

Letter re *Letting the Heart Sing - The Mind Gymnasium: digital edition CDROM* reviewed by Geoff Lamb

As the author of two dozen films and several books, I have to date had a policy of never responding to reviews, but as publisher of *Letting the Heart Sing - The Mind Gymnasium: digital edition CDROM* reviewed by Geoff Lamb in the last edition of *Self and Society*, I feel that, apart from my own work, I need to honor the contribution of the three editors who worked on the CD, plus the many people who helped produce it, and vigorously object to his review of our product.

I found his review essentially trivial, inadequate and ultimately derisory, and certainly unworthy of *Self and Society*. Geoff Lamb damns with faint praise 1200 pages of content in 100 words while indulging a whim for engaging the prejudices of a techno-savvy teenage son that occupies around three quarters of his text.

Rather than accept and enjoy the CD for what it is— the cover explicitly describes it as 'A web-site on a CD' - he complains that it is *not* the video game that his son prefers; *not* the book he wants to read in bed or on a train. Will we next see a review by Geoff of a 2005 desk diary bemoaning its lack of content?

It's very difficult to understand how he could pass over without comment 100+ pages on personal and political power, original material on Flourishing, Living Together, Becoming a Person, an extensive Client Guide, or the 300+ illustrations and 28 pages of interactive index.

Anyone who is familiar with browsing web sites will find that the CDROM is an easily accessible resource for personal and professional development. Browse it as you would a Sunday newspaper, or the BBC's web resources.

What a pity that *Self and Society* didn't find someone more capable of matching in a review the merits of *Letting the Heart Sing* as a huge compendium of humanistic psychology. Or, following good humanistic (and IPN) practice, detailed in the CD, perhaps I should contribute a self and peer assessment of it?

Denis Postle

A reply from Geoff Lamb

Dear Dennis

I want to respond to your letter from two perspectives, that of the reviewer and that of the reviews editor.

As the reviewer, my response is simply to clarify the essential message of my review. I really liked, and was inspired by, the content of your CD. However, the form in which it was presented just didn't work for me. If you find it difficult to hear **both** parts of my feedback Dennis, I'm sorry, but I don't see that as my responsibility. ***

...

My response as reviews editor follows from this. I consider it vital, in both senses of the word, that reviews in S&S represent congruent, authentic feedback. I want to make it clear that I support all S&S reviewers, including myself, in valuing their visceral, subjective responses to a book (or other medium) and that I believe this kind of response to be, not only intrinsically 'worthy', but also entirely consistent with humanistic practice.

Having said this, I want to thank you Dennis, for taking the risk of responding with such feeling and for enabling me to clarify my beliefs about the function of reviews in a humanistic journal.

Kindest Regards

Geoff Lamb (Reviews Editor)

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