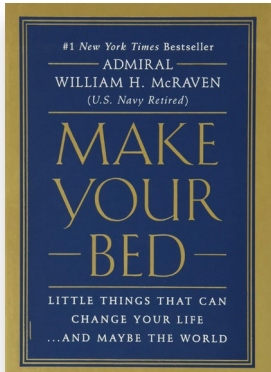


EXECUTIVE BOOK SUMMARIES

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Admiral William H. McRaven
Admiral William H. McRaven (U.S. Navy Retired) served with great distinction in the Navy. In his thirty-seven years as a Navy SEAL, he commanded at every level. He is now Chancellor of the University of Texas System.

Make Your Bed THE NUTSHELL

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Start Your Day with a Task Completed.

Life is hard and sometimes there is little you can do to affect the outcome of your day. In battle soldiers die, families grieve, your days are long and filled with anxious moments. You search for something that can give you solace, that can motivate you to begin your day, that can be a sense of pride in an often times ugly world. Daily life also needs this same sense of structure. Nothing can replace the strength and comfort of one's faith, but sometimes the simple act of making your bed can give you the lift you need to start your day and provide you the satisfaction to end it right. If you want to change your life and maybe the world—start off by making your bed!

You Can't Go It Alone.

During my time in the SEAL Teams I had numerous setbacks, and in each case, someone came forward to help me: someone who had faith in my abilities; someone who saw potential in me where others might not; someone who risked their own reputation to advance my career. I have never forgotten those people and I know that anything I achieved in my life was a result of others who have helped me along the way. None of us are immune from life's tragic moments. It takes a team of good people to get you to your destination in life. You cannot paddle the boat alone. Never forget that your success depends on others.

Make Your Bed

Only the Size of Your Heart Matters

Life's Not Fair—Drive On!

In SEAL training, the instructors would sometimes order us to roll around on the beach until we were covered with sand, or become a sugar cookie. It meant we would endure discomfort the rest of the day. It is easy to blame your lot in life on some outside force, to stop trying because you believe fate is against you. It is easy to think that where you were raised, how your parents treated you, or what school you went to is all that determines your future. Nothing could be further from the truth. The common people and the great men and women are all defined by how they deal with life's unfairness. Sometimes no matter how hard you try, you still end up as a sugar cookie. Don't complain. Don't blame it on your misfortune. Stand tall, look to the future, and drive on!

Failure Can Make You Stronger.

The Circus was held every afternoon at the end of training. The Circus was another two hours of additional calisthenics, combined with nonstop harassment by SEAL combat veterans who wanted only the strong to survive training. If you failed to meet the standard on any event that day—calisthenics, the obstacle course, the timed runs, or the swims—your name was on the list. In the eyes of the instructors, you were a failure. What made The Circus so feared by the students was not just the additional pain but also the knowledge that the day after The Circus you would be exhausted from the extra workout and so fatigued that you would fail to meet the standards again. Another Circus would follow, then another and another. It was a death spiral, a cycle of failure that caused many students to quit training. In life you will face a lot of Circuses. You will pay for your failures. But, if you persevere, if you let those failures teach you and strengthen you, then you will be prepared to handle life's toughest moments.

You Must Dare Greatly.

I always had great respect for the British Special Air Service, the famed SAS. The SAS motto was "Who Dares Wins." The motto was so widely admired that even moments before the bin Laden raid, my Command Sergeant Major, Chris Faris, quoted it to the SEALs preparing for the mission. To me the motto was more than about how the British Special Forces operated as a unit, it was about how each of us should approach our lives.

Life is a struggle and the potential for failure is ever present, but those who live in fear of failure, or hardship, or embarrassment will never achieve their potential. Without pushing your limits, without occasionally sliding down the rope headfirst, without daring greatly, you will never know what is truly possible in your life.

Make Your Bed

Stand Up to the Bullies.

Bullies are all the same whether they are in the school yard, in the workplace, or ruling a country through terror. They thrive on fear and intimidation. Bullies gain their strength through the timid and faint of heart. They are like sharks that sense fear in the water. They will circle to see if their prey is struggling. They will probe to see if their victim is weak. If you don't find the courage to stand your ground, they will strike. In life, to achieve your goals, to complete the night swim, you will have to be men and women of great courage. That courage is within all of us. Dig deep, and you will find it in abundance.

Rise to the Occasion.

At some point we will all confront a dark moment in life. If not the passing of a loved one, then something else will crush your spirit and leave you wondering about your future. In that dark moment, reach deep inside yourself and be your very best.

Give People Hope.

Hope is the most powerful force in the universe. With hope you can inspire nations to greatness. With hope you can raise up the downtrodden. With hope you can ease the pain of unbearable loss. Sometimes all it takes is one person to make a difference. We will all find ourselves neck deep in mud someday. That is the time to sing loudly, to smile broadly, to lift up those around you and give them hope that tomorrow will be a better day.

Never, Ever Quit!

Life is full of difficult times. But someone out there always has it worse than you do. If you fill your days with pity, sorrowful for the way you have been treated, bemoaning your lot in life, blaming your circumstances on someone or something else, then life will be long and hard. If, on the other hand, you refuse to give up on your dreams, stand tall and strong against the odds—then life will be what you make of it—and you can make it great.

Remember...start each day with a task completed. Find someone to help you through life. Respect everyone. Know that life is not fair and that you will fail often. But if you take some risks, step up when times are toughest, face down the bullies, lift up the downtrodden, and never, ever give up, then you can change your life, and maybe the world, for the better!