



Altering Fate: Why the Past Does Not Predict the Future

Michael Lewis PhD

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On the psychoanalyst's couch...in the Head Start classroom...whether teasing out the mysteries of our own past or trying to brighten our children's future, few of us question the pervasive belief that early childhood exerts an inordinate power over adult achievements, relationships and mental health. Once robbed of our potential by the psychic wounds of infancy or the inadequacies of our upbringing, the theory goes, we risk being trapped in maladaptive patterns and unfulfilling lives. But does early experience really seal our fate? Daring to challenge prevailing models of child development, this provocative book persuasively argues that childhood experiences neither determine who we later become nor limit what we can do. Just as our world is unpredictable in nature, Lewis argues, so too is the course of our lives. What enables us to survive--and sets us free from our pasts--is our astonishing adaptability to change, shaped by the uniquely human attributes of consciousness, will, and desire. With insights from psychology, philosophy, education, and science, this book puts forward a compelling new vision of how we become who we are and raises vital implications for clinical interventions and social policy affecting children.

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