

A Warrior's Bible: The Elements of True Warriorship

Gus Gordon

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An overview of masculinity, A Warrior's Bible is as much self-help book as philosophical treatise.

Many of the behaviors that exemplify the traditional Western notion of masculinity, such as hunting and fighting, are enjoyed by members of all genders. In attempting to define masculinity for the modern person, *A Warrior's Bible* eschews behavioral stereotypes surrounding the concept of a manly lifestyle. Instead, Gus Gordon focuses on a healthy mind-body-spirit balance that is in sync with many philosophies.

In the sense used here, a warrior is not necessarily a literal war fighter, but someone who achieves inner strength by pursuing masculinity. This process includes controlling destructive impulses, following a self-defined path, renouncing luxury, and engaging in intense physical activity to achieve fitness. In fact, much of the book is devoted to athleticism, both in chapters that deal with it exclusively and as a running theme in chapters concerning other matters, such as spirituality.

Gordon admits early in the book that most of the content is intended for men, but he also states in the introduction that the book's contents "could also apply to female warriors in many ways, since masculinity is not confined exclusively to the male gender." Indeed, the text makes frequent mention of femininity as a necessary, internally sourced balance to masculinity, not an external prize or sign of weakness. This attitude may not quite broaden the scope of *A Warrior's Bible* enough to appeal broadly to female readers, but it opens the door to women who may already appreciate some aspects of the book's philosophy.

In defining masculinity in his own way, Gordon draws on sources from a span of backgrounds, from Nietzsche to Bruce Lee. By way of its excellent bibliography, the volume succeeds where many self-help books do not: it provides a generous list of supplementary reading options. Though these can be a little weighted—the writings of Nietzsche are particularly prominent—the work of plenty of other foundation stones of philosophy are present, including Kant and Confucius. This makes *A Warrior's Bible* a good potential gateway to the study of philosophy in general.

The author's language is straightforward and plain, even when discussing complicated concepts. It is a well-edited and easy read, a candidate for many repeat inspections, and may be a good pick for young, athletically inclined men. Highlighted portions of the text amplify several important points, making it easy to flip through and find items of interest from previous read-throughs. All in all, this is a fine example of a self-help book that would not be out of place at a YMCA or martial arts studio.

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