GOOD READS

PEAKS AND VALLEYS

Making Good and Bad Times Work for You – at Work and in Life

BY SPENCER JOHNSON, M.D.
REVIEWED BY JANA-LYN NAGEL

MAKING GOOD and bad times work for you – at work and in life, is the theme of Spencer Johnson’s latest book Peaks and Valleys. And what better time than our current economic circumstance to learn about balance and bravery.

It has been over 10 years since Spencer Johnson’s hit bestseller Who Moved My Cheese helped us all make our way through the great maze, challenging ourselves onward through times of change to that dreamy Eden, “Cheese Station N.” While Peaks and Valleys is not quite as witty it is just as inspiring – helping lead us out of the valley sooner, teaching us how to stay on a peak longer and how to have more peaks and fewer valleys.

Once again, Spencer tells his tale as a classic parable. This time the narrator is a woman, Ann, sharing the story with a man, Mike, who is facing challenges both at work and home. She relates the tale of a young man who lives in a very nice valley, where life is simple and everything is comfortingly similar every single day. We know that most people are happy to spend their lives in this calm uncomplicated valley, but this young man is restless and wants to see the view beyond from an intriguing nearby peak.

After an exhausting climb, the weary traveller meets a wise man at the peak. The young traveller very quickly realizes that it is not easy to remain at the peak or forge on to even greater peaks where things are beautiful but much more difficult compared to the simple and comfortable life in the valley. As he decides whether he wants to remain on the peak or return to the valley the wise man guides him through lessons about life and encourages him to forge his own path making both good and bad times work in his life.

From a quick read the moral of the story seems to be that how well you handle the valleys in your life helps determine how much you will enjoy your time on the mountaintop. However, the greater lesson is that the view from the peak truly is more rewarding when you have conquered your fear of the unknown and had chosen your own path. Appreciating that you have the power to decide how to deal with both the peaks and valleys in life and choose to share the wisdom of your knowledge and experience are the keys to a successful journey.

Spencer Johnson, M.D., is one of the world’s most beloved authors and respected thinkers. His books have helped tens of millions of people enjoy more happiness and success with less stress, at work and in life. Dr. Johnson is often referred to as “the best there is at taking complex subjects and presenting simple solutions that work.”

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