Clarion Review

Self-Help

The Power to Excel: Reaching for Your Best
Azuka Zuke Obi
Azuka Zuke Obi
978-0-615-70644-3
Three Stars (out of Five)

Humbleness and giving back are central to Azuka Zuke Obi's first book, *The Power To Excel: Reaching For Your Best*. Like a long and somewhat drawn out conversation with a friend, Obi passes along his secrets of success gained while traveling the world and experiencing different cultures and values.

The West African native, who has made a career of encouraging and empowering others, writes about what works for him and reminds readers that it takes commitment and diligence to reach one's goals.

"Personal resistance," Obi states, is a "dream killer." He suggests that "we don't start anything because we are afraid of failure" and that we sometimes get in our own way. The author challenges his readers: "Stop what you are doing, right now. Drop this book you are reading, shut off your cell phone and … silence every background noise." He then recommends writing down two ideas that can change one's life and expanding on them to make them "realizable." Simple and quite doable, and with no cost involved, the program couldn't be easier.

Obi starts from simply stated general principles about the power of positivity or how negativity impacts one's life, and he drills down to examples of successful icons, including Martin Luther King Jr. and Oprah Winfrey. Many chapters include religious references, though this likely won't be off-putting to those not of the same faith as the author.

The book's chapters guide readers through common themes, including snippets on the laws of attraction, the power of positive thinking, visualization, fitness, diet, sleep, charity, faith, friendship, and service. Obi believes that good energy is vital, and he states, "Life has taught me that where there is action, there is opportunity."

Broad topics headline the chapters, and each ends with a "Little Corner," which is either a homily or a quote from the Bible. Obi's own advice is that "you have to be in motion, stay in

motion." He implores readers to "please take action, set yourself in motion." The author's voice is that of a gentle guide who nevertheless kicks the readers in the pants to spur activity. On occasion, he repeats an idea several times with only slight variations in wording, making it seem like he is using repetition to stretch out the number of words or pages.

Obi offers only glimpses into his childhood in Africa, and they are the most intriguing parts of the text. More of these would have created context and offered readers insight into a place that is not well known to most people in the United States.

"Everything big starts with something small," Obi writes. This short volume is the beginning of something interesting, especially if the author shines more light on the past that brought him to the present.

Dindy Yokel