



The Heart Aroused: Poetry and the Preservation of the Soul in Corporate America

David Whyte

[Download now](#)

[Read Online](#) 

The Heart Aroused: Poetry and the Preservation of the Soul in Corporate America

David Whyte

The Heart Aroused: Poetry and the Preservation of the Soul in Corporate America David Whyte
Only a poet could produce such a provocative analysis of today's widespread disenchantment with business -
- or such a daring prescription for using the classics of poetry to revitalize the soul of corporate America.

The Heart Aroused: Poetry and the Preservation of the Soul in Corporate America Details

Date : Published June 1st 1996 by Crown Business (first published 1994)

ISBN : 9780385484183

Author : David Whyte

Format : Paperback 368 pages

Genre : Poetry, Nonfiction, Business, Spirituality, Leadership

 [Download The Heart Aroused: Poetry and the Preservation of the S ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online The Heart Aroused: Poetry and the Preservation of the ...pdf](#)

**Download and Read Free Online The Heart Aroused: Poetry and the Preservation of the Soul in
Corporate America David Whyte**

From Reader Review The Heart Aroused: Poetry and the Preservation of the Soul in Corporate America for online ebook

Beth says

This book challenged my cynical attitudes about what level of creativity and authenticity can be had in the standard white collar corporate American career. I remain pessimistic on that front overall, but less so after reading this. Loved the application of literary analysis; this book summarizes a number of "life lessons" relevant to just about anybody in most walks of life, regardless of occupation. Sometimes meanders a bit before returning to its main points, but highly thought-provoking.

Hundeschlitten says

A great thing about books is how they can sit on your shelf for months, if not years, untouched, until you pick one of them up on a whim and it changes how you look at the world. Such is the case for me with "The Heart Aroused," which I brought home last year from a used bookstore.

The subtitle sums up the subject matter: "Poetry and the Preservation of the Soul in Corporate America." Whyte discusses poetry, story, and soul, and how, in a healthy psyche, they are intertwined with our life's work. He has an entire section about how our inevitable midlife crisis is actually an opportunity to look at the world with both the wisdom of experience and a renewed idealism. This book has sharpened my thinking about my life and where I am heading. It also has some beautiful passages about the ability of language, myth and story to change our lives. It is a little too blissfully cosmic and optimistic at times, about both the corporate world and individual purpose. And the language sometimes borders on pretense. But even at these moments, I appreciate Whyte's effort to help us all find beauty and meaning in what we do.

Mark Oppenlander says

This is a tough book to review. In part, it's difficult to review because the subject matter and content of the book are themselves hard to describe. And in part, it is hard to review because I don't fully know how to discuss how I feel about this book yet.

David Whyte is a poet and an academic but also a corporate consultant. In this book he discusses the meeting place of those two vocations - the intersection between poetry and the corporate office. Whyte argues that we need to rediscover our imaginative selves in order to find meaning and purpose in the halls of the modern corporation. Work takes up far too much of our lives for us to bring only a portion of our whole person with us to the office. And poetry can help us find our creativity, our authenticity and our voice, even amidst the jungles and deserts of corporate America.

In a series of surprisingly fast-moving chapters, Whyte takes us from Beowulf to Coleridge to modern poetry in pursuit of metaphors and images that will help us find out courage, our creativity and ultimately our *soul* in the corporate office. At first, it might be easy to see his technique of tying poetic ideas to workplace situations as a gimmick. But Whyte is convincing in his knowledge of what troubles the corporate executive and the cubicle drone. He unearths our deepest desires and fears at work and gives us hope that we might be able to pursue the former and stare down the latter.

This is a book I will re-read eventually. There were far too many passages that I wanted to read and savor and speak aloud. Too many ideas that I needed to mull over and then come back to later. I found myself consistently wanting to read things out loud to my wife who was, God bless her, trying to read her own book. So I opted for posting quotes on Facebook instead.

Some of you reading this need to read this book. I don't know who you are, but you're out there. I can feel you. If anything I've written here piques your interest, give Whyte a shot. I don't think you'll be disappointed. And it might just save your soul.

JoAnn says

This may have been the book that sparked my search for authenticity. While reading it, I came across a poem that I have consistently returned to over the past eight years, entitled, "Lost," by David Wagoner.

Stand still. The trees ahead and bushes beside you
Are not lost. Wherever you are is called Here
And you must treat it as a powerful stranger,
Must ask permission to know it and be known.
The forest breathes. Listen. It answers,
I have made this place around you,
If you leave it you may come back again, saying Here.
No two trees are the same to Raven.
No two branches are the same to Wren.
If what a tree or a bush does is lost on you,
You are surely lost. Stand still. The forest knows
Where you are. You must let it find you.

I consider this book an essential resource for students of authenticity. Using poetry and myth, David Whyte speaks soulfully to those of us who have been wandering in the wasteland of corporate America and who, for whatever reasons, have awakened enough to realize something is missing.

