

BOOK REVIEW

Rhythms of Academic Life: Personal Accounts of Careers in Academia, (Eds.) Peter J Frost & Susan Taylor, Sage, 1996, pb 318 pp, £22.95, ISBN 0-8039-7262-8

This is a most interesting book for academics as it addresses many issues in the professional and personal life of the academic. It is part of the Sage Foundations of Organisational Science series which has previously produced volumes on such topics as, *Publishing in the Organisational Sciences* and *Weick's Sensemaking in Organisations*. It is a large book, 518 pages and 52 chapters. The chapters are comprised of individual academics reflecting on their academic life, either in general or in relation to a specific theme, such as becoming a researcher, getting published, becoming a teacher, getting tenure, relating to doctoral students and so on. The reflections are anecdotal and many are full of practical advice from experience. I recognised many of the contributors' names from the field of organisational studies.

First an overview of the book. It is divided into six parts: each part is introduced by the editors and a general summary is provided. Part I - Career Rhythms has five accounts of individual academic careers. Part II focuses on Early Rhythms and is divided into four sections - becoming a teacher, doing research and getting published, working with doctoral students and getting tenure. Of the 15 chapters in this Part there are lots of practical hints on getting published, getting tenure and the traumas of teaching one's first courses. Part III - Middle Rhythms: Traditional Paths - has five sections which deal with issues such as: working collaboratively, becoming a reviewer, becoming a journal editor, becoming a department chair and administrator, and becoming a full professor. Part IV takes the nontraditional paths and has chapters on working as a consultant, developing innovative teaching materials, working inside the university and working with policy makers (being on government commissions). Part V - Rhythms of Renewal - has a chapter on taking a sabbatical and one on returning to academe after a spell as a dean. Finally Part VI takes a broader perspective and looks at the future in terms of business education.

In a book this size and with such interesting subjects there are many themes and issues towards which it is worth directing a reader. I found the treatment of the subject of getting published interesting and useful, particularly as the different sides - trying to get published, revising and resubmitting, being a reviewer, being an editor - are considered. I took delight in the story where an author had his own article rejected by the journal of which he was the associate editor. I also found discussion of the research-consultancy debate enlightening. The reflections on the role of chair (head) of department takes both sides and are illuminating and useful.

There is one particular theme that runs through many of the contributions and is explicitly addressed in three short sections. These are sections which explicitly address

issues of the integration of personal and professional life. At the end of Parts II, III and IV there are sections entitled, Pause Points. The five chapters spread across these three sections focus on integrating work and personal life, holding it all together, dealing with the overenriched work life, and confronting the tensions in an academic career. These chapters add the essential dimension of managing one's own life.

As to what I think is missing, it would have been nice to have had contributions from retired academics. I would also have liked more on the sabbatical than the two provided.

While the perspective of the contributions is limited to the US American university culture (with two exceptions where eminent UK academics, Stewart Clegg, Bob Hinings and Royston Greenwood are featured), this does not inhibit the book being of value to academics in any university culture. The chapters in this book can provide useful input into formal discussions on particular topics which a faculty might be considering - the role of research and teaching, integrating new faculty, dealing with doctoral students, the role of the head of department and so on. They can also provide much useful stimulation for situations in which informal discussions among colleagues take place. Finally individual readers will find plenty of material for personal reflection on their own personal and professional lives.

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