’s society.

As a reader, I am not so sure that this issue has clear applicability to a broad spectrum of readers, nor did Hertenstein expect the reader to settle for just one example, such as his personal one. He includes many different situations where people would be better off if they paid attention to “the tells” they are encountering. Too often, he feels, we let the clues we encounter elude our senses and psyches. He goes about trying to get us to begin to attend to signs and clues we have to what people are communicating to us.

Hertenstein’s coverage of the topic is eclectic. He includes topics of how we look at others and how we look at ourselves equitably. In Chapter 2, “The Genes in All of Us,” he looks at how perhaps our ability to pay attention to messages we are being sent may come from our genetic make-up. In Chapters 5 he approaches how we look for others in love relationships and how we respond to close significant relationships in our lives. Interestingly enough, he approaches the topic of “gaydar” when trying to establish romantic relationship (pp. 69-82). I found it rather interesting, though, that this was the only subject he discussed in that chapter, even though the title of the chapter was “The Targets of Our Attraction.” I guess I thought it would include both heterosexual and homosexual “tells.” I was pleased to discover

that he did find that it is not acceptable to do the good old “judge a book by its cover” phenomenon when discussing this topic.

As a scholar of nonverbal communication myself, and as a scholar of gender communication issues, I took great interest in Chapter 6, “From Dating to Mating.” He does give good coverage to meeting men and women for romantic reasons, and how to determine if “the tells” are indicating that the relationship will move toward a more intimate, romantic affiliation, or if it will end before it ever progresses that far.

Probably the chapter that caught my interest the most was Chapter 7, “Detecting Deception.” I think my biggest issue with this chapter was what I always teach as the “cardinal rule” in my nonverbal communication classes: you should never try and evaluate honesty in an individual that you do not know well. I always say, “The better you know the person, and the better you know the context, the more accurate your judgments of deception will be.” Hertenstein addresses this a little, but I am always leery of people who think that you can tell how people are lying by the way they avert their eyes or how they hold their bodies.

I think that Hertenstein’s coverage in his last chapter about “the tells” of politicians is one of the better chapters of the book. He is prescriptive of things to watch for and how to determine what is being “told” by the politician. The unfortunate thing about this is that most people will not watch for any of the “tells” of politicians if they are ego-involved with the candidate or the topic.

As a cross between a “pop” book and a scholarly book I found this work thought provoking. He doesn’t clutter the text of his message with internal citations or foot/endnotes. This has its shortcomings, though. I kept reading things that I knew were facts, or were findings from studies, and there were no citations. This is not a book for an academician to read thinking it will give you a clear picture of the topic. Even the endnotes are strangely done. They have a page number and a specific concept on that page, then the source, and then you have to go to the “References” sections to see the source. Instead of reading like an academic book, it was very confusing to me to read it like this. One fun aspect to the book is that at the end of each chapter he gives you some “Party-Worthy Findings.” These are fun little tidbits that you can use when discussing these topics with others at social gatherings.

If you are looking for a different approach to nonverbal communication, that is written just a wee bit awkwardly – although I do admit that it is easy reading – you might like this book. I think that perhaps I might not be the best judge of its value to society due to my personal background in the academic study of nonverbal communication, but I do think those who do not have that background might enjoy the read. I would suggest that you not turn it into your reference book for nonverbal messages is all.

BOOK REVIEW

Kramer, D. (2015). *Entering the real world: Timeless ideas not learned in school*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Reviewed by SUSAN MILLSAP, OTTERBEIN UNIVERSITY

What do students need to know to be successful now that they have a degree? This is the question that David Kramer attempts to answer by presenting 150 practical ideas and tools for people moving into the “real” world. As a computer software business entrepreneur turned university professor, Kramer has written a fast and easy-to-read book that connects guidance on personal growth, career, relationships, and financial advice with many motivational quotes and stories. And while some subjects are given superficial coverage, the resources listed allow the reader to investigate topics in more detail as desired. The book also has its own website where the author provides additional resources, more detail on some topics, and maintains a blog to answer specific questions. This book would make an excellent supplement to a senior year transition course.

While the chapters can be read in any order, there is logic to the organization of the book. Early chapters deal with personal growth and adapting to changes in your life such as graduation, outgrowing friends, and beginning a new job. Basic communication concepts are presented in a practical way and are a pleasant reminder of the importance of good communication in any situation. There is also an emphasis on the importance of critical thinking and its value in different situations. Asking “How do I know I’m right?” leads into an interesting chapter on defining terms for your life. The concepts covered justify what is taught in any argumentation and debate class. Students who participated in forensics will quickly see how the skills they learned in forensics are valuable tools in the real world. While these lessons are very applicable to the high school or college graduate the ideas presented are useful for all ages and all stages of life.

The middle chapters of the book deal with the various stages of finding a job. Kramer gives some good advice on goal setting and looking at the companies where you think you want to work. I found his chapter on interviewing, however, applicable to only certain types of jobs, like sales positions. His suggestions on how to answer some questions would not work for all careers. Kramer also provides advice for working with difficult people and in difficult situations. Most of his suggestions in this chapter are consistent with lessons in interpersonal communication and conflict resolution. The chapter begins to lose some focus, however, as it shifts to a discussion of win-win situations.

The later chapters on finance were filled with specific suggestions that were both practical and informative. The book's website has sample budgeting sheets which are very useful. The section on stock market investing is very interesting but does shift audiences from the new graduate to someone who has money to invest. The idea of planting seeds for future use does make this section valuable for the younger reader as well, although I'm not sure how many will actually read it. I believe the younger reader will be more interested in his chapter on starting your own business. His list of insightful questions and recommendations should help anyone to develop and focus their ideas for a new business.

Finally, Kramer provides a very thorough resource list to help anyone as they venture out in the world. The book ends with a feedback form that is also on the book's website thus indicating that the author is willing to make changes as the world changes. The various topics covered should easily stimulate conversation in a college-level transition course. Overall, this book is a very quick read that has practical information for the new graduate of any age. As the title indicates, this book will be most useful for those just getting started or those making significant changes in their "real" world.

