



The Path

Laurie Beth Jones

★★★★☆ (4 stars)

Buy this book if:

- *You want a practical process for developing a mission or vision statement.*
- *Your looking for some inspiration about the power of focusing on your call*

This book from a well known Christian business coach provides a step by step outline for developing a personal mission and vision statement. A variety of well-thought-out, practical exercises are deployed to help individuals quickly center in on what they want to accomplish in life, what they value and who they want to help. The second half of the book provides several case studies of biblical leaders and their missions.

The book delivers on its central premise, presenting some creative and effective exercises that help people get past their mental barriers to describing their call. For instance, Jones has you visualize yourself as one of the four elements, or create a word picture of who you are (an eagle, a bridge, an acorn) to draw out of you a description of your true self. Meditations from scripture are sprinkled throughout. There is also an excellent section on reconnecting with what you wanted to be as a child (they often contain the seeds of our true call), and on receiving the gifts and detaching ourselves from the cords that have come through our families.

I liked Jones' emphasis on short, memorable mission statements – often in the ministry world I see statements that are unmanageable or unused because they are too long and convoluted.

While the simplicity and creativity of the process the book presents is its strength (it will help almost anyone develop a mission statement quickly), the weakness of that approach is that the statements are somewhat formulaic. The book even provides a sentence format where you simply plug in the cause you serve here, your three verbs here, and your core values here and you have a statement. However, you can always change it later – and a formulaic mission statement is far better than no mission statement at all, which is what most people have.

Evangelical or conservative readers may be put off by periodic statements that seem to draw more from new age or eastern thought than from traditional Christianity. For instance, at one point an example is presented where an individual's pursuit of her dream lifestyle results in her moving out and leaving her husband. This result seems to be applauded by the author. I'm not sure the individual's local pastor would have agreed



with that approach. And like a lot of life purpose books, this one minimizes the call to a sacrificial lifestyle that is an integral, essential part of becoming like Christ.

Summary

Still, for practical tools for developing personal mission and vision statements, this is one of the first resources I'd turn to. *Values Driven Leadership* by Malphurs is sounder biblically, but is geared more toward organizations and is less accessible for the average reader (meaning: it's pretty dry.) Though written by a coach, this is not intended to be an instruction book for coaches. But mission and vision is a coaches' bread and butter, and the tools here are well worth the price of the book.

Reviewed by:

Tony Stoltzfus, Professional Coach & Coach Trainer
www.CoachingPastors.com/stoltzfus.htm