



The Next Chapter: Change The Mindset, Change Your Life

Robert Miller

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A guide to approaching uncertain life stages with the right mindset that illustrates by example, The Next Chapter is a comforting book.

Focused on the mind, Robert Miller and Monika Lowry's *The Next Chapter* is a soothing self-help guide to changing mindsets and formulating sustainable lifestyle plans.

Covering rightsizing, downsizing, and the recalibration of expectations, married business partners Miller and Lowry draw upon their prior conversations with clients to address the lifestyle concerns and challenges of several generations, including millennials, gen x, and boomers. Their book asserts that a lifestyle, founded on a personal belief system, is "the point in a person's understanding of themselves and their life expectations, where their Big Why, What, When, Who With, How Much, and, finally, Where come together." And to better demonstrate what lifestyles are, the book adds a helpful aside as to what they are not: "A lifestyle is not the cars, the furnishings, the cottage, the boat, or the vacations in all the marketing brochures." Further, it speaks to the importance of being remembered well and leaving behind a legacy for loved ones upon death.

The book has a clear formula: it introduces a couple and their story, relates that story to the theme of the connected section and chapter, and it pronounces takeaway lessons based on the couple's experiences. To illustrate the importance of proactive planning, for example, the book focuses on George and Donna, who looked forward to their golden years and accompanying future lack of social obligations but were uncertain of how to take advantage of their free time. Some other examples are quite personal, as with a story about Miller's mother's cluster headaches; she is extolled for having never complained and for her "quiet courage and optimism." Further, some sweeping generalizations are made about older generations.

The book spreads itself quite thin; it includes generic dieting tips, simplified generational history lessons, and quotes from wise people in the past. There are also discursions into topics of finance and real estate that go beyond its primary focus on relationships and families. And its suggestions for stimulating children's financial intelligence feel as though they belong to a different book altogether; their references to *Rich Dad, Poor Dad* are somewhat discrediting. And not all of the book's attempts to draw in its audience resonate, as with "How could I have gotten it so wrong?" we continually ask ourselves as we look at the ruins of who, where, and what we have built." An allusion to "an abundance of resources, including internet sites, online consultations, and countless new alternative practitioners offering a broad spectrum of health and wellness practices" goes unsatisfied.

A calming self-help book, *The Next Chapter* highlights the importance of one's mindset when it comes to navigating the uncertainties of the world.

STEPHANIE MARRIE (July 13, 2024)

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