



Mastership: The Journey From Bankruptcy to a New Life

Master Lorne Davidson

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Mastership by Lorne Davidson is a memoir about overcoming financial failure and finding success through martial arts.

Davidson shares his personal story in the two decades since he declared bankruptcy, as he climbed the ranks of taekwondo, finding success both on and off the mat. His story begins in a difficult moment, with his music career and finances in shambles; he reluctantly accepts his friend's invitation to a taekwondo class. From that moment forward, his whole life shifts.

Through his practice, he learns to take charge of his life and not be defined by failure. Today, he's a sixth-degree black belt who found his calling as a master instructor. The book is about more than just the practical elements of his life change, including taking classes, beginning his own club, and meeting people along the way; it's about his growth as a person through the tenets of martial arts, including gratitude, respect, and humility. These character traits make the book compelling.

The narrative is clear-sighted, open, and honest. In its lack of self-consciousness, it becomes inviting and, as it traces Davidson's transformation, inspiring. Those familiar with martial arts won't be surprised to see its character-building power at work, with workout classes or lessons in fighting managing also to instill hope and to change a person from the inside out. Davidson's personal changes are shown to collide with external conflicts, including financial stress and his wife's battle to overcome childhood abuse.

Writing is polished yet conversational, filled with casual diction, occasionally informal syntax, and rhetorical questions. This focus on audience engagement sometimes pushes the work toward self-help, though it still keeps Davidson's story at the center; there's advice based on Davidson's experiences and thoughtful prompts, like "In what areas of your life could you use more self-discipline and focus? Do you believe in yourself, in your abilities and capabilities?"

The book's brevity and focus keep the pace moving forward. The narration balances in-the-moment descriptions with reflections based on his experiences since each event. The story is accessible to those outside martial arts, thanks to brief explanations of key ideas.

Photographs of Davidson document his taekwondo accomplishments, building upon the deeply personal feeling of the book. A suggested list of inspirational books and movies is a friendly prompt for the audience to seek their own changes, while pull quotes and epigraphs of inspirational wisdom make even skimming the book a rewarding experience.

Mastership is a story about how hard work and character bring meaning to one's life.

MELISSA WUSKE (January 22, 2018)

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