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TITLE INFORMATION

CAREERS BY THE PEOPLE

Candid Career Advice from 101 Experienced Professionals

Mike Wysocki

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BOOK REVIEW

Wysocki presents an interview-driven overview of the ups and downs of a wide variety of professions.

The author opens his nonfiction debut with a deceptively simple question: “Why are so many people unhappy” in their work life? His answer is equally simple: Those people didn’t actively choose their careers. Instead, he asserts, they drifted into them, letting opportunity—or, more specifically, market trends—guide them. The purpose of his book is to give readers a chance to find a career that resonates with them—to “clarify what calls to you.” Wysocki’s compelling approach provides readers with a series of detailed interviews with people, identified only by their first names and last initials, in a broad range of careers. These discussions are grouped under general headings, including “The Hustlers” (which include delivery people, truck drivers, farmers, and office managers), “The Einsteins” (software engineers, database developers, electrical engineers, and accountants), “The Good Kids” (ministers, social workers, and registered nurses), and “The Rock Stars” (writers, graphic designers, television producers, and, perhaps unexpectedly, English professors). The interview subjects are asked similar questions about how well their job pays, what they dislike about their work, what they see as common misconceptions about their job, and so on; regarding the latter, an archeologist mentions that his work involves a lot of tedious paperwork, for instance. Over the course of this survey, Wysocki shows himself to be highly skilled at assembling this material for practical use. He helpfully advises readers to skip straight to professions that interest them, but reading the book from cover to cover makes for a surprisingly gripping experience. Its optimistic tone, too, may strike some readers as unexpected; time and again, in profession after profession, responders report that they’re truly fulfilled by their job and wouldn’t change it, thus demonstrating to readers that satisfying careers really do exist.

A compelling examination of how to find satisfaction in today’s working world.

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