



Crossing the Unknown Sea

Notes by Frumi Rachel Barr

Author: David Whyte

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Author bio and credits: David Whyte is a Yorkshire born poet and Fortune 500 consultant. Using poetry to bring understanding to the process of change, he has introduced poetry into such companies as Bristol-Myers Squibb, American Express, Boeing, Kodak, and Toyota, helping clients understand individual and organizational creativity and apply that understanding to vitalize and transform the workplace.

Noteworthy info regarding contents and chapter titles:

It is the greatest and most often missed opportunity of our lives to have a firm persuasion, to feel you can move mountains. David Whyte brings the word of William Blake to tasks that occupy most of our waking hours: "To have a firm persuasion in our work - to feel that what we do is right for ourselves and good for the world at the exact same time - is one of the greatest triumph's of human existence".

Following this introduction Whyte makes his point clear through a series of personal stories - his own personal pilgrimage in search of the work that would come to fulfill him. *Crossing the Unknown Sea* hopes not only to chart the journey into work itself and our present sense of power and powerlessness, but to offer something of a journey, an arrival, and if we are lucky, a little insight through its poetry, its memories, and its stories.

Each chapter explores a story and then an application of the story to elements of the work environment. They have such titles as *At The Cliff edge of Life: From Powerlessness to participation*; *A Star for Navigation: Ambition, Horizon, and Arrival*; *The Awkward Way the swan Walks: From exhaustion to Wholeheartedness*.

Author's main point:

Our greatest opportunity for discovery and growth is in the thing we most often want to get away from our work. It's where people spend the majority of their time, and it's where many spend much of it wishing they were somewhere else, or doing something else. It's where people often spend their time not being present and not being themselves. Whyte points out that "as human beings we are the one part of creation that can refuse to be itself. Our bodies can be present in our work, but our hearts, minds, and imaginations can be placed firmly in neutral or engaged elsewhere.

Being engaged elsewhere is damaging to our souls. Crossing the Unknown Sea is about reawakening the sleeping captain in us before that soul crashes on the rocks. This book is a pilgrimage to the center of identity and the roots of growth. The author brings a new practicality to finding fulfillment and nurturing our deepest identities at work.

A few supporting ideas:

The author, in one of his jobs, ran into a room *looking for David* - for himself. He hadn't seen him in the longest time and sincerely wondered where he was. He had become a stranger to himself and didn't even have time for a snatched conversation about things that really mattered to him. The embarrassment of this action created a wake up call for the author.

When he announced that he was becoming a fulltime poet, this was met with disbelief. He had an intuition that you really announce what you want in the world you will always be greeted, in the first place, with some species of silence. It may be that the silence is there so that you can hear exactly what you have asked for, and hear it more clearly so that you can get it right.

As the author prepares to follow his dream, and is about to give his first public speech he is very frightened and ill. He says that it is all very well to have a dream, but the moment you put the dream to hazard, you have the possibility of failing it. Then who would we be.

There is a wonderful point made about coming home at the end of a day. " Late in our day, the first shadows of return we encounter on the threshold of our own door are times of immense vulnerability and transition. We should remember to take time for ourselves and for those who share our lives.

Reviewer's recommendation: This book is beautifully written combining poetry with the Author's personal journey. It is a life-changing work about discovery and the shaping of identity in conversation with the world. I would enthusiastically recommend this book to clients and friends.



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Frumi and Deborah Gaal are co-founders of the Leaderly Learning Center, a leadership development company specializing in women. We get results because our workshops are led by women who have been CEO's, entrepreneurs and certified coaches. We walk the walk.

Our unique curriculum enables leaders to achieve results through a combination of learning and implementing research-based leadership lessons, coaching to develop self-awareness, and mentoring to provide support.