

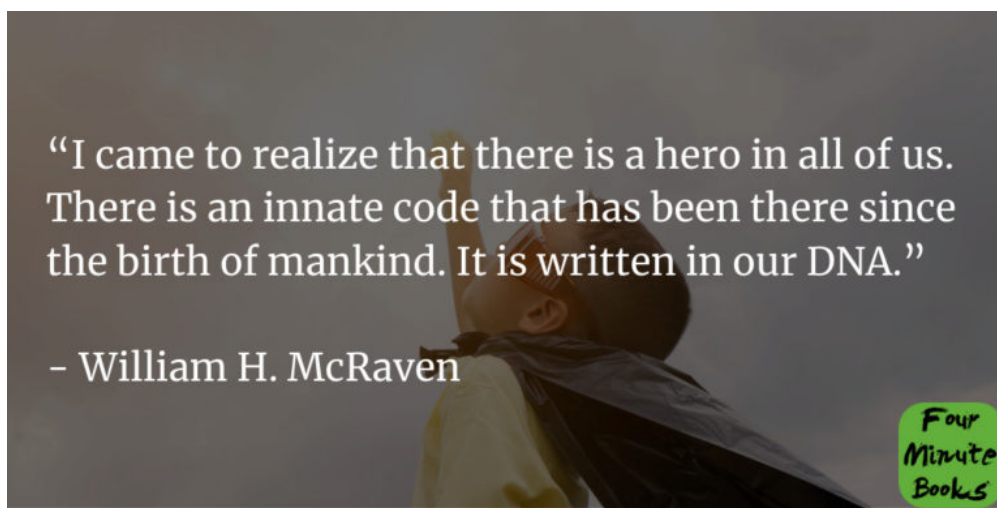
The Hero Code Summary

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1-Sentence-Summary: *The Hero Code* is Admiral William H. McRaven's guide to becoming a hero, identifying the traits of real-life heroes through inspiring stories of bravery and determination, including many of McRaven's own experiences as a four-star admiral and in his personal life.

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:



What is a hero? When you're a kid, it might be someone like Superman, who has otherworldly powers and wears a cape. Many kids are also inspired by real-life heroes like firefighters or soldiers. They aspire to grow up and become extraordinary and heroic too.

As we get older, we start to lose touch with that ambition. But if you want some inspiration on what heroism looks like in everyday life, four-star Admiral William H. McRaven has no shortage of inspiring stories. In *The Hero Code: Lessons Learned from Lives Well Lived*, he recounts acts of real-life heroism both on the field and among everyday people.

He reminds us that even as adults, any of us can become a hero with the right key virtues. His stories will inspire you to start making a difference in the world today, even if it's only in small ways.

These are 3 of the best lessons the book teaches:

1. Heroes always strive to be courageous and will risk their lives for others.
2. A hero never gives up, even when things get hard.
3. Giving others hope is an act of true heroism.

Are you excited to see how you can be a real-life hero? Let's get into these lessons and discover how!

Lesson 1: Heroes have courage in the face of danger and are willing to sacrifice themselves for others.

When Admiral McRaven learned the news of the loss of three soldiers serving in Afghanistan one night, it hit particularly hard. It was a tragedy for their teams and their families back at home. But it was also personal to McRaven because he was responsible for one of them being there in the first place. Her name was Lieutenant Ashley White and he always saw her as an example of courage.

A few years earlier, McRaven realized they had a gap in their strategy in Afghanistan. They were having trouble dealing with some of the Afghan women because the vast majority of soldiers there were men. The women often had important information about the Taliban but weren't comfortable speaking to male soldiers.

So McRaven established the female Cultural Support Teams, whose job it was to gather this information. He found Lieutenant White, who had endured her intense training with stride. When she was deployed, her bravery never wavered. **She valiantly did her difficult job every day, not knowing whether or not she'd make it home.**

Another quality of a hero is that they are willing to sacrifice themselves. In the Vietnam War, a small US reconnaissance team arrived in the Quan Duc Valley of Vietnam. The people there didn't want it occupied by enemy forces and started a last-ditch effort to fight back. They quickly began a brutal assault against the soldiers.

During this assault, a grenade landed near Private First Class Ralph H. Johnson, a young Black Marine. Without even hesitating, Johnson quickly threw himself on top of it, absorbing the blast and protecting his fellow Marines from the full force of the explosion. The Marines were stunned by this act of sacrifice and held strong until reinforcements came.

For this selfless sacrifice, Johnson was posthumously given the Medal of Honor and recently had a Navy destroyer named after him. What's more, this act spoke louder than words. His actions argued for the dignity of every US citizen, no matter the color of their skin.

Lesson 2: Heroes don't give in, they persevere.

Young James Patrick Allison lost his mother to cancer when he was only 11. Not long after, he also lost two uncles to cancer. Instead of brooding over the loss, he decided he wanted to do something about it— he was going to cure cancer.

At the University of Texas, he studied T-cells. These are a cell in the human body that attack infections and aid the immune system. He believed they could have some role in fighting cancer. He was right.

After years of researching, he finally developed a drug that was able to help T-cells kill cancer in mice. He was excited but had a long road ahead of him. Even though he had done extensive research, drug companies didn't want anything to do with his new drug. They had already spent millions investing in failed cancer treatments.

Most of us would likely get discouraged by this. After years of working in a lab and finally finding something worth sharing, nobody wanted to listen to him. **But he persevered and continued to advocate for it, and eventually, somebody listened.** Drug company Bristol Myers Squibb gave funding for human trials.

In 2011, the drug was approved by the FDA and has since been given to over a million patients. It has saved hundreds of thousands of lives. Dr. Allison's work earned him the Nobel Prize for Medicine. If it wasn't for his perseverance, none of this would have ever happened.

McRaven believes that for every Olympic gold medallist, there is also an equally talented runner who just never went through with the grueling training. The thing that separates heroism from everyday talent is perseverance.

Lesson 3: Giving people the gift of hope is heroic.

During the Vietnam war, over a thousand Americans were taken as prisoners of war. The treatment was brutal— captivity for years, beatings, isolation, and sometimes a severe withholding of food and water.

In this situation, it was natural that many of them lost hope, and their faith in a return home faded the longer they were there. In November 1970, an Army Special Forces unit known as the Green Berets went on a rescue mission to free 60 prisoners of war.

When they got to the camp, they engaged in a firefight that killed 42 enemy soldiers. After the immense struggle, they realized it was too late: the prisoners were moved.

However, word of the raid did reach the prisoners. While the raid wasn't able to free them, it did give them something almost as valuable: hope.

They were eventually freed, and soon there was a reunion for them along with their families as well as the Green Beret team who led the mission to rescue them. In the years between, the rescue team suffered from intense guilt for their failure.

Because they didn't make it in time, the POWS endured two more awful years of hunger and pain. But the prisoners didn't see it that way at all. From their point of view, the mission gave them hope that they weren't forgotten. Things were bad, but hearing that other fellow

soldiers put their lines on the line for them meant a lot, and they said it kept them going.

Hope may not change something today, but it comes with the promise of a better tomorrow, which is enough to keep people going. So whatever you do, try to inspire hope in the people around you whenever you can.

The Hero Code Review

The Hero Code is such an inspiring and refreshing read. We hear so much about the bad things happening in the world that we sometimes overlook the beautiful acts of heroism all around us. This book definitely makes me feel motivated to try to display the attributes of a hero in my day-to-day life!

Who would I recommend The Hero Code summary to?

The 17-year-old who is thinking about joining the army, the 37-year-old that feels bored with life and wants some inspiration to be better, and anyone who could use some motivational life advice.