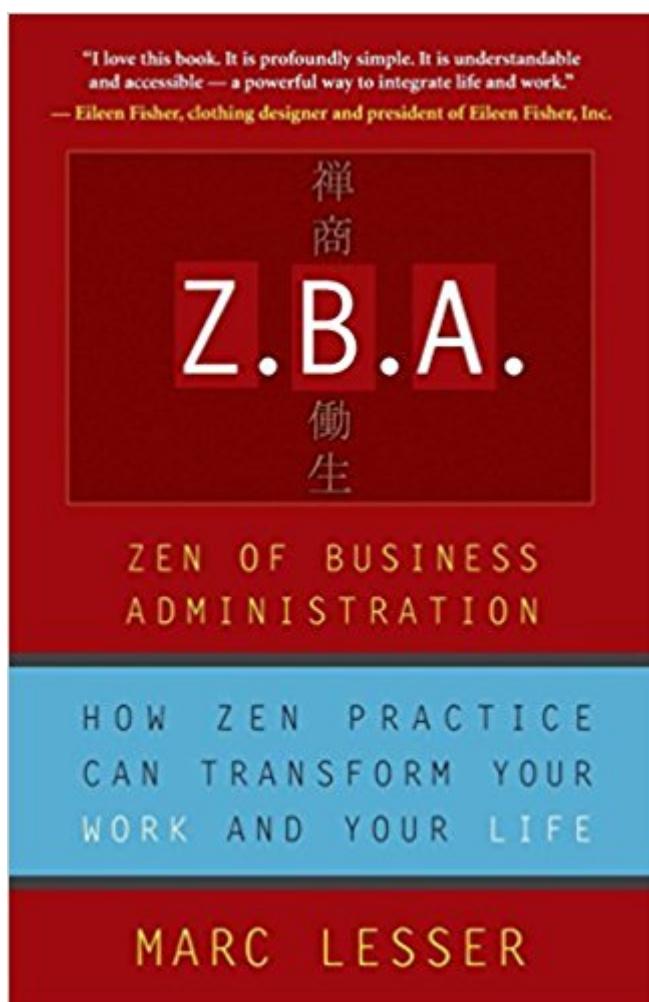


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# Z.B.A.: Zen Of Business Administration - How Zen Practice Can Transform Your Work And Your Life



## Synopsis

In the great Zen tradition of teaching stories, Marc Lesser relates his own personal and professional trials as he navigates the delicate path of managing a successful business while staying true to his spiritual roots. Struggling through a difficult economic climate, he also faces the usual challenges of running a growing company – meeting payroll, balancing cashflow, hiring and firing employees, and maintaining relationships with vendors and customers. Guiding him through these difficulties while providing strength and insight is the practice of Zen. Utilizing his training as a Zen practitioner, Lesser learns to apply specific teachings such as the eight-fold path directly to work and life. In chapters such as "Work: The Impossible Request," "Appreciating Uncertainty," and "Accomplishing More by Doing Less," ZBA: The Zen of Business Administration provides readers with intimate, helpful advice, while acknowledging the paradox of applying spiritual practice to the business world.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"I love this book. It is profoundly simple. It is understandable and accessible – a powerful way to integrate life and work." – Eileen Fisher, clothing designer and president of Eileen Fisher, Inc. "Marc Lesser's book illuminates his two-tiered life history – as Zen adept and business entrepreneur – with a skillfully woven fabric of Buddhist teachings and personal stories. I loved reading about his triumphs and tribulations in both spheres. This is how it really is, in Zen and in business. May his readers learn and prosper from Marc's hard-won wisdom!" – Lewis

Richmond, author of *Work as a Spiritual Practice* "ZBA is a wake-up call for any entrepreneur who seeks self-knowledge, life balance, and boundless vitality. You'll save yourself years of practice just by contemplating the provocative questions at the end of every chapter." Will Rosenzweig, former president and CEO of The Republic of Tea and coauthor of *The Republic of Tea: How an Idea Becomes a Business* "I have long realized that among spiritual paths Zen is uniquely suited to application in the world of work. The way is right there at your fingertips, not complicated, but it does require a guide, someone who knows Zen practice; and the ins and outs of real-world business. In ZBA Marc Lesser has managed with elegant and honest lucidity to point to a Zen way of working. This book isn't Zen in ten easy steps: it's a reliable companion for the path." Norman Fischer, former abbot of the San Francisco Zen Center and author of *Taking Our Places* "There is an urgent need for all of us to walk our faith in the marketplace. *Z.B.A. Zen of Business Administration* by Marc Lesser will surely help. Read, rejoice, and start practicing." Ken Blanchard, co-author of *The One Minute Manager*® and *The Secret* "Marc does a brilliant job blending the spiritual and the practical in a likeable style of simplicity, genuineness, and self-deprecating humor. His book shows us how the philosophies and practices of Zen will give us resilience in the face of challenges, win the hearts and minds of employees, customers and business partners, and deliver a unique kind of competitive edge in the world of business." Minh Le, president of The Wilfred Jarvis Institute "In a world of intense competition and drive for short-term profits, Marc Lesser brings a new and vital message. The world of work is not about profits, promotions, bonuses, and self-interested behavior. True work is the art of living life; a life of vitality, of completeness, of interdependence with our fellow workers, our environment, our loved ones, and most important with ourselves." John Oliver Wilson, retired executive vice president and chief economist of Bank of America

