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Choose Friendly Rebel, if you read only one book about America’s most respected adult educator Edward Lindeman. “What an absorbing adventure joining the daughter of a legend on a journey to find the human being in the legend,” as Malcolm Knowles says.

The eminent historian Clarke Chambers writes a compelling introduction assessing the significance of Lindeman’s extensive writings on crucial national issues over the course of his thirty-five-year career in adult education, social work, and politics. Then Leonard’s short, pithy chapters—often reading like a mystery novel—unravel the myths and facts about her father.

This book is far from a simple puff piece. It’s a warm-and-factual biography revealing Lindeman’s weaknesses and strengths. As Leonard discovered them over a fifteen-year search of the record. Through interviews with his colleagues and the unearthing of his lengthy correspondence, she encounters many surprises, some of them unpleasant. In addition, she explores his many travels, travels, and friendships with the high and mighty, including the president of the United States, and the very wealthy heroine in the Whitney fortune.

Friendly Rebel is a classic worth reading again and again. Like her father’s The Meaning of Adult Education, it is a concise and useful guide for adult educators and for understanding the development of adult education. The book is divided into five parts: The Beginning, The Middle, The End, The Aftermath, and The Legacy. Each part is further divided into chapters on specific topics, including Lindeman’s childhood, education, career, and impact. The book concludes with a conclusion and list of further readings.

—by John A. Henschke
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Review