PM WORLD BOOK REVIEW

Book Title:  *The Power To Transform: Passion, Power, and Purpose in Daily Life*

Author:  Chris Majer with John Brant

Publisher:  Rodale

Format:  Soft cover; 259 pages


Reviewer:  Nazanin Mehrooz, PMP

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Introduction to the Book

This self-help book provides guidance on how to transform yourself to a better version of yourself based on your goals. Applying concepts learned and repetitive application of that knowledge is the best way to learn and become a subject matter expert. This book raises awareness of how simple statements we hear form our reality and how to manage the stress which occurs when transitioning from a beginner while learning a new skill. Several techniques such as building a strong centered focus, making effective choices and replacing excuses with accountability improves your chances of success throughout the transformation process.

Overview of Book’s Structure

The book contains 14 chapters:

1. The history of the human potential project
2. How to use this book
3. Language shapes reality
4. Learning in a new world
5. It all moves from center
6. Cultivating Awareness
7. Choice: claiming your birthright
8. Ability and willingness
9. Accountability
10. Commitment
11. Trust
12. Honesty
13. Integrity
14. Being a stand

Highlights: What’s New in this Book

- It was very interesting to learn that we form our realities based on statements we hear from others about ourselves and how these impact our daily activities. The book raised awareness of how simple linguistic building blocks (declaration, assertion, assessment, request, promise and offer) can impact us and how to control the impact in a positive manner.

- Our learning process is not as effective as it could be. We can improve this by accepting that as a beginner, you have to commit to the effort of learning and work in a supportive team environment to build competence through repeated exercises. Trying to find a quick solution by memorizing lessons and claiming to be competent at a skill is often what we see in practice and results in unsuccessful results.

- The skill of learning how to find your center can help your focus during the learning process and keep you level during the process. Often obstacles interfere with effective learning and understanding how to remain centered and focused will help to address these challenges.

Highlights: What I liked! (1-3 paragraphs)

Each chapter has exercises and there is also an online access code to tools which can help you form support team for the learning and transformation process. The exercises can easily be incorporated into everyday activities and can be done alone or with a support group to reinforce the learning process.

The every organization people fall into learners, skeptics and prisoners (cynics) when exposed to a new concept. While the skeptics are in wait and see mode, the cynics take the route of being afraid and protecting themselves with barriers. The author was able to covert 90% of the prisoners into learners within a few days in a project he implemented and found them later to be the best advocates of supporting the new concept after the experience.

The author does a great job of explaining how we all have hidden enemies and what you should do to keep these enemies from interfering with the transformation process. Simple tips like removing “I can’t” from your vocabulary and stepping away from fear based motivators to power driven language like “I am currently not competent to do this yet” helps to eliminate excuses or victim mentality and drive towards more accountable behavior.
Understanding the importance of commitment and putting into action accountable behavior are important steps to reach positive results. Commitment often means making sacrifices and tough choices. Without adequate commitment, there is a tendency to procrastinate, focus on appearances and self-doubt. These often derail you from reaching your goal.

Trust should be based on a more solid foundation than a feeling. It should be an assessment of a person’s ability to commit to taking a specific action. Sincerity, competence and reliability reinforce that ability. The author does a good job on explaining how to build up each of these characteristics.

The distinction of the three different kinds of truth was an interesting observation. The first is universal, absolute and unquestionable. An example of this may be your religious beliefs. The second type is based on observable and verifiable facts like 2+2=4 and the grass is green. The third type is “My Truth” and is based on personal experiences, interpretation and memories. These self-assessments can mislead us or confuse our path to successful transformation. Open communication without finger pointing can help remove potential barriers.

**Shortfalls: What was Missing!**

The author provided some impressive statistics on improvements seen across a large group after using application of these guidelines in the human potential project. It would have been great to offer similar statistics around the different phases of the transformation process. This would support the reader to know which phases may cause majority to falter and where to provide additional reinforcements to keep one on track.

**Who might benefit from the Book**

Any Project Manager or Leader who seeks to facilitate change from undesirable self or team behavior towards a more effective state will benefit from reading and applying the techniques offered in this book. The exercises can be easily practiced as team building and development tasks.

**Conclusion**

The philosophies of the author were applied by a large project and lead to positive transformation and improved productivity. The base of these philosophies is how we perceive our reality and how our words can impact that reality. Understanding how our assessments can impact our reality is the first step to eliminating fear and allowing positive transformation to take their place. Further reinforcements like removing excuses or victim type behavior and replacing them with accountability aid in the
transformation process. Ensuring trusts, honesty and taking a stand about things you are passionate about are the key drivers to complete the transformation successfully.


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About the Reviewer

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Nazanin Mehrooz studied software engineering and is a certified project manager and scrum master. Her experiences include consulting as a program manager in the transportation industry and managing a suite of related software projects. She has extensive work experience in the defense, telecom and environmental industries with special focus on project development, delivery and operational phases. She has lead mid-sized teams as an IT Application Manager and Service Delivery Management in the telecom industry. Nazanin is an active volunteer for the PMI Dallas Chapter (Marketing group) and PMI Fort Worth Chapter as the email manager. Email: nazi_mehrooz@yahoo.com

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