I'm afraid I have to concur with an earlier reviewer, who had hoped, based on the title and the description, that this book dealt in a meaningful way with the application of Zen practice to the worlds of business and commerce, which I think is an important topic that deserves reflection. Many of us spend a great deal of time and energy at work, and if we can't bring our practice to life in that context, then we're not really making contact with our lives. This book consists of homilies written in what I found to be an undistinguished California ecumenical Dharma center style. Lesser earnestly recounts his experiences in a series of autobiographical vignettes that connect basic points of practice with his experience in the business world. I didn't find this a particularly illuminating or useful approach. We can agree, for example, that everything is interconnected, and this includes

everything at work, but this insight is superficial if merely stated in those terms. The question is how to meaningfully realize and actualize that fact in our interactions, and here, Lesser provides very little help. I'm not sure why he focuses so heavily on his own experience - I suppose the pattern of Dharma talks he's familiar with emphasizes leading from personal experience. But for me, at least, these stories are pretty boring and border on self-absorption. Honestly, I could care less about his experience on a high school wrestling team, and it's not exactly the Flower Sermon to read about. I believe he means well, for what it's worth, and apparently a lot of readers get some value out of this book. For someone with some degree of experience in practice, and to whom lines from the Heart Sutra will be as familiar as the opening chords of "Stairway to Heaven," this book will not break new ground, and doesn't have much to say.

Marc Lesser writes of the value of paradox. "If it is not paradoxical, it's not true." And in his own book, he skillfully balances the very nature of business leadership and success with the humility of a zen teacher. For most of us that is its own paradox. In the chapter "Act Like You Know What You Are Doing", I could see my business persona. I have had the chance to part of exceptionally successful businesses where we led with conviction, but I was also in touch with the realization how little we can be certain of anything. Most importantly, this is not a book "about" you or business administration. This is a book "for" you and your business. Marc gives practices at the end of each chapter so you can see what works in your life. If you are reading this to see if this might be worth your money, time and effort, buy it and start it now.

"We are all Zen students. We are all businesspeople." This is how the first section of this book opens. As for me, I am a Manager. Also I am a person in search for answers in my spiritual life, and I am seeking into Buddhism for those answers. This combination led me to read by pure accident an ad on Shambhala Sun magazine (highly recommendable, if you are into Buddhism, by the way) that featured Marc Lesser's Z.B.A. I ordered it and it didn't take long for me to get hooked on it. Walking the reader through means of achieving the Buddhist Eightfold Path while at work, the book offers a refreshing perspective on how to bridge the gap between our "work lives" and our "personal lives", if such a dyotomy makes any sense whatsoever. A good example of how these two things are in essence one and the same is what Lesser makes of the purpose of Zen: "The purpose of Zen and the purpose of business practice is to develop and open, flexible mind, a mind that can deal with a world that is both solid and completely impermanent." In the end, there are so many fascinating elements proposed by the author, that I cannot avoid but to feel sorry for having finished the book. I

almost feel like re-reading it, and I do recommend that you check it out.

This is a collection of short vignettes by a Zen practitioner who is also the founder and CEO of a successful company. Each vignette frames a different aspect of Zen practice and connects it to an aspect of running a business. The idea is to bring the concepts of Zen into the business world, to help the reader become more adept at dealing with the daily challenges of work, while integrating the spiritual into the business realm, where it is not usually welcomed. I connect with these ideas and could imagine how useful this book would be on the bookshelf next to my desk, to consult when I face a new challenge or stress while I am working. Each vignette could bear multiple readings and reveal something new every time, in light of the context in which it is read. I particularly appreciated the Nine Practices for being more in connection with yourself while at work and the Z.B.A. Manifesto at the back of the book, and plan to consult both regularly.

I enjoyed reading this book. It has plenty of interesting comparisons between life at work and life on the cushion. My only struggle was with the book's structure. It could be that I had difficulty was because I read it on my Kindle Voyage--perhaps thumbing between sections, or reviewing the table of contents, would have made it easier to see how Mr. Lesser organized the book. Instead, it felt like a bit of stream of consciousness.

a monk that had several experiences including operating a printing business. This is one of my favorite books that I keep on my shelf because I like Marc's humble attitude and sharing of his mindful experiences. The format of the book easy to read.

Very good

I bought this for my mother. She said it was both informational and a wonderful gift.

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