

One Small Step Can Change Your Life: The Kaizen Way - Review

This is a 228-page self-help book, packed with practical applications of an ancient wisdom. *One Small Step Can Change Your Life: The Kaizen Way* was written by psychologist Dr. Robert Maurer, about the wisdom of the two-thousand-year-old words from the Tao Te Ching “The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step”-Lao Tzu. The doctor’s insights into the meaning, philosophy and way of life that the Japanese have adopted and applied are the subject. It is also a blueprint of how to attain the same philosophy of life. Dr. Maurer believes that the principles of Kaizen, making small changes to change for the better, are a process that can be exercised by anyone. Wanting to change and doing something about it can be accomplished in small increments, according to the philosophy. He further delves into the four advantages Kaizen presents:

1. It trains the brain to learn.
2. Skill has time to develop
3. Increase daily pleasures.
4. Come from the overwhelming crisis.

Overall, I believe this to be true. Dr. Maurer also looks at the common misconceptions most of us were brought up to believe. A statement like “Change is hard” is related in this book as a myth, when you look at the way change is usually tried and the way Dr. Maurer suggests. The suggestion is that, in order to make a change for the better and stay, there must always be a/a [small] action toward that goal. One of his goals in this book is to remove fear from the equation of positive change. As an example;

The fear of failure prevents some from making a New Year’s resolution. Therefore, you do nothing to change. The use of Kaizen allows us to make the resolution, with small steps, to reach the goal.

The word Kaizen is made up of two words. Kai, meaning change and Zen, meaning good. The word, itself, is a philosophy that the Japanese hold advocating continuous improvement. It is an act, although slow, that produces success when applied.

The spiritual aspects to Kaizen are two-fold: service and gratitude. The thought pattern behind this philosophy is that when something is done, it is done for the betterment of the customer. Dr. Maurer points out that this philosophy can be used for both the personal and professional life with this idea. Life, no matter the religious background (or non-religious), should be treated as sacred (or valued) by our own thought. An example of service:

You can make someone’s day better by a simple smile, notice him or her, or remember something of importance to him or her as a way of service, in the personal life, or you can make

sure that the customer's purchase will not break in transit by securely packing the product so it does not get broken.

Gratitude, as part of Kaizen, is becoming aware and grateful of the small things in your life. When you are focused on the small things, you are less aware of how close you are to the goal and it becomes something to be grateful for when it occurs, naturally. This also helps to rid our minds of the negative self-talk.

In Dr. Maurer's book, *One Small Step Can Change Your Life: The Kaizen Way*, he teaches that the brain learns in a slow and subtle way. Using this method builds neural pathways by making small changes and building on them. People, in general, have an underlying fear of change. Kaizen is a mindset that produces results rather than a system or plan of action. It allows the mind to become creative in becoming better while bypassing the fear of change. One of Dr. Maurer's techniques is to change the way we perceive a problem that stops us from attaining a goal. Instead of doing nothing because we cannot seem to find a resolution to a problem, instead, ask a question to find an answer. The mind works better with questions than it does with statements. Dr. Maurer points out that the mind sees this as a game and looks to resolve a question, rather than try to remember a fact.

Toyota is the best example used in the book as a company that adopted the practice of Kaizen successfully. They were shown the philosophy, implemented the process by asking all the employees to help make their product better and all the managers consider the suggestions seriously. Toyota became very successful using the philosophy. A real turning point for the company was when they had decided to expand and lost sight of Kaizen for a short period. It was realized what was happening and was remedied by putting the company back on the philosophy that had gained it the success it had accomplished.

Many of the customer reviews are very positive about Dr. Maurer's book. They have mentioned becoming refocused, help in creating new positive habits, and life can have more meaning with results. Overall, customers who read self-help books that seem to want to better themselves in some way have found this book very useful. A few customers either did not understand the simplicity of the Kaizen philosophy or did not want to believe that something so easily attainable could be worth their time to try. This book is for those looking for a way to make their lives move forward, instead of being stuck in fear, stress or anxiety.

Whether you are looking for help in your personal or professional life, this book is worth the read. If you think that you are doing okay but could use a little push, this is also the go-to book for you. You need to put all preconceptions of what you think you know aside and read this book with an open mind in order to get the true value from its pages. You need to be able to look within yourself and be able to answer questions that may come up honestly. Only then will you receive the true gift of Kaizen.