Mind Shift: It Doesn't Take a Genius to Think Like One

Over the years, I have read many of Erwin McManus' books. I find them to be consistently thought-provoking. His latest book does not disappoint—*Mind Shift: It Doesn't Take a Genuis to Think Like One*. Early in its pages, he states his case: *Mental health, mental clarity, mental toughness, and mental agility all have one thing in common: The journey begins in our minds. This is where the battle is fought—and where the battle is won. Every time you want to elevate your level of execution, performance, or effectiveness, it will require a mind shift. For anything to change, the first thing that must change is your mind.* From there, he discusses several mental frameworks to enhance your potential.

As leaders, we are called to bring our A-game to our circles of influence. This call certainly includes the responsibility to cultivate a mind that seeks to grow every day. Check out these Book Notes to see how to do just that.

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Title: Mind Shift: It Doesn't Take a Genius to Think Like One

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Book Description:

Throughout his thirty years of work as a mindset expert and leadership coach, Erwin Raphael McManus has been obsessed with these questions: Why do some people succeed despite having all the odds stacked against them? How do others achieve the unthinkable, only to watch their lives slip away? Are there mental structures for failure and success?

McManus has come to realize that too many of us have "near-life" experiences. We almost pursue our dreams. We almost make the decision that changes everything. We are always one choice away. If we want to live without regret, we need to make a mind shift—trading beliefs that limit our potential for ones that help us move toward optimal performance and pursue the success of being fully alive. We must move from a life of obligation to a life of intention.

In *Mind Shift*, McManus brings together twelve mental frameworks that have helped some of the most accomplished people on earth create internal structures of success. Among them:

- You have to choose between acceptance and uniqueness. If you are addicted to affirmation, you will become what others want you to be rather than who you were created to become.

- You don't need an audience. It's what you do in private that makes you who you are.

- Talent is a hallucinogen. It will make you believe that hard work and discipline are for everyone else.

Sharing experiences from entrepreneurs, artists, professional athletes, and his own career, McManus shows us how to transform our thinking—and, in turn, transform our lives.

Book Quotes:

If my mind can be structured for failure, then it can also be structured for success. LOCATION: 112

Your mental structures can unlock untapped potential and unleash unimaginable capability. LOCATION: 119

There is an ancient proverb that tells us that you become your thoughts. Your thoughts are the road map to your future. If you transform your thinking, you will transform your life. LOCATION: 122

The more determined you are to maximize your life, the more challenges you will face. The more you are unwilling to be satisfied with the status quo, the more you will find yourself facing resistance. It's tempting to choose the easy road, to settle for mere existence. But the obstacles and challenges and crises you face are not interruptions or detours on the path of life. They are the very context for life itself. LOCATION: 163

Mental health, mental clarity, mental toughness, and mental agility all have one thing in common: The journey begins in our minds. This is where the battle is fought—and where the battle is won. Every time you want to elevate your level of execution, performance, or effectiveness, it will require a mind shift. For anything to change, the first thing that must change is your mind. LOCATION: 166

You don't have to see the future to create it. You only need to see the patterns that create that future. LOCATION: 178

Transform your thinking. Transform your life. LOCATION: 183

If we don't know what really matters, we will spend our lives accumulating the very things that do not matter—discarding the things that matter most. LOCATION: 217

The best way to lose your life and look back with regret is to never mature past the mindset that life is all about things. LOCATION: 242

When we grasp that life is about people, when we make people our highest priority, this shift becomes the best measure of maturity, wholeness, and health. LOCATION: 253

The danger, of course, is that you can become blind to the importance of the people in your life. No one succeeds alone. Yet some people take all the credit for the success in their lives. Success is far richer, more meaningful, and more sustainable when you build it in the context of healthy relationships. People must never be a means to an end. Relationships should never be simply utilitarian. LOCATION: 274

My measure is simple: Do people elevate when they are in the gravitational pull of my life? Am I investing in the success of others? When you make the mind shift that it's not all about you—it's all about the people whose lives change for the better because of you—it is transformational. LOCATION: 287

When you finally understand that life is all about people, everything in your life changes. LOCATION: 294

The greatest mistakes you will ever make will not cost you money; they will cost you people. LOCATION: 328

Prepare for the unexpected. Prepare to bring your best at a moment's notice. Prepare for the impossible.

