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Self-Help

Bright Triumphs From Dark Hours: Turning Adversity into Success
David Heenan
University of Hawaii Press
978-0-8248-3430-2
(December 31, 2009)

Bright Triumphs from Dark Hours aims to empower the fatigued spirit with stories of ten relentlessly driven individuals who rose from the lowest points in their lives to bravely forge new paths toward personal and professional success. Following the successful model of his previous book, Flight Capital, David Heenan takes readers behind the headlines and delves deep into the lives of his subjects through interviews that explore their fears, guilt, and motivations, revealing what it takes to turn numbing adversity into brilliant success.

Heenan categorizes each of his "heroes" as one of three types: Crusaders, Combatants, and Comeback Kids. Crusaders willingly entered into difficult situations and fought to achieve extraordinary results; Combatants faced life-threatening obstacles while exerting efforts that changed the course of American history; and Comeback Kids battled public downfalls that required the careful restoration of ruined reputations. The individuals studied are diverse in their backgrounds and careers: college football and basketball coaches, a university president, CEOs of multinational companies, an educator, a navy captain, mountain climber, and even figures from American history.

The triumphs of each individual are more keenly felt by the reader because of Heenan's dedication to background research and meticulous detail. For example, in the telling of Shirley Ann Jackson's effort to transform a research university and ignite a spirit of achievement, Heenan carefully plots out the pivotal points in the university's history that "removed the college from the national limelight." He also describes Jackson's struggles as a black student in the 1960s. Thus Heenan sets the scene completely, and the reader cannot help but become personally invested in the story of Jackson's subsequent trials and successes.

While the subjects offer an eclectic array of experience and insight, almost all of these stories are of the struggles faced by individuals who have already achieved a certain degree of success. The misfortunes and triumphs faced by CEOs and deans are so unique and far removed

from the majority of most people’s experience that at first glance the book seems best suited to the high-achieving professional. However, Heenan’s quick forays into childhood anecdotes-a mountain climber’s first camping trip to the Rocky Mountains, or a CEO’s turbulent childhood with an unstable mother-make these incredibly successful people relatable to the average self-help reader. Overcoming adversity, after all, is a universal wish, and anyone looking for inspiration and insight will find the tenets of success this book espouses truly valuable.
(January) Shoilee Khan