

Balance: The Business-Life Connection

James A. Cusumano

SelectBooks (Apr 16, 2013)

Softcover \$16.95 (256pp)

978-1-59079-960-4

Finding the right balance between one's life and one's job is a challenge many face and few seem able to resolve. Rather than give in to the dichotomy, James Cusumano urges readers to embrace it in *Balance: The Business-Life Connection*.

A short autobiography presents Cusumano's unusual journey—from teenage rock star to scientist, entrepreneur, movie producer, and hotelier. That variety of experiences helps Cusumano illustrate one of his core messages: It isn't what you do in life; rather, he writes, "once you determine that special skill that you were born with and you connect it with a positive need in the world, you will have found your life purpose."

The author divides his book into two main sections, "Creating a Fulfilling Life" and "Building a Successful Business." In the first section, Cusumano delves into "purpose and passion," urging the reader to hone in on a unique ability or skill that is fulfilling and has value to the world. He explains how to create a life plan by identifying one's values. Then Cusumano offers an insightful discussion of happiness, in which he suggests there is significant difference between a job, a career, and a calling. A calling, writes Cusumano, "is by far the best means to deep, long-term, lasting happiness and fulfillment."

In the second section, Cusumano turns his attention to business while cleverly reinforcing several of the concepts he covers in the first section. An excellent leader, writes the author, is one who "inspires teams and employees in setting their values for the company." Inspired leaders are those who "fervently internalize and pursue their company's purpose." By addressing values, purpose, passion, innovation, and trust in both life and business, Cusumano draws a powerful connection between the way one should live and work.

Cusumano is clearly passionate about conveying his message of balance. He writes with confidence and ease, offering plenty of practical advice, as well as a large dose of spiritual guidance the reader may not expect. For example, he ascribes to "Inspirational Leadership," a concept that involves "higher levels of consciousness," developed by Lance Secretan, former CEO of Manpower Inc. and author of fifteen books on leadership. Cusumano also advises that the book's strategies will be more effective to the reader "if pursued in parallel with the development and practice of your spiritual character through meditation."

The author is convincing in his position that, whether living life or building a business, the principles are essentially the same. Cusumano's view of balance is worthy of attention from anyone who feels pulled by the conflict of life and work.

BARRY SILVERSTEIN (March 22, 2013)

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