



Team of Five: The Presidents Club in the Age of Trump

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Kate Andersen Brower chronicles relationships, laden with anecdotes, between the past living presidents in her book, "The Team of Five. - The President's Club in the Age of Trump" (George H W Bush passed away after her book was published).

According to Brower, there are nine unwritten rules that every past president should adhere to. Those rules are 1 Honor a shared history. 2. Respect the office and one another 3. Avoid criticizing the sitting president at all costs. 4. Don't be too proud to ask for help. 5. Unite in tragedy. 6. Come together for celebrations. 7. Treasure the most perfect house in the United States. 8. Give back. 9. Family comes first

The most intriguing part of the book, in my opinion, is the unprecedented friendships between Bill Clinton and George H.W. Bush. The former first lady Barbara Bush even called them "the odd couple." The next most interesting relationship, as described in this book, is between George W. Bush and Barack Obama. Bill Clinton and George W. Bush also developed a loving relationship in large part because of George H W. Bush. George W Bush's transfer of power to Obama is considered the smoothest in the history of the presidential transition. In all, Bush 41 and Bush 43 are the only presidents mentioned in this book who followed the unwritten rules mentioned above.

Brower, a CNN contributor is especially harsh on Trump. She writes, "Trump once

desperately wanted to earn the approval of his predecessors. He has since disparaged all the former living presidents and seems unconcerned that he will be an outcast from the President's Club."

Brower also tells amusing stories about the First Ladies and their relationship with each other. She describes Laura Bush as the most amicable among the First Ladies. She observes that Michelle Obama and George W Bush have become the best of friends. Hillary Clinton and Pat Nixon had to face the most onerous task of supporting their husbands despite their (husbands') follies.

All the former presidents have difficulties adjusting to civilian life after being the most important person in the world. Jimmy Carter didn't have enough money to repair his farmhouse in Georgia. He repaired his house with his own hands to save money. Ultimately, he wrote novels to sustain himself and his farm. Other recent presidents have become extremely rich by writing memoirs and by charging huge amounts for their speeches. Bill Clinton charges between \$250,000 to a million dollars per appearance, so do George W Bush and Barack Obama.

If you are not in the mood for critical reading, "Team of Five" is my recommendation to you. It's a perfect book to bring along on vacation as a pastime. **-Reviewed by Musafir**