



[Coaching the Artist Within](#)

by Eric Maisel

★★★★☆ (4.5 stars)

Buy this book if:

- *You want tools for coaching artists, writers and musicians*
- *You want to improve your ability to coach self-defeating thinking and inner obstacles*
- *You want to finish that book, song or creative project you dream about*

Overview

This book does a great job of treating the inner obstacles that block creative people from producing or enjoying their work, and provides useful tools for coaching around those obstacles. The author, Eric Maisel, is an internationally-known author, creativity coach, and coach trainer, and his breadth of experience shines through the text. This is a great inside look at the challenges artists, writers and creative people face. And I find how-to books from trainers particularly useful, because while a coach knows how to utilize a coaching technique, a trainer has refined the process of helping **you** use it.

The book is arranged around 12 chapters, each covering a central issue in the creative process, with at least two coaching exercises in each chapter. The text is sprinkled with coaching dialogues, and each chapter has an extended, real-life example of a creative individual facing his or her giant. I love that the examples focus on make-or-break destiny issues as opposed to trivialities—it is clear that this coach gets to the heart of the issue.

While it is written as a self-coaching guide, one can easily translate the techniques directly into a coaching relationship. You'll learn tools for creating mindfulness, centering creativity on life purpose, setting realistic, flexible goals for artistic endeavors, identifying what generates and drains creative energy, dealing with dualistic thinking, and much more.

According to the author, “Would-be creators are stymied more by anxiety than by any other factor.” So the book is focused around techniques for developing mindfulness (getting perspective on yourself), identifying self-defeating thinking patterns and changing them. Maisel's approach depends heavily on self-talk and affirmations, the mental disciplines of changing the patterns you use in thinking. I would have liked to see some complimentary focus on emotional techniques, but hey, you can't have everything.

The book is written from an atheist/Buddist perspective, so you'll have to wade through some stuff about yin and yang (which would be better understood in terms of personality types anyway), as well as a philosophy that artists must choose to make their own meaning even if the world is meaningless. If you understand going in that this person isn't writing from a Christian perspective, it isn't a big deal. I found it stretched my thinking to learn from a coach who deals with rock star type issues (drugs, selling out, creative mania, etc.) that I don't often come across.

Summary

In addition to being an excellent book for learning to coach artists and writers, and coach can benefit from its treatment of internal obstacles and techniques for overcoming self-defeating thinking patterns. I would also recommend this to the many coaches I meet who dream of producing a book or other creative work but never seem to get it done. And on top of it all, [*Coaching the Artist Within*](#) is a well-written, fun read. You'll enjoy it.

Reviewed by:

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