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The Marble and the Sculptor: From Law School to Law Practice

Keith Robert Lee

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FROM LAW SCHOOL
TO LAW PRACTICE

THE MARBLE AND THE SCULPTOR



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Keith Robert Lee : The Marble and the Sculptor: From Law School to Law Practice before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Marble and the Sculptor: From Law School to Law Practice:

11 of 13 people found the following review helpful. Inspirational but not nuts and bolts or much original contentBy WillThis book is more about encouragement, motivation, and self-help fluff than nuts and bolts information about practicing. It's also very short - 189 pages, including the index.Of those 189 pages,* 31 pages are completely blank* 4

pages are title pages, meaning the entire page contains six words or less of content* The chapter titles are in very large font, taking up almost a quarter of the page (sometimes more) and the chapters themselves are extremely short - usually about a page long. If the chapter contains quotes (and some of the quotes are long), the text is indented on both sides, meaning a smaller amount of text takes up more page-length.* 25 pages have 50% or more white space (for reference: pp. 12, 14, 25, 34, 41, 52, 54, 60, 63, 70, 76, 92, 95, 105, 118, 124, 137, 141, 144, 146, 155, 165, 167, 170). Some have much less than 50% text. For example, pages 60 and 170 have three lines of text and page 105 has two lines of text.* Page 175-189 are a list of books and websites Lee recommends, an "about the author" page, and the index.* There are extensive use of lengthy quotes. One chapter on Churchill's Five Elements of Persuasive Speaking repeats the five elements verbatim. Another chapter repeats Dan Hull's 12 Rules of Client Service, another repeats Peter Drucker's Four Universal Entrepreneurial Disciplines. The vast majority of page 109 is a quote from Henry Rollins' essay The Iron. The majority of space on page 111 is taken up with content by Prof. Clayton Christensen, author of The Innovator's Dilemma. Pages 125-126 contain a long quote about Erwin Rommel's military strategy. The vast majority of page 149 is a quote from the ABA Journal about the Joseph Rakofsky saga. Quotes are indented on both sides meaning there's lots of whitespace and not a lot of content. Pages 57-59 are primarily a story by the author's property professor. So what are we left with? 128 pages of original content. This doesn't include the very large chapter titles, which take up more than a quarter of the page in some instances, and the extensive use of quotes, which are indented on both sides of the page and sometimes take up almost entire pages. I would conservatively estimate that the space taken up by the chapter titles alone take up another 10 pages, which leaves us with 118 pages. The ABA's list price is \$24.95 and wants \$18.13, which is what I paid. There's just not enough original, worthwhile content to justify that price. Getting into the merits of the book, I give it 3 stars because it's at least encouraging to read as a new attorney. There's a lot of doom and gloom out there, but I appreciate the advice of an attorney telling us to go out there and bust our rumps. I think he's a bit naive about the realities of the legal industry. Getting involved in the community, publishing content, going to bar events, etc. - if you have \$150,000 to \$250,000 in non-dischargeable law school debt like most graduates, this isn't going to help much but it's better than despair. At least he's honest in the beginning that you can only expect to make \$50,000-60,000 as a lawyer. This is realistic, but I'd say the base compensation level is getting lower with the sheer amount of law school graduates being pumped out. I regularly see lawyer jobs advertised in the \$30,000-\$45,000 range in major metro areas. When you have to make payments on your law school loans, this means you'll be on food stamps. Now that said, I don't think there's much, if any, nuts and bolts content. This is more like a Tony Robbins book for young attorneys. The advice is simple:* Law school: you'll probably make \$50-60k, take practical classes like law practice management, writing, and advocacy classes, network, build relationships, cut distractions out of your life, and value your reputation (it takes 21 pages to get to this)* Fundamentals: copy and "steal" from experienced practitioners, you should always be learning, write well, every word matters, don't overstate your case, public speaking (control your voice, mind, and body), dress like a lawyer (takes us to page 48)* Clients: lawyers are servants and it's a privilege, have good stories to tell clients because people learn through stories, technology doesn't matter as much as good service, do everything like you give a damn, be generous with your knowledge (to get referrals in the long run), convey your background with a personal narrative, credibility is the most important thing a lawyer has followed by relationships, be honest with clients (tell them what they don't want to hear), get clients through relationships (go to Rotary club, bar events, CLEs, lunches, etc.), talk to strangers and be persistent* Professional development: you have to try and fail, always work on improvement, mastery is a journey, be so good they can't ignore you, make sure you get paid, be prepared, know when to ask for help, take risks, you can't wait until your ready, change your habits and routines if you want to change your station in life, don't just be a worker bee, you need to put your neck out there, no one cares about personal brand (seems to contradict personal narrative advice), don't exaggerate your experience, have a positive attitude. Although perhaps more the publisher's (ABA) fault than the author's, many of the blurbs seem misleading. Alex Craigie says, "This [a] how-to manual for newly-minted lawyers." There's nothing "how-to" in this book other than generalized advice to write well, get involved in the community, and generally care about your profession. Scott Greenfield writes "This book is about nuts and bolts, from the perspective of a relatively new lawyer." Perhaps I'm missing something but I could find neither nuts nor bolts in this book. Above the Law's David Lat encourages readers to "buy this book so you can make the most of your expensive education." Edward Bowser says this is a "manual for young lawyers." When I think manual, I think things like "how do I format a pleading, how do I electronically file documents, what parts are necessary for a motion, what is an affidavit, how are exhibits supposed to be organized, etc." Those are nuts and bolts. The blurbs give the impression that this book will provide practical advice but it's mostly feel-good fluff. The tl;dr: there's some good advice here but it's mostly feel-good, inspirational stuff. If you're looking for nuts and bolts practice advice, look elsewhere. There's also not a lot of original content in the book and it's not worth the cover price because of this. If the content contained in the book was extremely valuable and the result of expertise and decades of experience (like, for example, David Ogilvy's Ogilvy on Advertising), that'd be one thing but most of the advice here is pretty generalized. I don't want to be overly negative because I enjoyed the book and it was motivational, but I think I paid too much for it. 16 of 20 people found the following review helpful. Lee understands the value of people who shred lackluster work.

