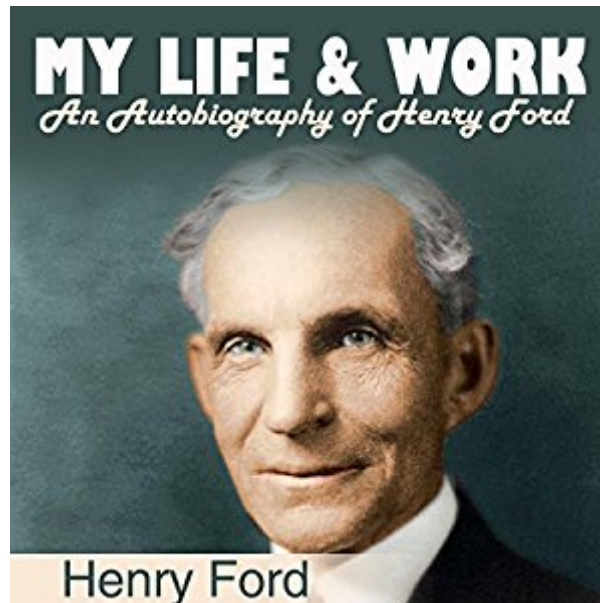




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My Life And Work: An Autobiography Of Henry Ford



Synopsis

We have only started on our development of our country - we have not as yet, with all our talk of wonderful progress, done more than scratch the surface. The progress has been wonderful enough, but when we compare what we have done with what there is to do, then our past accomplishments are as nothing. When we consider that more power is used merely in ploughing the soil than is used in all the industrial establishments of the country put together, an inkling comes of how much opportunity there is ahead. And now, with so many countries of the world in ferment and with so much unrest everywhere, is an excellent time to suggest something of the things that may be done in the light of what has been done. When one speaks of increasing power, machinery, and industry there arises the idea of a cold, metallic sort of world in which great factories will drive away the trees, the flowers, the birds, and the green fields. And that then we shall have a world composed of metal machines and human machines. With all of that I do not agree. I think that unless we know more about machines and their use, unless we better understand the mechanical portion of life, we cannot have the time to enjoy the trees, and the birds, and the flowers, and the green fields.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Sometimes with the pace of business we don't take the time to review the thoughts and concepts of the great people of the past. When I read this book I was amazed at his level of thinking. We tend to believe that "our" generation is always coming up with the great thoughts and ideas. If this is your thinking you need to step back 100 years or so to the life and times of Henry Ford. All we are doing

is reinventing what he did.

It was amazing to read that many of the ideas and ideals around the turn of the twentieth century are still used today. Ford goes into great detail describing the origination of the Ford motor company, the labor force, the assembly line, and financial situations of the company. At a time when most of the male workers across the country were working for fifty cents a day, Ford incorporated a minimum wage of from three to five dollars a day. Henry Ford did a good job writing this book as well. There were several examples of sage advice include which are quoted by speakers and writers to this day. He was truly a visionary, business minded genius. The world was certainly improved by his presence. I'm looking forward to reading other of his works in the future.

A wonderfully candid look into the life of an incredibly successful and brilliant businessman. Henry Ford was a genius but never lost touch with the common man. He did a great deal to raise the standard of living for his workers. It was very interesting to take a peek into the mind of this great industrialist.

First I want to tell you what this book is not. It is not a biography. It really isn't a biography of the Ford motor company either. What it is is the mind of Ford on paper. Henry Ford was a pure genius! This book is about how Henry ran his company and about his thoughts and ideals on business. You will really get to know the man behind the company in this book. A few of the chapter titles are "What I Learned about Business", "The Secret of Manufacturing and Serving", "Wages", "Why Not Always have Good Business" and "Money - Master or Servant". This is one of the top business books ever written. I think it was written very well and it just grabs your attention from the beginning. If you are looking for a great business book or just a great book about the real Henry Ford then you need not look any further. He certainly was one of the best business men to ever live.

While obviously self-serving, this book provides fascinating insights into the thinking of a true pioneer. Just when you start to think it is dated, you hit a section with startling current relevance. I wish the leaders of GE had heeded his warnings about getting so wrapped up in financing structure and accounting results that you get distracted from your basic business and your customers' needs. His approach to driving down costs and creating value are profound to this day. It's too bad the finance wizards at GM and Ford forgot his lessons - the leaders of Toyota and Honda learned them well.

I read about this book while doing some research into Lean management. Taiichi Ohno, "father" of the Toyota Production System noted that he learned many lean principles from Henry Ford. After finishing this book, I would recommend that EVERY CEO in this country be REQUIRED to read it. It is a wonderfully clear description of management and leadership principles that all companies should embrace. Mr. Ford is clear on the purpose of a company - to build products and provide services that meet the needs of its customers. If we do this, as he notes, the money will follow. We get it backwards so often these days - we think the purpose of a company is to make money or increase its share price. As opposed to most business books where one idea is promoted and beaten to death, Mr. Ford's book is full of good ideas on all aspects of managing a business. It's a delightfully refreshing read!

This book, like a lot of books in their period, does not focus on one main subject but is a collection of articles/personal point of views on business matters. What struck me most is how "uncluttered" his mind is and his clear passion for doing things in the most efficient way possible. Granted, the writing style at that time can be a bit tedious and long winded, but he certainly does not mince words and his style is "refreshing" amidst all the jargons and words you see in today's business books and magazines. He shows that how an intensely focused on increasing the buying power of the customer, combined with a relentless desire to be as efficient as possible can be enormously beneficial to society. For me, it's interesting to compare him with Michael Dell's book "Direct from Dell"...you'll be amazed with the striking similarities with both of their visions...only one is supplying a motor car and the latter personal computers.

I couldn't force myself to finish this book. He didn't seem to have any real purpose or theme in writing. (That I could discern.) No passion. I thought there might be some important lessons to learn from Henry Ford. If there were, I didn't get to them. It was interesting though, to see that, even in Henry Ford's time, the government was meddling in private matters where it shouldn't have.

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