

We're Gonna Need Cake: Celebrating Authentic Leadership in a Messy World

Valerie Garcia

Page Two

(212pp)

978-1-77458-448-4

An uplifting, realistic, and supportive leadership guide, We're Gonna Need Cake is about being one's true self at work and at home.

Valerie Garcia's inspirational business book *We're Gonna Need Cake* is a guide to being oneself at work in order to improve performance and productivity.

This is a book about leading with one's real emotions and true personality, as well as about finding joy, empowering employees, creating stronger teams, cultivating healthier workplaces, and satisfying customers. It begins with a personal story, showing Garcia sobbing in a utility closet at work. This humanizing story is used to eschew the notion that one's personal and work lives are separable.

The topical chapters concern values including bravery, curiosity, and confidence, paired with roadblocks to their realization, including denial, comparison, and ego. The book's "authenticity map" is used to outline stops on the way to revealing one's true self as a leader at work. All is made more personable thanks to a humorous tone and winsome allusions: the book discusses "failing like a boss," and it riffs on a proposed shark dive in Australia to quip, "If the power goes out and it gets dark, don't panic. Have fun!" Garcia further humanizes her work with frank admissions, as of reacting to a put-together Instagram model with the fear that "I was never going to succeed at anything, so I might as well give up. The end."

The book is heavy on illustrative examples that are used to support its general recommendations. Garcia discusses wanting more responsibility as a young administrator at the Red Cross but also being underprepared for said responsibilities in the chapter on bravery; she recalls sitting through meetings as a senior leader at a real estate company in a chapter about daring to be curious and letting go of feelings of certainty. Stories about a college student seeking advice from an influential musician on how to be an artist and of a writer addressing their self-doubt by reading one-star reviews of Pulitzer Prize-winning novels are used to model facing the internal roadblocks of rejection and fear. These tales result in general accessibility and strong narrative support for the book's encouragements against compartmentalizing one's work and personal lives. Some clichés are included, including "hashtag blessed" and "one hell of a drug," but the book as a whole is uplifting, realistic, and supportive.

A celebratory and inspiring leadership guide, *We're Gonna Need Cake* calls for a more human approach to work that's grounded in authenticity.

JOSEPH S. PETE (August 1, 2024)

Disclosure: This article is not an endorsement, but a review. The publisher of this book provided free copies of the book and paid a small fee to have their book reviewed by a professional reviewer. Foreword Reviews and Clarion Reviews make no guarantee that the publisher will receive a positive review. Foreword Magazine, Inc. is disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255.