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Atlantan Gene Ruyle has some encouraging words

■ **Making A Life: Career, Commitment, and the Life-Process.** Gene Ruyle. Seabury Press. \$7.95.

By Colleen Kelly Teasley
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What would God say if he read this book? It is a legitimate question that readers of Gene Ruyle's new book, "Making A Life," might find themselves asking.

After all, Ruyle, an Atlanta psychologist, Episcopal priest and former Marine, at first blush seems to be exhorting his readers live it up.

A closer look, however, reveals a message that is courageous, not frivolous: "What do we have but life? What is it for but to live?"

What Ruyle sets out to do, then, is to lead his readers on a step-by-step pilgrimage through their lives. It is a trek that may be uncomfortable to some. For life's path, according to Ruyle, is riddled with risk-taking and decision-making. Stagnancy looms as the biggest sin.

In a compact 144 pages, "Making A Life," makes a place for Ruyle as a modern-day philosopher. While he relies on

the philosophies of such a diverse group as Mark Twain, Thomas Jefferson, Goethe, Nikos Kazantzakis, James Cagney and the Italian journalist Oriana Fallaci as allies, it is clearly a Gene Ruyle philosophy that emerges.

In a nutshell, it goes something like this: "For human beings, being human does not come naturally or easily. It comes hard, with effort, and is met with the greatest reluctance because being human means making choices and taking stands. ... Those who know this live differently from those who do not."

It's a philosophy that Ruyle not only writes about, but also lives. And it's a way of living that occasionally has thrown him at odds with his own church.

He has faced his own divorce, his troubled children and head-on collisions with some Episcopal church officials. He has found himself at the crossroads more than once. Through it all, he has made his choices, taken his stands.

In many ways, it's his own pilgrimage through life that Ruyle has put down on paper. This time out, though, he is able to guide his readers through the often painful steps of "life making." He even provides

them with simple, reflective exercises to ease the journey.

Ruyle — who has found his place as founder and director of an Atlanta institute called Individual and Personal Studies in Experience, and as assistant to the rector at Atlanta's prestigious St. Luke's Episcopal Church — prods his readers towards finding their own way.

"Most people decide to finish with life before life finishes with them," Ruyle writes. "They start to drift, and gradually begin to sink from the weight of their own unspent vitality, until they come to settle in its residue."

This tact, Ruyle warns, can banish you to the "hoards and herds of the half-alive."

"Making A Life" is a book for those who want to do more than pass through life. It is a book for those who are looking for a little encouragement and help as they strive to make their way through life.

For the author, it is a book that should begin to make a name for Gene Ruyle as a contemporary philosopher who has something important to say.



■ **RUYLE:** Pilgrimage through life.