Prepare for your purpose. LOCATION: 364

Commit to greatness when you have no audience. Discipline yourself and prepare yourself to be the best at what you do. Live as if today you may be given the greatest opportunity of your life. Be ready to step up when the call comes. LOCATION: 421

You may think you need an audience to reveal your greatness. The truth is, the audience will sidetrack you from your future. You perform for the audience; you develop for yourself. That's the paradox with unlocking your greatness. While the outcome may gain you the adoration of the masses, the process is a journey you must be willing to walk alone. Greatness is always grown in private. If you want to do what no one has done before, you must be willing to do what no one is doing. LOCATION: 433

When you make a commitment to show up for yourself, you'll be surprised how many people show up for you. LOCATION: 442

Still, there was tremendous resistance to change and growth. Some people saw church as an escape from the outside world, and now their sacred space was filled with strangers who did not look or think like them. I never could have predicted the amount of turmoil and hostility these changes would create. It seemed as if every conversation was either complaints, criticism, or conflict. At the core of every conflict was the struggle between the past and the future. Was the primary responsibility of our institution to preserve the past or create the future? If you're a church, both choices will cost you dearly. One will cost you your traditions, the other your children. LOCATION: 461

Leaders create clarity, raise standards, and call people to more. By definition, this creates a dividing line. Great leaders are not afraid to define what it means to be on their team, organization, or movement. They know their vision isn't for everyone, and they recognize those with a shared vision. Great leaders also know that great teams form when there is a sifting process. LOCATION: 472

What I didn't realize is that most institutions—whether they're a church or a Fortune 100 company—are led by administrators and managers. Their highest value is to protect what exists. Their strength is risk management. Their weakness is an aversion to innovation, creativity, and risk. LOCATION: 477

The kiss of death for any company is when late adopters have secured control over the organization. LOCATION: 484

I've learned through great pain and loss that transitions are a natural and even healthy exit for those who want an alternative future than the one you are creating. LOCATION: 486

As a leader, you cannot make decisions based on who you have. You have to make decisions based on who you serve. LOCATION: 500

Your leadership will not only gain people, it will also lose people. In fact, at first, you will be more defined by who you lose than by who you gain. LOCATION: 506

Having people choose to leave can be the greatest gift they give to you. Some of your most defining moments will be when you bring such clarity that people know whether they are in or out. LOCATION: 513

Humanity has advanced through the courage and sacrifice of the pioneers, adventurers, explorers, and innovators. If you are playing it safe, you are playing to lose. The full measure of your gifts, and talents, and potential, and life, cannot be actualized if you are not willing to step into risk. LOCATION: 572

You must choose between acceptance and uniqueness. If you're addicted to affirmation, you will become a

reflection of yourself rather than the genuine version of you. LOCATION: 602

Take the time to figure out who you want to become. Take the time to nurture your own dreams. Make the choices necessary to create the future you long for, and don't expect others to understand the path you have chosen. They won't get it until they see it. You won't see it until you get after it. LOCATION: 632

However, as real as those obstacles may be, it's also true that some of the steepest obstacles in your life will come from within. We all tell ourselves a story: I'm too damaged to ever be healed; I've made too many mistakes to make something of my life; I just can't get a break; I would have accomplished so much if others hadn't held me down; I'm not talented enough to do something significant with my life; I don't have enough money to create wealth; I'm the victim of an unfair system; I'm too young to take on so much responsibility; I'm too old to start over again. The self-limiting stories we tell ourselves are endless. LOCATION: 642

It may sound unfair, but it doesn't matter if it's not your fault. It's still your responsibility. No one but you is accountable for your life. LOCATION: 665

The height of your ceiling is the perfect reflection of your mental toughness. You will know you are mentally tough when your optimal performance is completely unaffected by your environment. LOCATION: 671

