

The Superstar Roadmap: How Ordinary People Build Extraordinary Careers

Myra White

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Harvard psychologist Myra White has written an exceptionally engaging book that tells the stories of sixty people who became “superstars” and serves as a guide for successfully launching or changing a career. Building off the “road map” in the title, White cleverly employs the characters from *The Wizard of Oz*, each of whom represents an appropriate personality type, and all of whom “follow the yellow brick road” to achieve their dreams.

White begins with an impressive list of the superstars featured in the book, who come from all walks of life, including business, entertainment, journalism, politics, and sports. Well-known personalities such as Woody Allen, Richard Branson, Hillary Clinton, Steve Jobs, Jack Welch, and Oprah Winfrey are included in the text. They were chosen, states White, “because they achieved something of value for others. They produced products or services that improved the quality of people’s lives, created jobs for others or lifted people’s spirits through their art or athletic feats.” Rather than including these individuals randomly, however, White integrates their stories with the chapter themes.

The author also manages to weave in the various *Wizard of Oz* characters in a way that is both natural and novel. For example, she writes, “Superstars focus on motivating people by fulfilling these deeper needs. This is what Dorothy did. She appealed to the Scarecrow’s, the Tin Man’s, and the Lion’s deep inner needs. She inspired them to help her by telling them how important it was for her to return to Kansas because Auntie Em was sick. In addition, she treated them like family and made them feel appreciated. As a consequence, they were highly motivated to help her succeed.”

The road map White lays out consists of nine steps. While the advice is not unique, it is packaged in highly readable chapters, each of which makes a specific point, such as, “Know how to create your personal success syndrome,” and “Know how to deal with risk and adversity.” The chapters combine just enough motivational language with stories about the appropriate superstars as well as snippets about the Oz characters. Every chapter is subdivided into consumable chunks and ends with a section called “Take a Moment to Reflect.” Here, White encourages the reader to answer a compelling question related to the preceding content.

Selecting the sixty superstars alone is a masterful feat, and just telling their stories might have made Dr. Myra White’s book good enough. But the author goes one step further by using the stories to illustrate her larger theme, showing the reader how to apply these examples in order to build an extraordinary career. A well conceived, well written self-help book, *The Superstar Roadmap* will offer much inspiration and insight to all who read it.

BARRY SILVERSTEIN (May 10, 2012)

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