Jan Höglund says

This book was first published in 1994. If I had read it twenty years ago, it might have influenced me to take another path in my work life? Or, maybe, I needed the experience acquired during those twenty years to really appreciate the book? It's a wonderful book. David Whyte eloquently addresses the split between our work lives and the part of ourselves (our souls) which are forced underground in the corporate world. This is the split between what is nourishing and what is agonizing at work. David Whyte offers the poet's perspective on this chasm. He writes about *inviting the soul to work, power and vulnerability in the workplace, grounded creativity, speaking out, innocence and experience, the soul at midlife, facing what is sweet and terrible, and ecological imagination*. His language is colorful and multidimensional, yet strangely precise. It's a very well-written book which arouses the heart! I give it my heartfelt recommendations!

Below are some quotes from the book:

By definition, soul evades the cage of definition. It is the indefinable essence of a person's spirit and being.

Looking over the vast amount of management literature, very few authors are willing to take the soul seriously in the workplace.

I have tried to illuminate ... the forces that work for and against an individual who asks for more commitment and passion in his work.

... we live in an unfathomable, shape-shifting world that must be lived and experienced rather than controlled or solved ...

Preservation of the soul means the preservation at work of humanity and sanity ...

Above all, preserving the soul means preserving a desire to live a life a man or woman can truly call their own.

If work is all about doing, then the soul is all about being ...

Our own path must be deciphered every step of the way.

We cannot neglect our interior fire without damaging ourselves in the process.

All things change when we do.

Some things cannot be ... discovered until we have been stuck ... or blown off course for a while.

... everything takes form according to the consciousness that shaped it.

It is essential ... to know what is vital and alive inside us and shape our lives in its image.

The full terror of our aloneness is the force that makes us praise the meeting with others. The terror of intimacy and belonging gives us the depth and appreciation for aloneness.

Every action, ... no matter how small, influences every future action, no matter how large.

Managers, being true to their title, have ... the belief that everything ... tends toward disorder, unless, of course, it is managed.

... it is hard to put our heart in the work when most of what we feel is stress.

Without ... rules ... a cohesive team with a strong sense of its mission ... can be allowed a lot of leeway to develop its own approach ...

There is ... tremendous natural "beauty" in an organization that allows people to bloom and grow ...

The soul bereft of meaningful experience begins to engineer its escape from the structures holding it in check, by dying to itself.

Trying to run complex companies ... by ... command, from the top down, may be the single most unnecessary burden carried by any ... manager.

Stop treating people as if they are dangerous vehicles about to spin out of control unless you are constantly applying the brakes.

We are not our job descriptions, and the small, confining prisons those descriptions have made for us.

We have been handed an accepted work world in which the things that really matter in human life have been pushed to the margins ...

Elizabeth says

Oh there were a lot of WORDS in this book. Some of them quite lyrical. It took me weeks to get through it because of both the font and the wordiness. I loved some of the connections and conclusions that Whyte makes, especially about preserving innocence while valuing experience, about bringing genuine and complex humanity into the workplace. But this could have been half the length and made the same points. (I'm not normally a complainer about length, FWIW.)

Jeff says

While attending a poetry workshop on Iona in June, I learned of this book and was intrigued. When I got back home, I picked up a copy and read it back in August while in North Carolina on a planning leave. I was pleasantly surprised. It was better than I expected. Whyte is a British poet who moved to America and found himself involved with corporations as he attempted to encourage their creativity with the use of poetry.

You'd think that management and poets would avoid each other. After all, management is attempting to maximize the productivity of employees and poetry does little for the bottom line. Work is about doing, while poetry is about being (20). However, Whyte suggests that both need each other. Without poetry (and the arts) corporations becomes soulless, and poetry without the corporate world becomes useless. Poetry can help businesses have employees who are better-rounded and who are creative. To tap into the creative process of individuals, souls must be nurtured and emotions understood. Of course, this begs the question as to what is the soul. And there are no easy definitions or ways to understand the soul.

It's not just poetry from which Whyte draws meaning. He draws from all kinds of stories as archetypes of our experiences in life and within organizations. There's Dante, lost and walking in the dark woods and Beowulf facing not only his fears, but the mother of his fears. He explores the luring passions of fire around which our storytelling and language began, and the Irish myth of Fionn and the need for mentors to teach a new generation to rise even further. He draws from the wisdom of Greek myths that point to our need to become elders, and to the English poet Coleridge observing the chaotic yet orderly flight of starlings. In addition to the above who became major themes within individual chapters, he draws from a host of others throughout this book such as Franz Kafka, St. John of the Cross, Goethe, the Bible, the Gilgamesh, Rainer Maria Rilke, Paulo Neruda, T. S. Eliot, the Tibetan Book of the Dead, Chinese mythology, Robert Burns, William Blake, William Butler Yeats, Zen, Native American and African legends, Matt Groening ("Life in Hell" cartoons), among others.