To keep elevating throughout your life you need more than mental toughness, you need mental agility. You need the ability to see things in a new way and to solve problems in a new way. Our ceilings are created by our own mental rigidity. When you change your thinking you blow the lid off. LOCATION: 724

We bet on talent, overlook character, and underestimate grit. It's why we are confused when we see someone underachieving, despite having all the inborn skills and advantages in the world. LOCATION: 743

I say all of this to get to one critical point: Talent is a hallucinogen. Talent creates an illusion of success. It causes you to believe a false reality—that inborn skills are what separate the best from the rest. You may be more talented than everyone in the room, but that doesn't mean you will be more successful than those sitting around you. In fact, the opposite may prove confoundingly true. You will know people who are clearly less talented who are undeniably more successful. Or you'll experience it in the contrast. LOCATION: 745

One of the most difficult challenges in this work is convincing a person with world-class talent that their character is more essential to their success than their natural attributes. Everyone knows in theory that hard work and discipline are important, but how about integrity and humility? LOCATION: 750

All the talent in the world is not a guarantee of success. At best, talent is a sign of promise. But without discipline, it will never realize its full potential. I cannot say this enough times. For talent to translate into success, it must be forged in the pressure cooker of adversity and centered by character. No matter how talented you are, you will eventually come to the end of your talent. When you come to the end of your talent, you discover the depth of your character. LOCATION: 779

Let your deficit of talent be your fuel, but never allow yourself to have a deficit of character. Aspire for a life of virtue. Be humble. Be kind. Be generous. Be courageous. Have integrity. Tell the truth. Express gratitude. Make love your motive always. Serve. Let who you are be your best feature. LOCATION: 809

Talent moves fast and burns like a high-octane fuel. Character, on the other hand, prepares you for the long journey ahead. Becoming the number one draft pick is overrated. It's way better to finish first. It's even more important to finish well. LOCATION: 811

Talent is a hallucinogen. Character keeps it real. LOCATION: 813

The truth is, no matter what direction you choose for your life, on the first day, you are not qualified to do that job. But that does not make you an impostor. It simply makes you a beginner. It's what you do after you start that matters. Well, let me take it back one step: What matters most is that you start. LOCATION: 838

Frankly, one of the hardest people to help is a bitter person. When someone is discouraged, you can call out their strengths and tell them all the ways you admire them. When someone is grieving, you can love them and be present in their grief. But when someone is bitter, they are rarely open to the process required to find healing. They see forgiveness as a weakness. They don't want to concede anything to the person who offended or hurt them. It dominates their thoughts to the point where it's impossible to think about anything else. LOCATION: 903

We know that obesity or a bad diet can lead to heart disease. But bitterness, too, is a silent killer. Nothing will steal your health, your relationships, your joy faster than carrying your emotional baggage with you. Bitterness, resentment, envy, and unforgiveness can poison your soul and cost you the intimacy of being loved and truly known. LOCATION: 915

Humans are a multidimensional species. We live in the past, present, and future all at the same time. We live in the past through our memories. We live in the future through our dreams. We live in the present through our choices. When the three are integrated, we live at our optimal level of health and wholeness. The future pulls us forward. The present keeps us grounded. The past calls us backward. LOCATION: 917

It is fascinating from a psychological perspective that two people can have virtually the same traumatic experience and come out of it completely different. One response can leave us broken; another can create internal structures for success. Either way, our experiences are not the defining ingredient in our lives. It is our response to those experiences—how we remember them and interpret them—that shapes who we become. LOCATION: 921

Bitterness is a poison that numbs you before it kills you. Without the bitterness, all you will feel is the pain of the lost job opportunity, the broken relationship, the loved one who let you down. When you can't take that level of pain anymore, you harden your heart with bitterness. In theory, you're protecting your heart from being hurt again. But bitterness doesn't protect your heart, it hardens it. When you are bitter, that becomes the only emotion you can feel. LOCATION: 937

