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Review: Filling the Glass

By Reviewed by Philip Abelard

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Filling the Glass: The Skeptic's Guide to Positive Thinking in Business by Barry Maher (Dearborn Trade Publishing, \$19.95)

Rating: \$\$\$\$\$

Businesses often seem more concerned with the spin than with the reality, more concerned with what people think about the product than the product itself. Employees are constantly being told to be positive. "Negative attitude" on an evaluation can kill a career. Positive thinking shaman crisscross the country, delivering keynotes and writing books. With cosmetically perfect smiles and televangelist hair, they explain that everything is, after all, wonderful. Let's all think happy thoughts. And the glass is—as we all know—half full not half empty.

Reading the cover of Barry Maher's new book, Filling the Glass: The Skeptic's Guide to Positive Thinking in Business, you might expect more of the same. Maher is, after all, a prominent keynote speaker. And the cover blurbs are too good: "inspiring," "uplifting," "packed with useful practical advice," "enlightening," "entertaining," even "laugh out loud funny." Once you begin the book however, you'll suspect that Maher's teeth are less than perfect. He openly admits his hair is much too thin for televangelism. He says things like "With all the money we spend on self improvement in this country, you'd think we'd all be darn close to perfect by now." And, "If you're absolutely, 100 percent positive, without the slightest trace of a doubt that you can do something, get a second opinion."

Filling the Glass is a business self-help book with an edge: Chicken Soup for the Skeptical Soul. It's a book for the rest of us—for those who understand the benefits of a positive attitude but deep down inside don't really believe that chanting affirmations will make our dreams come true. It's a book for those who suspect that when the boss enthuses, "Jack has a positive attitude," he really means, "Jack kisses all the right posteriors and doesn't gripe about my stupidity."

Barry Maher doesn't seem at all concerned about who moved his cheese. He distrusts self-help books and business gurus. And when he holds them up to question, he holds himself up as well. Readers

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who loved Leadership Secrets of Attila the Hun, Maher writes, will find that Maher is "every bit as much an expert on seat-of-the-pants psychology as Attila was on rape, pillage and—I guess—twentieth century management technique."

To Maher, whether you call the glass half empty or half full, it's still only four ounces of water. The problem isn't whether it's half full or half empty, the problem is figuring out how to fill it up. Reality counts. To grow or change or improve a business, to motivate people for the long haul, you have to begin by dealing with that reality—rather than what you, the company, the CEO or the stockholders might wish were true. All the innovative—and even counter-intuitive—strategies, tactics and tips that Maher offers for improving businesses, business lives, and careers spring from that deceptively simple premise.

Consider the technique he calls, Bragging about the Negatives. Are you having a problem explaining a price increase, for example? Try this: "Are our rates expensive? Absolutely. Why do we charge so

much? Because we can. Because our clients are willing to pay that much for the results we generate. Is the competition cheaper? Absolutely. But do you really think they would charge less if they could charge more? They charge less because that's what they can get for the results they generate." No excuses, no convoluted explanations, no mealy-mouthing. Reality.

If you ever want to promote an idea, a proposal or yourself, if you ever want to sell anything to anybody, the story of Clyde Thompson winning a job by bragging about his prison record is, by itself, worth the price of the book.

Maher's unique perspective illuminates even the familiar in new and revealing ways. "As far as this, I'm okay, you're okay stuff," he writes, "maybe you're not so okay. It's not like everybody is. The universe has produced Charles Manson, Jeffrey Dahmer and Adolf Hitler. They weren't okay. And to be frank, I'm still not all that convinced about Attila the Hun . . . [When it comes to self esteem,] you know yourself a lot better than I do. If you don't think much of yourself, who am I to contradict you?" Oddly enough, the book's hardheaded skepticism ultimately makes it more inspirational—and more positive—not less. The ending is an emotional body blow.

Filling the Glass is not perfect. Some strategies could use more amplification: two or three are worthy of books of their own. A few anecdotes seem to have been included more for their entertainment value than because they add much to the message. And occasionally, Filling the Glass yields to the self help temptation of promising more than it or any book or program can deliver. The over-promising is unnecessary, and Maher should know better. But, as he himself notes, "Marketing has it's own truths which are often hidden from the heart."

No matter, Filling the Glass: The Skeptic's Guide to Positive Thinking in Business is a strong \$\$\$\$\$: our highest recommendation. For once, the cover blurbs are right. And when Guerrilla Marketing author Jay Levinson writes that Filling the Glass should be "required reading for any MBA program," the proper response, even for those of us without televangelist hair, can only be "Amen."

Books for Business Ratings

\$\$\$\$\$ A Must-Read, Invaluable

\$\$\$\$ Well Worth the Investment

\$\$\$ Some Worthwhile Content

\$\$ Invest Your Money Elsewhere

\$ Demand a Refund

Philip Abelard writes the syndicated Books for Business column. He may be reached at booksforbusiness@yahoo.com.

How Do They Make Auto Glass Bulletproof?

By Jeff Jefferson

As you may know bulletproof glass is glass that is capable of stopping all sorts of bullets fired at it. This type of glass is made by using a strong but transparent material such as polycarbonate thermoplastic. Sometimes it's constructed by using layers of laminated glass.

The polycarbonate layer is often put between layers of regular glass. A bullet will probably pierce the exterior glass layer, but will be stopped by the really strong polycarbonate layer before it can pierce the inner layer of glass. There's also what's called bullet resistant glass that's constructed of laminated glass layers. This is built from sheets of glass glued together using some sort of liquid rubber.

One-way Bullet Proof Glass

As technology advances in the field of bullet resistant glass we now have a new type of bullet proof glass called one-way bulletproof glass. These types of glasses are commonly used by armored cars.

The beauty of this glass is that it will resist incoming fire arms striking the outside of the glass, while allowing those on the other side of the glass, such as guards, fire from inside the armored car, through the glass at the exterior threat outside.

Usually One-way bulletproof glass is made up of two layers. A brittle layer on the outside and a flexible layer on the inside. If a bullet is fired from the outside it will hit the brittle layer first and will probably shatter an area of it. This shattering of the glass absorbs some of the bullet's energy, and spreads it out on a larger area. When the slowed down bullet hits the flexible layer, it will be stopped.

However, when someone fires a bullet from the inside it hits the flexible layer first. The bullet will then go through the flexible layer because its energy is focused on a smaller area. The brittle layer will then shatter outward because the inner layer flexes and doesn't stop the bullet's progress.

Jeff Jefferson Auto Glass Site Auto Glass



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