



## BOOKSHELF

# *Filling the Glass: The Skeptic's Guide to Positive Thinking in Business*

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**W**e all know the distinction between an optimist and a pessimist: one views the glass as half full, the other as half empty.

In *Filling the Glass: The Skeptic's Guide to Positive Thinking in Business* (Dearborn Trade, January 2001), Barry Maher tells us how to reconcile the difference "between what we believe we should be doing in our careers and our lives and what we actually find ourselves doing."

In the early 1980s, a 30-year-old Maher was struggling to make ends meet. He eventually was hired by a Fortune 100 sales organization to sell advertisements for the Yellow Pages. After five weeks of classroom training and three days in the field, Maher hadn't sold a single ad and was ready to quit. Then he recalled his short-term goal—simply do the best he could on the next call—and finished the year as the No. 1 sales rep in the company (out of about 900). He continued to set records throughout what came to be a very successful sales career. His book, *Getting the Most from Your Yellow Pages Advertising: Maximum Profits at Minimum Cost* (AMACOM Books, 1988; 2nd edition, Aegis, 1997), still ranks as one of the best resources in its field.

In *Filling the Glass: The Skeptic's Guide to Positive Thinking in Business*, Maher is often funny, occasionally blunt, but

always honest. "If you choose to put a small value on yourself, you can be sure the world won't raise the price." He distills 15 years of experience as a professional speaker and a business consultant to more than 300 companies into 10 strategies for positive thinking.

"This is not a book about selling, it's a book about succeeding," Maher writes. Aimed at anyone in the business world, "it's about strategies that work."

Maher helps us fill our own glass through a skillful mix of case studies, tips, tactics and "hard-headed, reality-based inspiration." Skeptical of positive thinking that isn't based on reality, Maher believes readers, audiences and employees have had their fill of "wishful thinking, Pollyannaism and pixie dust."

Four of the 10 strategies found in *Filling the Glass* are:

- ▼ **Make peace with the negative.** Acknowledge the problems in your career, your product, your company, your peers, etc. Tip: It's much harder to change the world than it is to change how we respond to the world.
- ▼ **Fill the glass.** "If you can't honestly justify to yourself what you are doing with your life, if you aren't working toward goals in which you honestly believe," Maher writes, "you are never going to be—by your own standards—successful."

Tip: Neither the job nor the company makes us who we are. We make us who we are.

- ▼ **Fail toward success.** "Nothing succeeds like failure . . . benefit from it. Make new and better mistakes," Maher writes.

Tip: No matter what the outcome—good, bad or indifferent—always take a moment to ask yourself how you could have improved your performance.

- ▼ **Never settle for success.** "We all know we can do more. We all know we can do better," Maher writes, but don't let the quest for success become self-limiting. Tip: You're asking much more of your career than it's likely able to supply if you can't find satisfaction in any other aspect of life.

Meeting planners and other MPI members are sure to find this book useful when evaluating their own career and personal satisfaction levels. Maher concludes his spiritual message of self-discovery with one final tip: You wouldn't settle for half empty. Never settle for half full. Fill the glass.



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