



Mind Over Water: Lessons on Life from the Art of Rowing

By Craig Lambert

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In this wise and thrilling book, Criag Lambert turns rowing--personal discipline, modern Olympic sport, grand collegiate tradition--into a metaphor for a vigorous and satisfying life.

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Mind Over Water: Lessons on Life from the Art of Rowing By Craig Lambert Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Some sports--the solitary ones, in particular--are simply more prone to mysticism and mystery than others. Golf, certainly. Long-distance running, of course. Fishing. Climbing. Each has a literature that confronts the essence of its lonely pursuit and explores the way the solitude and self-discipline these sports demand grow the spirit and fill the competitor. Lambert's graceful reflection on rowing is a lovely addition to the genre, part memoir, part narrative, part celebration of a relatively arcane endeavor, and utterly provocative. The superficial journey here is over water; the real one is internal. "Like Einstein," he writes, "we wish to know God's thoughts. We shall attempt to pry them loose with an oar. The raw elements of the sport are our teacher: the wind and the water, the boat and its oars, our own bodies and minds." Given those elements, it's no surprise that the education is a profound one. The surprise is how accessible and appealing it turns out to be. --*Jeff Silverman*

From Publishers Weekly

Although fishing has had many advocates who see it as a metaphor for life, Lambert, a staff writer and editor at *Harvard* magazine, draws many comparisons between rowing and life. The first such deals with the importance of steering and finding one's way. The second, "Equinox," relates to balance, as both rowing and life are difficult, if not impossible, without it. The last section, "The Powerhouse Stretch," involves the endgame and giving your all, and "never taking no for an answer"?familiar tropes from any comparison of sport and life, sport and business, sport and love. This is not a "how to" manual, by any means, although there is quite a bit of description about the mechanics of rowing. Mostly, Lambert's aim is to mesh his philosophy on life and rowing, and, on occasion, on other pursuits, such as electronic engineering and gardening: "To gain greater effect as athletes, we do not necessarily have to do more. The secret may be to do less, to suppress noise.... The skilled athlete eliminates motions that do not serve the desired result. Our tomato plants thrive when we weed the garden." As in this example, much of the writing is exceedingly earnest and many of the metaphors exceedingly forced. Although rowers will no doubt be hooked, others will likely head back to their Izaak Walton.

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From [Booklist](#)

Written by an editor at *Harvard Magazine*, this meditation on the art of rowing is oar-stroke precise. Its themes are distilled into tight, poetic summations; its autobiographical elements (including the portrait of Boston's Charles River rowing community) prove engaging; its feels-like-you're-there descriptions have an appealing immediacy; and the author's passion for rowing is conveyed convincingly. Unfortunately, many of these virtues are smothered by tedious attempts to impart wisdom under the flimsy rubric of rowing as a metaphor for life. Lambert's metaphors, however, rarely resonate, leaving him in the uncomfortable position of seeming to exalt the unamazing. Still, there aren't many books on rowing out there, and this one attempts to look seriously at the sport's strange allure. Lambert's gaze occasionally drifts out of focus, but fellow rowers will applaud him for looking in the right direction. Recommended where the sport is popular. *Dane Carr*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Elizabeth Daugherty:

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