So, in that spirit...By CustomerHaving graduated law school earlier this year and taken my state's July 2013 bar exam, I would seem to be the target audience for this book. But much of the book seems implicitly aimed at "young" lawyers rather than "new" lawyers - those of us, like the author himself, who went to school later in life with a bit of maturity and understanding of the ways of the world, and the ways of law offices, under our belts. For those similarly situated - for those who have had to go out and earn a living for a significant amount of time before law school - this book won't be particularly helpful. For those who went straight from college to law school, well, I don't know. I don't know much about your generation. If you all are as bad as the author paints it, you're in need of serious help. You're spoiled, self-entitled know-it-alls who show up in law offices, throw time-tested motions, briefs, practices, and procedures onto a bonfire before marching straight into the Managing Attorney's Office to suggest that senior partners and senior associates be replaced by iPads. I'm guessing that some of you are, and some of you aren't. Logic suggests, however, that the young, self-absorbed know-it-alls who need to (as Lee puts it) "shut up about [their] personal brand[s]" are almost certainly not the ones shelling out \$18 and spending a few hours of their lives reading this book. That's where it falls flat. The book could have been a home run if the author had shown enough respect for his intended audience to recognize that those of us who bought it genuinely do care about self-improvement, both personally and professionally. The effort Lee devoted to beating up on straw men could have been more productively devoted to providing more practical advice - maybe a mention of Toastmasters in the section on public speaking; a suggestion to use your law school's alumni library privileges - and their "suggest a title" services - if you're striking out on your own; suggestions for assessing one's marketable skills and using them to make ends meet in or around the legal industry while trying to land that first job or to develop one's client base; etc. Those of us who shelled out the money and spent the time reading it are Lee's kindred spirits. In law school, we rolled our eyes at those talking about their "personal brands" and we were the ones in legal clinics who suggested to our peers who were ready to throw out time-tested motions, briefs, policies, and procedures that they first ask the lawyers why things are done a particular way. If you have a self-entitled, cocky young lawyer in your family, buy this book for him or her, and give it to him or her along with a stern lecture on the importance of humility. If you're a recent graduate and already have humility, gratitude, commitment to constant personal and professional self-improvement down pat, save your money and spend an hour or two or three reading Lee's blog, especially if you're scrimping and saving while you build up your book of business or land that first gig. This book isn't a complete waste of time, but the diamonds in the rough are few and far between, and the return on investment isn't great. 1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. great read before and during law school By Customer wonderfully inspiring and real look at the pains and pleasures of what is the law school experience!

Let's face it. The entire legal industry is in a state of flux. If you're a new lawyer in today's economy, you're probably asking yourself one of the following questions: How do I transition from law school to law practice? How do I get a job? How can I find like-minded mentors and colleagues? How do I develop a book of business? How do I become a good lawyer? These questions weigh on you and keep you awake at night, along with thoughts like "Was going to law school really the right decision?" or "Should I be doing something else with my life?" If you aren't asking yourself these questions, you are ignoring the world to your detriment. Written from the in-the-trenches perspective of a young lawyer, *The Marble and the Sculptor* provides a clear no-nonsense path from law school to lawyering. It presents a fundamental understanding of what is expected of new attorneys and a framework for becoming a successful both as a lawyer and in life. With advice on everything from choosing classes that matter in law school to the importance of writing well, attracting clients, and avoiding five basic mistakes in your first job at a law firm, this book is destined to become the go-to guide for all young lawyers regardless of law school or area of practice. Simply put, if you care at all about practicing law, you can't afford not to read it.

"If you've spent three years and a small fortune to obtain a law degree, buy this book so you can make the most of your expensive education." -David Lat, Founder and Managing Editor, Above the Law