



The Courageous: Overcoming From Within

Chris DeeRoy

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Chris DeeRoy's *The Courageous: Overcoming from Within* is a sometimes inspiring memoir that elaborates a spiritual lesson about maintaining fortitude through suffering.

DeeRoy was raised by his grandmother in Togo, West Africa. During the country's unrest, he lived in a refugee camp, later finding asylum in the United States at the age of sixteen. He was always spiritually attuned, though, and heard God's voice in his dreams.

That sensitivity served him well when he became the victim of sabotage at his software design job. "To survive, I had to develop ... a strong and resilient character," he writes. The management created "a culture of fear and contempt," and anyone who questioned the status quo was thrown under the bus. DeeRoy even overheard coworkers remarking that they'd like to kill him. He relates how being reprimanded based on trumped-up charges ultimately "turned ... into a blessing."

The text makes strong use of American vernacular and popular psychology vocabulary, resulting in fluid prose. Italicized prayers also inject some suitably Psalm-like language. Though there are occasional grammatical issues, strong dialogue and vivid accounts of symbolic dreams featuring snakes enliven this tale of courage in the face of manipulation. Some chapters are excessively detailed, though, as with a company picnic that takes up an entire chapter.

The author calmly recounts various exchanges with his manager and a colleague, emphasizing how his measured responses imitated Jesus's example of silent refusal to retaliate. Still, the book provides few details about the "John Doe" project that sparked the disagreement or about the particular accusations made against DeeRoy, making objective readings difficult.

The book's perspective sometimes comes across as defensive and judgmental, as with a description of a foe as a "dark sorceress," and language of spiritual warfare sometimes detracts from the work's power to inspire. The work spiritualizes bad situations so that the author is depicted as "the object of demonic attacks." This tendency to attribute supernatural significance to work grievances is potentially alienating, even for those who share the author's Christian faith.

The most inspirational sections of the book come in its early pages, which describe DeeRoy's childhood years in Africa, and there is some suggestion that such inviting autobiographical material may be covered more later in the series. A final chapter that spells out the lessons that the author drew from his experiences at the software company is powerful as well.

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