

Practicing greatness book review examples

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Practicing Greatness Book Review

The book “ Practicing Greatness: 7 Disciplines of Extraordinary Spiritual Leaders,” written by Reggie McNeal is one of the famous literary works on seven fundamental disciplines for religious leaders. The author portrays a complete picture of a spiritual leader, by reaching multiple aspects that comprise an individual. From his long years of experience as the leader of the Church, McNeal illustrated several practical examples to examine the positive and negative aspects of leadership. The seven key disciplines stated by the author are self-awareness, self-management, mission, decision-making, belonging and aloneness. McNeal describes perfecting the strengths of leadership in the chapter called self-development by addressing the managers and leaders through various philosophies. The philosophies suggested by McNeal support the church or business staff in combating the problems, which originate from positioning people in an environment that exploits their flaws instead of taking advantage of their strengths.

McNeal addresses the leaders as learners. McNeal gives an account of self-awareness as a key to maximize strengths by knowing what one is good at and not. He states that one should be aware of reacting and identifying the good and bad things that attract the attention. Another discipline called self-management is necessary to manage one’s life, which includes “ health, physic, marriage, relationship, learning and sexuality.” It is only the leader that can manage these aspects of life. McNeal quotes that whenever one says “ I don’t have time for that, it is due to the inability of the person to make time.” On the account of mission, McNeal narrates that it is the duty of great leaders to renounce their passion and accomplish the tasks given by

God. Spiritual leaders must understand what “enables them to feel the smile of God” and make a move towards their passion. The most important discipline McNeal addresses is decision-making. Though self-explanatory, the author emphasizes on making and evaluating decisions in a better way. McNeal states that great leaders must possess the capability to make effective decisions even with the little information available. Great leaders must also know when, how and what decisions are important. However, making too many decisions create an issue. The next discipline McNeal addresses is “belonging.” Though leadership is lonely, a leader doesn’t need to make it so. Community and relationships are equally important, but require time and effort. Marriage and family are important as they are the lifeblood for a leader. ‘Aloneness’ is the last discipline notes by author McNeal, which he describes as an essential quality to refresh and walk through the tough times of life. However, he does not stress much on aloneness, but describes it as “wilderness experience.” Transformation is possible only if the leaders realize their mission. It is important to deal with situations rather struggle for clarity about moving on with something. The book “Practicing Greatness,” reminds me of a personal experience during my days in the community college. When I entered the city after the high school, I was struggling to find work. However, after a few weeks, I was lucky to find a job as a cashier where I learned from my co-workers that attending a community college is an effort to improve the earning power. After a few months, I was able to find a position to teach in a displaced homemaker program at the local community college. In spite of having the support of the people, I failed to get a promotion in the college. At one point

of time, I decided to leave the institution unable to continue facing the challenges at work. I had higher expectations as I was aware of my qualities and capabilities as a leader.

After thorough self-analysis, I finally decided to apply for the position believing that the college required action, and that my positive relationships with the people will allow me to make tough decisions. The very reason that motivated me to apply for the promotion was because the community college identifies the strengths and weaknesses of the individuals, and capitalizes the strengths and minimizes the weaknesses. I finally achieved the position and served as the community leader for six months, during which I found the opportunity to unleash the creativity of the college, help the people live out their dreams and make a difference in their lives. I found the importance of nurturing relationships as a leader. I used intuition, humility, fear and trust in the practice of leadership and believed in an open door mission of the community college.

“ Practicing Greatness,” is a valuable book not only for the young leaders, but also for the elders. While the book is an aspiration to young leaders to excel in their careers as efficient leaders, it inspires elders to make necessary changes in their practice of leadership. The book advises how one should understand the importance of “ time, money and emotional intelligence.” It suggests asking right questions to the right people and collecting right information for right decision-making. McNeal offers practical wisdom through the book and narrates that the disciplines mentioned in the book do not sum in the beginning of the life of a leader, but augment through experience. Intensive education and experience gained by a leader

develops a dedication to self-examination. The book alerts the leaders not to look for excuses in failures, instead view the failures as valuable morals of life.

Each chapter in the book inspires the leaders to reach a higher level of excellence and commitment. McNeal explains to the leaders about different ways of overcoming failure, which is an essential component for every leader to learn. The book classifies four groups of people who have problems with their limits, namely "yielding, locked, controlling and intensive." McNeal notes spiritually-driven solutions to the real life issues that occur in the lives of a majority of the leaders. Though the seven disciplines mentioned by the author are challenging tasks, they are a definite help to the students and young leaders who wish to climb the ladders of success in terms of leadership. The author makes a note of his practical experiences to reveal the importance of leadership, however, on certain occasions, the readers feels the solutions to be repetitive. Also, some parts of the book criticize the basic practices of the leaders, which do not impress the readers.

After a thorough reading and analysis of the book "Practicing Greatness," I feel the differences in greatness between the "heavenly dimensions and worldly dimensions." Out of the seven disciplines listed by McNeal, I feel that I should excel in decision-making. I am good at making decisions, but most of the times I spend a lot of time thinking and worrying myself about the decisions I make. I feel uncomfortable about my decisions with the fear of their failure at some or the other point of time. I wish to focus on the discipline 'mission'. My mission is to follow the guidelines of Jesus and preach the importance of God and his incredible grace to the whole world. I

discovered the importance of the eleven elements of behavior, such as, perfectionism, confession and pride in order to gain a better service for God. I will participate in community activities to inspire the people. I prefer to maintain “ healthy emotions and a spiritual mind,” which are the two factors on which the success of a leader depends. I came to know the importance of physical health through the book. I wish to maintain a balance between my physical health as well as spiritual health in my daily life. I recognized that sharing sadness with others helps to forget the same. I prefer to share my feelings of sadness as well as happiness with my friends on a regular basis, so that I can relieve myself from stress. I also understood about the importance of time and effort. I plan to spend my time in the service of God by attending the prayers every week and put my efforts to help the world in a positive way by preaching the values of Jesus.

The book made me realize the differences between good leaders and great leaders. I would take necessary measures to ensure that I follow the disciplines provided in the book and transform into a great leader. I would like to change my priorities among the personal values. I aspire to become a great spiritual leader and work with a combination of my heart and soul. I would take every possible step to inspire and encourage people who follow the path of God. I will mingle with people and maintain a “ nurturing relationship” with others as it is one of the disciplines of a great leader. I will make a note of my daily activities and make sure that I follow the guidelines of McNeal in every aspect of life. The book is one of the greatest inspirations of my life and transformed my views, ideas and thoughts about a leader. I

would recommend the book to each one as it is a treasure of knowledge that makes an individual complete.

References

McNeal, Reggie. *Practicing Greatness: 7 Disciplines of Extraordinary Spiritual Leaders*. John Wiley & Sons, 2010.