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You're Smarter Than They Make You Feel: How the Experts Intimidate Us and What We Can Do About It

Paula J. Caplan

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Paula J. Caplan : You're Smarter Than They Make You Feel: How the Experts Intimidate Us and What We Can Do About It before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised You're Smarter Than They Make You Feel: How the Experts Intimidate Us and What We Can Do About It:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. rockdreamerBy PorscheThis is by far one of the best books that I've ever read. I would highly recommend it to anyone who wants to increase their self-esteem and knowledge.

This is a book for anyone who has sought help from a doctor, lawyer, teacher, auto mechanic, or other expert, and ended up no better off and left with a sense of powerlessness. Caplan discusses the strategies experts typically use to intimidate clients, their reasons for doing so, and provides a wealth of counterstrategies.

From Publishers WeeklyThere is a certain anti-intellectualism inherent in this treatise by Canadian psychologist Caplan. She assumes the mantle of an "authority," charging that experts in virtually every field--medicine, law, education, auto mechanics, plumbing, business--intimidate the nonspecialist by using jargon, complicating simple subjects, shirking responsibility and by their unwillingness to listen. Caplan's explanations for such attitudes range

from insecurity to ineptitude, and she presents helpful recommendations on how to combat techniques of intimidation. But she does a disservice by not including sufficient disclaimers that she does not dismiss all experts. Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Kirkus sA plodding, repetitive self-help manifesto by psychologist Caplan (Psychiatry/Univ. of Toronto; *Between Women*, 1981, etc.) that accuses experts in the fields of medicine, law, and psychiatry of deliberately using rank-pulling strategies to intimidate the hapless consumer. In chapters with titles like "What They Say and What They Don't Say" and "What They Do and What They Don't Do," Caplan draws up a laundry list of devices that doctors and other experts routinely employ--such as using needlessly complex language, refusing to answer questions, or failing to give all the necessary information--to lord it over their patients or clients. The author cites numerous examples of people who have been victimized by experts--like the woman who ended up on a kidney dialysis machine because her psychiatrist, who'd put her on lithium, had failed to monitor the antidepressant's side effects. Moreover, Caplan charges that our childlike insistence on seeing doctors and lawyers as gods instead of as the ordinary nebbishes many of them are--men and women who may have graduated at the bottom of their med- or law- school class--prevents us from wising up and demanding the treatment we deserve. Too many conspiratorial references to the evil experts as "them" and to the cheated consumers as "us" tend to infantilize the reader, as well as to simplify the problems of living in a complex, highly specialized world where technical language is sometimes unavoidable. If you're as smart as Caplan claims, you probably don't need to read this book. -- Copyright 1993, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.