

Splitting Wood

by Tom Rademacher

About the Book

"SPLITTING WOOD," is a culmination of stories written over the last 21 years by long-time Grand Rapids Press columnist Tom Rademacher, who launched a career writing extraordinary stories about everyday people from all over West Michigan.

Published by Lake Michigan Books, "Splitting Wood" is an apt metaphor for the way in which Rademacher reveals his subjects, knots and all -- sharing stories of tragedy and triumph about people in our midst who both suffer and soar.

Praise for the Book

“Tom Rademacher has a gift for articulating the ways in which all of us are connected, and in each of his deftly crafted stories, he reminds us of the love, hope and humor in our own lives.”

— *Jeffrey Zaslow, Co-Author of the No. 1 Bestseller “The Last Lecture”*

“Tom Rademacher is a journalist with a heart as big as my home state of Texas. He writes about real people and real situations in ways that will make your laugh and cry. You will be touched by his stories.”

— *Heloise, Internationally Syndicated Columnist and Author*

“Who else but Tom Rademacher could convince readers to donate band instruments to a struggling middle school music program, help a family in need, or attend the funeral of a total stranger? This book is a godsend.”

— *Colleen Pierson, Media Instructor, Rockford Public Schools*

“An antidote for the banality of celebrity worship, Tom’s understated Midwestern brilliance is his poet’s capacity to mine and distill what is extraordinary in ordinary people’s lives. Without an ounce of preachiness or preciousness, he both tells us who we are and reminds us of our inherent interconnectedness. This homegrown seer is a community treasure.”

— *John Otterbacher, Author of “Sailing Grace”*

Courtesy of Lake Michigan Books

About the Author

Born and raised in Grand Rapids, Tom Rademacher has been employed part-time as a lifeguard, factory worker, silk screener, taxicab driver, handyman and swim coach. Those hardscrabble connections to everyday men and women helped launch his career at The Grand

Rapids Press as a teller of extraordinary tales about “the guy next door.” For more than three decades, he endeared himself to readers of The Press as a writer with a nose for news, a keen eye for detail, and a desire to provide a voice for people both struggling and soaring. He retired from The Press in 2009, and now freelances. He and wife Hollie have three sons – Tom, Patrick and Andrew – and live in Rockford. This is his first book.

Courtesy of author's website: http://tomrademacheronline.com/Tom_s_Bio.php retrieved 10/20/2010

Discussion Questions

1. Does the book offer a central idea or premise? What are the problems or issues raised? Are they personal, spiritual, societal, global, political, economic, medical, scientific?
2. Do the issues affect your life? How so—directly, on a daily basis, or more generally? Now or sometime in the future?
3. What evidence does the author give to support the book's ideas? Does he/she use personal observations and assessments? Facts? Statistics? Opinions? Historical documents? Scientific research? Quotations from authorities?
4. Is the evidence convincing? Is it relevant or logical? Does it come from authoritative sources? (Is the author an authority?) Is the evidence speculative...how speculative?
5. Some authors make assertions, only to walk away from them—without offering explanations. It's maddening. Does the author use such unsupported claims?
6. What kind of language does the author use? Is it objective and dispassionate? Or passionate and earnest? Is it polemical, inflammatory, sarcastic? Does the language help or undercut the author's premise?
7. Does the author—or can you—draw implications for the future? Are there long- or short-term consequences to the problems or issues raised in the book? If so, are they positive or negative? Affirming or frightening?
8. Does the author—or can you—offer solutions to the problems or issues raised in the book? Who would implement those solutions? How probable is success?
9. Does the author make a call to action to readers—individually or collectively? Is that call realistic? Idealistic? Achievable? Would readers be able to affect the desired outcome?
10. Are the book's issues controversial? How so? And who is aligned on which sides of the issues? Where do you fall in that line-up?

11. Can you point to specific passages that struck you personally—as interesting, profound, silly or shallow, incomprehensible, illuminating?
12. Did you learn something new reading this book? Did it broaden your perspective about a difficult personal issue? Or a societal issue? About another culture in another country... or about an ethnic / regional culture in your own country?

Courtesy of LitLovers website: http://www.litlovers.com/questions_nf.htm retrieved October 26, 2010