



Simply Amazing

K. C. Armstrong

XlibrisUS (May 14, 2019)

Softcover \$19.99 (340pp)

978-1-79603-350-2

The interviews of Simply Amazing catalog the struggles and accomplishments of twelve phenomenal people, captured well because of well-thought-out questions.

Radio personality K. C. Armstrong collects twelve inspiring interviews with extraordinary people in his book *Simply Amazing*.

Previously an interviewer on the Howard Stern show, Armstrong hosts an online series, World's Most Amazing People. This book includes the transcripts of twelve interviews from that show, each with a person who experienced a life-changing event or succeeded against the odds, pushing through difficult circumstances with faith that perseverance would lead to success. Beyond these themes, the interviews encompass a wide variety of topics, including climbing Mount Kilimanjaro and personal challenges, each explored through the minutiae of the individual's ordeal. The information that arises spans the breadth of human experiences, and each interview is thick with specifics.

Subjects include Werner Reich, a Holocaust survivor who shares his experiences with eloquence and wisdom, discussing the brutality of concentration camps, what he learned about human nature, and how he carried on after the war. His story is motivating and educational. Another subject, Jenny Maher, became a quadriplegic after an attempted suicide. She shares the events that led up to the incident and discusses how she copes now. This and other interviews seek the roots of mental illness in an investigative yet gentle manner. Elizabeth Rodger, who opened a veterinary clinic in Alaska, responds to thoughtful questions and shows how animals communicate that they're in pain—and what she's learned about people by working with animals.

The interviews are fascinating. Armstrong asks probing questions, and those inquiries flow well together. Interviewees express themselves without interruptions or arguments, and follow-up questions draw out the intricacies of their stories. Delicate subjects are approached with sensitivity. Whether they focus on autism behaviors and treatments, what it's like to be raised in a violent neighborhood, or the reverberations of a sexual assault, the exchanges are professional.

An autobiographical introduction focuses on Armstrong's health, rather than clarifying the purpose of the book, and its self-deprecating humor is off-putting. Brief introductions precede each interview, providing background on the focal individual and contextualizing the circumstances of their discussions, but they are superficial forwarded glances, focused most on praising the subjects. There is little wrap-up to unite the interviews as a whole, though there is a peek ahead to a coming title.

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AIMEE JODOIN (September 5, 2019)

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