This is not a how-to book on saving corporate America. Instead, it is a complex book that invites us to consider stories with ancient truths and how they might help us navigate the complex world in which we find ourselves.

Whyte sees poetry as a way that corporate America can foster the well-being of the souls of employees and thereby allow them to bring creativity into the organization as they navigate the path between imposed orderliness and chaos. This book is over twenty years old and I know he has revised a new edition. I wonder

if he addressed how poetry might address Enron and the current political nature of our society.

Martin Blackman says

This book is worthwhile if you're locked into a demanding professional office life and looking for inspiration to break out and survive psychically. What I don't get and what I think makes the book less than it should be is his narrow reference to corporate America as the primary and singular example where the soul does not flourish but can. I think space for the soul and space to be creative is boxed in is the challenge in a good many other work situations than the author addresses directly. So that is the peculiar side of the book.

On the other hand, David Whyte is an interesting author with both a classical English literary education as well as modern biology/ecology. Both aspects of his education inform his perspective, and the combination serves as a catalyst for his thinking. The literary background is best reflected in his extensive knowledge of myth ranging from well known legends like Beowulf to much lesser known traditional myths like the story of Fionn and the Salmon of Knowledge.

This book may be a bit didactic, but it served its purpose for me. It contained something I needed--call that a basis for seeking a new inspiration if not a major inspiration itself.

Donna says

Many of you are aware of the SIM RLF (Society of Information Management Regional Leadership Forum) reading list that is updated each year and posted on their site - http://www.simnet.org/?page=5_RLF_Boo...

One book that has consistently appeared on the list is David Whyte's "The Heart Aroused: Poetry and the Preservation of the Soul in Corporate America".

David describes preserving the soul as "we come out of hiding at last and bring more of ourselves into the workplace. Especially the parts that do not "belong" to the company. In a sense, the very part of us that doesn't have the least interest in the organization is our greatest offering to it. It is the part that opens the window of imagination and allows fresh air into the meeting room..."

David is a poet and is inspired by many poets throughout the book. It is amazing to me that this book was written in 1994, and almost 20 years later remains 100 % relevant. I loved this book and this will definitely go on my "Books to Read Again".

Vinod Narayan says

I recommend this read for every one interested in Organizational development and involvement in Work and Life in a very deeper level.

<https://penpositive.com/2017/09/29/ca...>

Daniel Seifert says

The Heart Aroused reflects attention to the self as soul navigating and struggling in the large organization, viz. the corporation. Whyte speaks as and to a poet (perhaps in most of us), who deeply wants to live and not lose the fullness of human enjoyment and creativity amidst the smothering pressures of an organization. He draws from the story of Beowulf as a way of reinforcing a path downward into the depths of one's self with all the vulnerabilities of the psyche (e.g., anxiety, grief, terror), while recognize the monsters on the surface (in the organization) that seek to destroy one's quest inwardly or downward where real change and life emerge. For this is where fire and combustion forge and try ideas, experiences, and creative meaning into rare and joyful forms of practice, production and performance. In "Fire in the Voice", Whyte contends for an embodied voice from courage from one's "guts", which entails coming to terms with what keeps it closed up (wounds, failure, trauma); thus clearing the inward path of to the mind to wisdom and personal strength, character and virtue.

Half way trough the text Whyte enters "The Soul at Midlife" directing the poet-practitioner on a path back home, which is an instinctive strategy that any career coach with any salt would suggest. Staying on one's own road is equivalent to being or knowing oneself verse meddling with someone else's or getting lost with the busyness of business. The poetry of "The Starlngs" reveals to us the reality of complexity and boundaries between chaos and order, and the way of being via instinctive strategies such as simplicity, silence, patience, metaphor and rest or standing still.

Whyte ends with an Ecology of Mind, acknowledging that the world too has a mind (geist). Here is a call to pay attention to the other as just that, the other versus a preoccupation with oneself (the customer, colleague, client, constituency, territory). With respect to oneself and other, as in nature, there are cycles that need to be heeded for what they are--times of blossom, loss, failure, growth--the cyclical stages of orientation, disorientation, reorientation. The heart aroused , in short, is one emboldened by one's art to celebrate work with care, courage and "above all, a little more soul."

David Pace says

Poetry and our contemporary working life never had more to say to each other, including those ensconced in corporate life where one would think poetry and lyricism have been relegated to the basement . . . and weekends (if you're lucky).

A modern-day prophet of the way the humanities shape, inform and revolutionize our internal lives and the lives we share with others, Whyte invites us to see even the most mundane (life in a shirt and tie) as ecstatic, trans-formative . . . a journey.

Erin Pretorius says

Genius.

Emily says

I marked so many passages in this book, and it was a very worthwhile read. Something about the flow and how the concepts were all connected could have been a little more focused. I've already recommended it a few times though.

Chad Cecil says

Stupid good. Like a slow sip of great whisky...burns going down but clears you right up. Tons to process.
