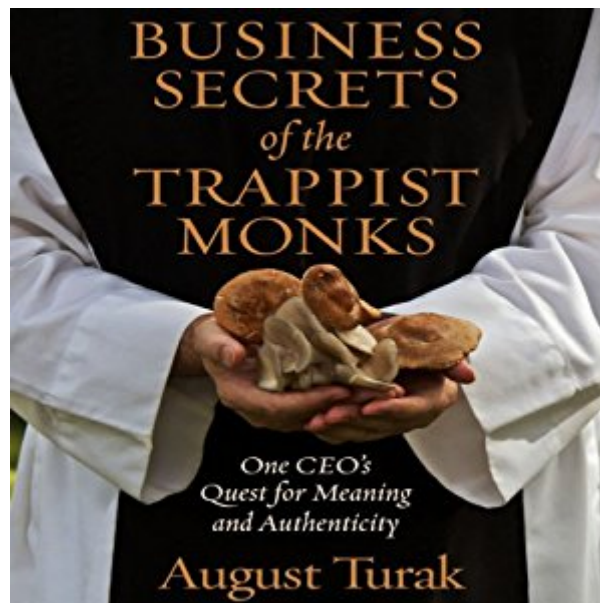




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# Business Secrets Of The Trappist Monks: One CEO's Quest For Meaning And Authenticity



## Synopsis

In addition to his work as an entrepreneur, corporate executive, and consultant, for the last 16 years August Turak worked alongside the Trappist monks of Mepkin Abbey, watching firsthand as they undertook new enterprises and sustained an incredibly successful business practice. Service and selflessness are at the heart of this 1,500-year-old monastic tradition's remarkable business success, an ancient though immensely relevant economic model that preserves what is positive and productive about capitalism while transcending its ethical limitations and internal contradictions. Combining the lessons he's learned from 30 years of business experience with intimate portraits of the monks at work, Turak shows how Trappist principles have been successfully applied in a variety of business settings. He demonstrates how the monks and such agnostics as Warren Buffett are wildly successful not despite their fanatical commitment to the highest principles but because of them. Turak also points to other transformational organizations that share critical components of the abbey's philosophy conducive to success.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

It's hard to describe this book because I've never read another like it. It's deeply personal and completely universal; it's nuts-and-bolts business insight and it's profound spiritual insight; it's ancient philosophy told through the lens of "Star Wars" and "The Devil Wears Prada." The best review I can give, I think, is a direct quote. Watch how he starts with a fairly commonplace psychological insight about money, moves to a concrete business application that most businesses could benefit from tremendously, twists it into an unusual look at the entertainment industry, and

then (as he would say) "transcends" all that as he brings it back to his overarching theme of selflessness.-----One of the most useful things I learned as a sales and marketing executive is the concept of "dollar votes"...if we really want to understand what motivates people, we should look at how people actually spend their money...I may argue quite persuasively that helping others is my top priority, but if I donate far more money to my favorite casino than to my favorite charity, I shouldn't be surprised if you remain unconvinced. In my own company, after some disappointing forays with surveys, we dispensed with this type of market research altogether. Instead, whenever we had a new product idea, we would presell the product into our customer base with a discount for prerelease software. Only if our customers were willing to pony up cold, hard cash would we in turn invest in full-blown product development. If the requisite number of sales was not forthcoming, we gave refunds to the disappointed few and headed back to the drawing board. This approach guaranteed that every product we introduced had a market, and it was actually less expensive and time consuming than traditional forms of market research. When we look at the world through the lens of dollar votes, we see an almost insatiable human demand for stories. Books, movies, and television are multibillion-dollar industries...The fact that we spend so much money on stories--in good times and bad--demonstrates that stories offer something we really want, not just something we like to say we want. And what most stories offer is the vicarious experience of transformation. We all learned in English 101 that in every compelling story, the main character must be transformed over the arc of the story...According to dollar votes, the fact that we spend so much time and money watching others being transformed proves that it is this essential transformation from selfishness to selflessness that we all really want. Of course the tragic part of this analysis is that for most of us, this urge toward transformation remains vicarious...deep inside we realize that just as we can't pay someone else to go to the gym, we can't be transformed secondhand either.

At its heart work is a spiritual endeavor. Most of us spend much of our waking lives at work. It's a place where our values and beliefs are revealed and manifested, for no matter how hard we may try to compartmentalize our work lives from our home lives, in truth we have only one life...and one self. August Turak takes us far beyond the typical leadership tips and techniques so common in business books to examine the inner currents of successful organizations. At the heart of this book is a deep rooted belief that life, and therefore work, is a spiritual quest, a yearning for transformation. Turak shows how "transformational organizations" ...those that pursue service and selflessness as their main goal, reap success as a by-product. By embodying our values and beliefs and pursuing spiritual growth...and selflessness, we can find meaning in our lives and also professional

success. "The Business Secrets of the Trappist Monks" is insightful and transformative. Turak's amazing life story takes us behind the scenes at Mepkin Abbey, MTV, and his two highly successful software businesses, Raleigh Group International (RGI) and Elsinore Technologies to see how service and selflessness can thrive in the marketplace and bring meaning to our personal lives as well.

Have you ever wondered, What's the secret to success in business and life in general? If so, read this book. It's AWESOME! Business Secrets of the Trappist Monks is not your run-of-the-mill business book. August Turk is a highly successful executive and entrepreneur who was a frequent monastic guest and worked alongside the Trappist monks of Mepkin Abbey for 17 years. This book applies the lessons he learned on how to succeed in business and in life. The message of the book is fascinating and the examples are poignant. While the solutions may seem counterintuitive, I believe August is spot-on. Business Secrets of the Trappist Monks provides real-world advice. August offers examples from diverse organizations -- such as the monks of Mepkin Abbey; Microsoft (where he served as a consultant during its early years); a major software organization (that he founded); and, believe it or not, The Devil Wears Prada -- to highlight why authenticity, service, and selflessness are winning ingredients for success. The book is practical, well written, and refreshing. I believe it should be read by leaders from all walks of life and made must-reading for every MBA student. Leaders of tomorrow who heed his advice will be well rewarded. His advice is invaluable. Frank Sonnenberg Author, Managing with a Conscience

I made the mistake of setting this book up as my "bed stand read," that I could slowly work through about 10 minutes per evening as I fell asleep. It was only a mistake because I couldn't put the book down, reading well over an hour the first night and well past the time I had intended to go to sleep. As regrets go, it was a minor one. While the book was occasionally repetitive -- I think this was a consequence of a series of originally standalone essays (each requiring full context to be understood) being converted into a single coherent book -- it was full of far more wisdom and colorful, illustrative stories than most any book I can recall reading recently. One of the previous reviewers made mention of the blend of philosophy, real-life anecdotes and examples from the business world, and spiritual autobiography, a combination which I found captivating. While the book is easy to read (the pages practically fly-by), you come to realize only after walking away from it just how much insight there is to unpack. I suspect that any reader will find that deceptively short book will leave them with a lifetime of wisdom to unpack and apply to their own life.

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