The reality is that when you are bitter, you are no longer in your own story. Your thoughts, actions, and other relationships are being poisoned by what happened with someone else. You unwittingly become a prisoner in the story of the one who hurt you, disappointed you, or betrayed you. LOCATION: 943

But bitterness is not an emotion you are designed to carry. Bitterness is your soul's way of letting you know that you are out of alignment. It is your soul screaming to be set free from a negative emotion it was never intended to hold. LOCATION: 949

I've learned that relationships work like a moth to flames. If you are compassionate, you will find compassionate people all over the world. If you love adventure, you will find adventurous people everywhere you go. If you are trustworthy, you will find a world full of trustworthy people. If you are hopeful, you will find people full of hope all around you. The world is full of people just like you. But know that you will not find what you are looking for; you will find what you are. LOCATION: 983

Here is the mind shift: You will find in the world what you bring to the world. Stop expecting people to be different until you are different. Don't expect to find better people until you are committed to becoming a better person. Change the world within you, and that will change the world around you. In fact, the opposite works just as powerfully. Change what you believe about people, and it will change the people who are drawn to you.

LOCATION: 1053

If you learned how to learn, you will have left school prepared for every challenge ahead. LOCATION: 1080

But here's the real problem. When the system tells us we're supposed to be good at everything, education becomes all about dabbling. We learn a little bit about everything and much about nothing. If the original concept was to make everyone great at everything, we have done the opposite—we've made everyone average at everything. Instead of pressuring people to make straight A's, maybe we should have been helping them find their one A in an ocean of C's. Maybe the first eighteen years of our lives would have been better spent learning to be average at almost everything—except your one thing. LOCATION: 1096

There are times when I feel like I'm playing a game of last man standing. Most of the high-powered leaders I've known over the last forty years have disappeared from the scene. Some discredited and disqualified themselves from leading their organizations. From infidelity to the abuse of power, from financial impropriety to fraud, from burnout to mental breakdowns, the weight of leadership has caused a great deal of damage in many of their lives. Others are still at the helm of their companies but have lost their marriages, their children, and their families. The weight of success was too heavy a burden to bear. LOCATION: 1161

If life and experience have taught me anything, it's that success weighs more than failure. If you think failure is hard to carry, wait until you have to carry the weight of success. It's easier to be liked when you fail. It's easier for others to empathize with you when you fail. It's easier to have people assume the best of you when you fail. The moment you succeed, everything changes. Success will cost you friends. Success will cost you goodwill. Success will cost you the benefit of the doubt. LOCATION: 1166

Act like you are going to be successful. Become the best version of you now. Spend as much energy developing your character as you do your bank account. Invest in yourself even more than you invest in your net worth. Once you have wealth and fame and power, it will be nearly impossible to find people who will tell you the truth—especially if you lack humility, and kindness, and generosity. You can't afford to take that baggage with you. LOCATION: 1238

It's one of the reasons I've never believed in balance. If anything, the best-lived lives are radically skewed. Passionate people are rarely balanced. There is a fire that burns inside of them, a love for what they do. They always find a way to talk about it, no matter what the conversation. They are convinced everyone should feel the same way. Those without passion might call them obsessed, and they are right. When someone is living out their passions, they feel most alive. LOCATION: 1274

If you want to be rare in this world, never give up on hope. Hope is the singular power that can destroy apathy and give you the strength to endure the dark violence of the human story. We cannot escape the reality that this life is full of pain and suffering, violence and injustice, even cruelty and corruption. Yet hope cuts through despair in the same way that light cuts through darkness. Hope makes you contagious. Hope makes you a light. LOCATION: 1308

The word integrity comes from the same etymology as the word integration. It means you are undivided. It means that you are the same person in every room, in every circumstance, and in every situation. Integrity means that you are a person of your word, and that is crucial, because trust is the basis of everything good you will ever want to build. Without trust, you cannot have sustained success. Without trust, you cannot have sustained relationships. If you are not trustworthy, everything else that is good about you will collapse in the end. No one will ever accuse you of having too much integrity, so have it in abundance. LOCATION: 1329

Note: should you wish to find any quote in its original context, the Kindle "location" is provided after each entry.