

Your Place in the World: Creating a Life of Vision, Purpose, and Service

Tom Anderson

BookSurge

Unknown (pp)

978-1-4392-7106-3

Hundreds of books have been written about the search for self. The inclusion of a unique component makes *Your Place in the World* a standout in the genre. According to author Tom Anderson, it is not enough to simply discover self or to grow as a person—it is essential to have a vision and a purpose, and to see how they lead to individual service in the world. Service is an element lacking in most self-discovery books, but Anderson writes, “Without action steps, our vision remains just a dream, our purpose is wasted, and those we are meant to serve don’t receive our blessing.”

Anderson takes a twofold approach in his inspirational account of self-discovery. He blends his own experience of finding vision and purpose in his life through a vision quest (a life-altering spiritual retreat) with actions of mythic heroes.

Anderson was so successful in his business career that he was offered a partnership in his firm, but he ached for something more fulfilling. He undertook his vision quest because he yearned for something more from life. Like the mythic heroes of yore, he set off on a “journey.”

His hero analogy, which can be easily related to contemporary life, is divided into stages of the hero’s journey (found in myth and literature): the hero answers a call, leaves the comforts of home and family and goes on a journey, perhaps seeking a “boon,” such as a sword or grail that he must bring back to his community. There are tribulations, danger, and perhaps despair along the way, and finally the hero returns home (perhaps to leave again).

Anderson says that everyone is the hero in his or her own life, but it’s not enough to be called to take the journey. Being in touch with one’s soul should lead to service when one finds out what he was born to do. “Our vision and purpose are intrinsically linked to the way we are to serve in the world,” Anderson writes. He adds that this service “will be found at the intersection of our heartache and our bliss.”

The exercises included at the end of each chapter are helpful, especially for readers who are physically unable to have a vision quest in a desert or in the mountains as the author did. Anderson now serves as a vision quest guide and offers workshops. He encourages journaling, becoming inspired by the natural world, and sorting out “soul,” “ego,” and “spirit.”

The process of self-discovery is not just self-serving; although individuals will be happier about their lives as they take the journey, ultimately, the world will benefit. “As we come to understand our vision, we will also come to see how we are bound to the earth,” Anderson writes. “Is it any wonder we are feeling this inner yearning at a time when the earth so desperately needs us to find a deeper understanding about how we are all connected?” His book eloquently guides readers to that goal.

LINDA SALISBURY (September 4, 2010)

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