

Get After It: Seven Inspirational Stories to Find Your Inner Strength When It Matters Most

Parker Schaffel

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Get After It is a memoir that shows how an average person, despite setbacks and obstacles, created a life of meaning and purpose.

Parker Schaffel's heartfelt, captivating memoir *Get After It* recalls an unimaginable eight-year-long emotional roller coaster in pursuit of an officer's position in the air force. It could have broken his spirit, but it ultimately led to victory and a life of meaning and purpose.

Growing up poor and as the child of a single mother, Schaffel was an unenthusiastic student. Were it not for his love and admiration for his grandfather, whose military career and attitude toward service made the young boy want the same for himself, he might have given up. Little did he know that he would have to endure a heartbreaking struggle involving three branches of the military, two discharges, two contracts, and a nine-year journey to finally find a good fit in the CIA.

While hard work and strategic planning led to Schaffel's selection for F-16 flight training, his exhilarating first flight was to be his last. He reported a spot of dermatitis on his nose, and "In a handful of words from a colonel and a hasty decision by an Air Force doctor, I lost everything for which I had worked so hard."

Schaffel moved on to unsuccessful attempts to serve in various branches of the military, seeking fulfillment in other careers, and to his ultimate success: a commission to serve in the navy reserves. His conversational narrative is paced to capture and hold interest. It reveals the rigors of military training, with descriptions of free-fall parachute jumping that are particularly intense. So too are descriptions of the cycles of emotional distress and elation he experienced.

Honest and forthright in sharing both triumphs and defeats, the book makes the best of each turn of events. It is enlivened by colorful and often humorous descriptions of people and places. Included photographs, though they are small and often dark, add to the imagery. The text flows smoothly, and brief flashbacks add depth. Helpful takeaway points are given at the conclusion of each account.

While the story line is generally clear, the entrance of Schaffel's father into the narrative and further mentions of his parents create confusion after the established notion that he'd been raised by a single mother.

Get After It is a memoir that eloquently conveys the notion that single-minded pursuit of a goal is worthwhile, even when sacrifices are necessary to achieve it.

KRISTINE MORRIS (October 19, 2018)

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