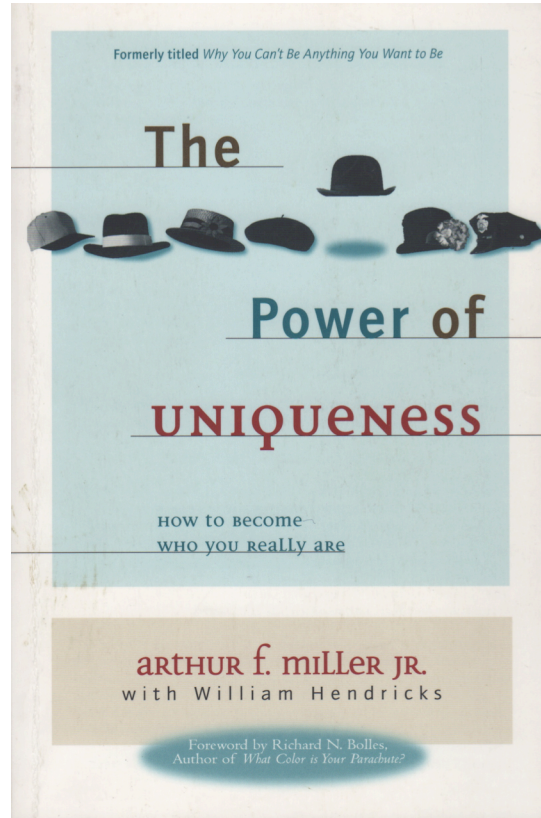

BOOK REVIEW

"The Power of Uniqueness: How to Become Who You Really Are" by Arthur F. Miller Jr. and Bill Hendricks

Zondervan; 2008
ISBN 13: 978-0310242888
ISBN 10: 0310242886

[Paperback for around \$4.97
on www.amazon.com
US\$14.37 for Kindle]

Reviewed by Dr Darryl Cross,
leadership & careers coach
& psychologist
www.DrDarryl.com



This book was originally published under the title *Why You Can't Be Anything You Want to Be* in 1999. That title describes well the thesis of *The Power of Uniqueness*. It helps answer the question, "What should I do with my life?"

Arthur Miller began thinking about this question decades before writing a book about it. In his introduction he tells several stories from his early life – beginning with a great example from being in the Navy in World War II – that illustrate that we are all created differently. Each of us has specialties of personality that make us excel at some things and not others.

Miller developed the SIMA profile which is used extensively in personnel departments and organizations around the world to place people effectively in their work positions. SIMA stands for System for Identifying Motivated Capabilities. *The Power of Uniqueness* explains in detail how uncovering your unique talents can result in a more satisfying and fulfilling life.

The author's approach is a spiritual one that equates our personal uniqueness to that which God has granted us, and because he is unapologetically Christian, one should take that into consideration when approaching the book. He describes a commitment to faith as "using one's endowed giftedness to serve the world with excellence and, through that service, to love and honor God! The calling that fully engages what God has given you is a holy task!"

One of the most revealing pieces of information Miller found from his own career was that "As a manager I could open doors for people who were able to make the most of the opportunity. I was not able...to provide continuing management...I am good at leading but not at managing." "I have systematically studied...what is going on in folks that drives them toward certain pursuits, things that allow them to function in 'full flight' with passion and commitment..."

He faults the science of psychology for seeking out general principles to explain how people function, when "if each person's behavior is uniquely motivated, you can't find any general principles that can predict future individual behavior..."

The book is organized nicely in three parts. The first describes Miller's study of giftedness and the MAP (Motivated Abilities Pattern) model. The second answers the question "How can I find and follow God's will and plan for my life?" The third is his dream of transforming society to embrace our differences rather than mold us into similar cogs in the machine.

Miller says it is a myth that we can become anything we want to be. He decries that school is "such a drag and so ineffective for most students," that "seven out of ten people [are] neither motivated nor competent to perform the basics of their jobs," and that "many millions of Americans spend their working lives in what bores them, stresses them, or fills them with self-hatred."

Another key idea is that your past is the best predictor of your future. That's why his extensive interviews with over 50,000 people to map their unique competencies begin with their earliest recollections of what they were good at. From those studies he developed this law of human behavior: "Every time people do something they experience as satisfying and as done well, they are in fact repeating part or all of a recurring pattern of specific competencies and motivations." He says that one's giftedness "emerges in early childhood and remains fundamentally the same throughout life..." One of his five very informative appendices helps you find this thread in your own life.

Miller is the founder of People Management International, Ltd. and is a speaker and presenter at numerous national and regional conferences and workshops. He was director of personnel at the University of Chicago's Argonne facility and director of industrial relations for Raytheon. His co-author, William Hendricks, is founder of The Hendricks Group, which specializes in pinpointing the motivational strengths and makeup of individuals, and has co-authored many titles.

My perspective on the purpose of the book is to help you identify your own God-given flair for life and use it to glorify God. He envisions a world in which everyone has the opportunity to break through the "self-awareness smog" (from Richard Bolles's foreword) and realize their potential and that of their business or organization.

The insights in *The Power of Uniqueness* are compelling and surprising, and I think there is something there for every reader to ponder and apply in their own life.

[Dr Darryl Cross is a clinical and organisational psychologist as well as a credentialed executive and personal coach. He is also an author, international speaker and university lecturer. Dr Darryl assists people to find their strengths and reach their goals. Further information on Dr Darryl can be seen at www.DrDarryl.com]