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Eleven Rings: The Soul Of Success

PHIL JACKSON

and HUGH DELEHANTY



READ BY
MATT WALTON

ELEVEN RINGS

THE SOUL of SUCCESS



Synopsis

During his storied career as head coach of the Chicago Bulls and Los Angeles Lakers, Phil Jackson won more championships than any coach in the history of professional sports. Even more important, he succeeded in never wavering from coaching his way, from a place of deep values. Jackson was tagged as the "Zen master" half in jest by sportswriters, but the nickname speaks to an important truth: this is a coach who inspired, not goaded; who led by awakening and challenging the better angels of his players' nature, not their egos, fear, or greed. This is the story of a preacher's kid from North Dakota who grew up to be one of the most innovative leaders of our time. In his quest to reinvent himself, Jackson explored everything from humanistic psychology and Native American philosophy to Zen meditation. In the process, he developed a new approach to leadership based on freedom, authenticity, and selfless teamwork that turned the hypercompetitive world of professional sports on its head. In *Eleven Rings*, Jackson candidly describes how he: Learned the secrets of mindfulness and team chemistry while playing for the champion New York Knicks in the 1970s Managed Michael Jordan, the greatest player in the world, and got him to embrace selflessness, even if it meant losing a scoring title Forged successful teams out of players of varying abilities by getting them to trust one another and perform in sync Inspired Dennis Rodman and other "uncoachable" personalities to devote themselves to something larger than themselves Transformed Kobe Bryant from a rebellious teenager into a mature leader of a championship team. Eleven times, Jackson led his teams to the ultimate goal: the NBA championship - six times with the Chicago Bulls and five times with the Los Angeles Lakers. We all know the legendary stars on those teams, or think we do. What *Eleven Rings* shows us, however, is that when it comes to the most important lessons, we don't know very much at all. This book is full of revelations: about fascinating personalities and their drive to win; about the wellsprings of motivation and competition at the highest levels; and about what it takes to bring out the best in ourselves and others.

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Customer Reviews

11 Rings: The Soul of Success is Phil Jackson's newest book and an interesting look inside the mind of one of the greatest American professional sports coaches in history. The entire book is filled with interesting quotes, historical and personal examples, relevant analogies concerning his theories on coaching, leadership, and teamwork. I find Jackson's mind to be very fascinating, and in a way, much less organized than John Wooden's more disciplined approach to life, leadership and coaching. I am reminded of the differences between an artist and an engineer, if I was generalizing. There are a few points I found most interesting. Jackson discusses the limited similarities between part of a winning sports team and part of a tight-knit military unit. He also discusses the difference between championship teams and less successful teams, and even the variances between championship teams he has coached or played for. Since I have had the privilege of living both experiences (not at the professional sports level), I found the comparisons and contrasts effective. He rightly points out that playing basketball is not the same as being willing to smother a live grenade to save a comrade's life, but that the best teams, in any walk of life, develop trust and love for each other. Their ability to perform at the highest levels goes beyond purely technical skill or physical talent and approaches the spiritual. Jackson talks frequently about Kobe Bryant and there are some comparisons to him and Michael Jordan made in the book. I found all of the comments Jackson makes about the many players he's coached to be interesting because he recognizes each had particular challenges and gifts, as do we all. How he helped individual players, and the teams, to overcome their challenges and successfully utilize their individual and collective gifts was insightful and a demonstration of his genius at people skills. The last point I want to share is that I feel Phil Jackson often gets unfairly criticized because he won championships while having all-world talent on each championship team. Any coach would like to have Michael Jordan, Scottie Pippen, Dennis Rodman, Shaquille O'Neal and Kobe Bryant play on the roster. It takes talent to win-both playing and coaching. All of those players played for other coaches who didn't win championships while they were teamed up. Phil Jackson repeatedly brings home the lessons of team chemistry, motivation, maximizing an individual's talents, human relationships and a myriad of

other "soft-skills" which are difficult for some people to accept as the other reasons for his success. It wasn't just about having the best players. John Wooden, Pat Riley, Red Aurbach and Phil Jackson were successful because they knew how to develop and utilize the talent of their players to become champions. Jackson shares insights on how he was able to help great players become part of great teams.¹¹ Rings will read like Phil Jackson's other books, so if you liked them, you will most likely enjoy this one. I believe he merits discussion as being the greatest basketball coach in history, if that means much to you. Certainly, anyone who reads 11 Rings and is a basketball fan will find some nuggets here. Likewise, anyone who is interested in building family, teamwork, people skills or leadership skills can read 11 Rings and find some useful lessons and interesting insights.11 Rings is quite good, but not a significant or innovative contribution to literature. Because of the organization of Jackson's thoughts and the similarity to his previous books, I believe this rates 4 stars. Enjoy!

As a mom who spent 12+ years watching my daughter play volleyball, basketball, and throw discus/shot put, I have seen my share of coaching styles. Some were awesome, some should have been fired, one was fired. Throughout it all, I always knew it could be more humane and motivating without the degrading, intimidating, and negative approach many coaches used. I always loved watching Phil Jackson coach the Bulls and read some about his coaching style at the time. But his book has great information that can be applied to any job, including parenting. Clearly, championships can be won while coaching a team respectfully and influencing them not just as a player, but as a human being. Every coach, teacher, camp counselor, parent would learn from this book. All athletes/children of those who do, will benefit greatly. I bought it for my Kindle, but just bought it in hardback too, as I want to highlight some parts and get all the book referrals he includes.

I love this book. It's a perfect storm in reverse: every good thing about it is enhanced by all the other good things that surround it. For a lifelong basketball fan with a deep interest in spiritual practice, creative improvisation, managing talent, and eliciting outstanding performance, it's a heady mix. The book backfills my memory of the great games I still replay in my mind, going back to a limping Willis's unforgettable two shots in the final game against the Lakers in 1970. But it is more than an intimate history of the game from a brilliant analyst. You get to follow the growth of players like Jordan, Pippin, and Bryant, people who were great to start with, as they into something beyond mere skill and athleticism. You understand the delicacy with which Jackson handled someone as

flamboyant and ornery as Rodman, successfully converting his eccentricities into consistent contributions at the highest level. But the book is also a toolbox filled with brilliant how-tos: How to fuse gifted individuals into what Jackson calls a "tribe;" How to instill confidence and independence in fragile egos; how to elicit consistently great performance from every member of the team, from the stars to the role players coming off the bench; how to manage "the elephant," (i.e. Jerry Krause). There are even simple but effective instructions in Zen Meditation. Eleven Rings is a lucid exposition of the ways it is still possible to function originally, creatively, and responsibly, while working with others. He reminds me of Ingmar Bergman and Robert Bresson in that respect. Both were filmmakers with a religious dimension, who were known for their creative collaborations. But they worked at one remove from the commercial mainstream. Jackson seems to have succeeded under the glare of the bright lights and the pressure of the big bucks.

I pre-ordered the book and received it on the 21st of May. This is a side of Phil Jackson I didn't know existed, I knew about the Zen side of what was reported by the media, but I was especially pleased he shared some minor intimate things about his childhood and the players he coached. He even leaked out a few methods he's used to coach at a high level. I feel he was as transparent as he could have been and related the essence of his winning formula in a way that was simple and practical. Great read! If coach Jackson happens to read this review, I want to say thanks for not putting superficial stuff in the book and adding depth to the manuscript. Very much appreciated!

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