ForeWord Reviews

SELF-HELP

Unstoppable: 45 Powerful Stories of Perseverance and Triumph from People Just Like You
Cynthia Kersey
Sourcebooks
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Cynthia Kersey was pulling down six figures, yet still felt unfulfilled. So she quit her job at Sprint, cashed in her family's life savings and set out to realize a heartfelt ambition to write a book that would inspire others.

The result, Unstoppable, brings together stories of 45 people overcame life's obstacles and persisted against odds to fulfill their dreams. Subjects range from the tale of a barefoot African villager who walked 3,000 miles to catch a plane so he could attend a U.S. college to a California man who passed the bar exam on his 48th try, and at age 61, launched a law practice. Inspiring? Indeed. The poor African later taught at England's Cambridge University.

"The stories of these unstoppable dreamers awaken in us our own potential to dream again, to act on those dreams and to see them through to the finish line," Kersey writes. She's right. These stories are page-turners.

But Kersey does more in Unstoppable than simply share personal tales. She identifies seven characteristics of 'unstoppable' people: They're fueled by purpose and passion, believe in themselves, are prepared for challenges, ask for help, seek creative solutions, and persevere no matter the challenge. It may be oversimplifying, but it is motivational. Each chapter focuses on one attribute and includes highly readable short profiles of folks who exemplify the characteristic, along with a colorful but slightly jumbled and confusing mix of related poems, cartoons and quotes from world leaders, sports figures and average Joes. Kersey provides sometimes-useful, sometimes over-broad instructions for developing the characteristics to realize dreams large and small, from completing a 5K race to launching a new business. She asks readers to reflect on their purpose in life in a section borrowed from Dare to Win, which gives cursory treatment to a deep subject. Other instructions are accessible and practical, like listing 10 solutions to a problem in order to spark creativity.

Unstoppable seems to combine two best-sellers: the how-to of “The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People” and the anecdotal inspiration of Chicken Soup for the Soul, making for a book that, at times, is a little too crowded. Uplifting for the downhearted with some hidden gems.

Lori Hall Steele