



Sacred Hoops: Spiritual Lessons of a Hardwood Warrior

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With a new introduction, Phil Jackson's modern classic of motivation, teamwork, and Zen insight is updated for a whole new readership *"Not only is there more to life than basketball, there's a lot more to basketball than basketball."* --Phil Jackson Eleven years ago, when Phil Jackson first wrote these words in *Sacred Hoops*, he was the triumphant head coach of the Chicago Bulls, known for his Zen approach to the game. He hadn't yet moved to the Los Angeles Lakers, with whom he would bring his total to an astounding nine NBA titles. In his thought-provoking memoir, he revealed how he directs his players to act with a clear mind--not thinking, just doing; to respect the enemy and be aggressive without anger or violence; to live in the moment and stay calmly focused in the midst of chaos; to put the "me" in service of the "we"--all lessons applicable to any person's life, not just a professional basketball player's. This inspiring book went on to sell more than 400,000 copies. In his new introduction, Jackson explains how the concepts in *Sacred Hoops* are relevant to the issues facing his current team--and today's reader.

Sacred Hoops: Spiritual Lessons of a Hardwood Warrior Details

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From Reader Review Sacred Hoops: Spiritual Lessons of a Hardwood Warrior for online ebook

Tommy McGreevy says

This book was very good. I really like the way it was written, and I loved all of the lessons and teachings that are shown the Phil Jackson taught to his team. Phil Jackson was a very philosophical person and learned amazing things in his life, and he passed these amazing ideas and teachings to his players and us through this book. I have nothing bad to say about this book and would greatly recommend it to anyone who likes anything philosophy, basketball, or cared little to none about each. It is an amazing book and I would recommend it to all.

Ben Rollins says

I finally found the time to finish this incredibly interesting book! Written by Phil Jackson, one of the greatest coaching minds of all time. Phil Jackson had an interesting childhood being the son of a pastor. His parent's strict parenting style made him a fierce competitor on the playing field that ultimately lead him to be a professional athlete. When injuries ended his playing career early he decided to coach. Once again, his background came into play. Phil wasn't your typical coach he took on a different coaching style that used the ideas of Zen Buddhism to bring together a wide range of personalities to work together and be successful. Phil was extremely successful winning 6 championships with the Chicago Bulls.

Peter Velic says

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When Jordan retired for the first time due to his father's death and his desire to play baseball, the Bulls were crushed. They knew that their odds of winning the next championship fell off a cliff. They had little to no energy for the next season without their leader. However, Jackson and the Bulls almost went to the finals again, but lost a heartbreaking series to the Knicks. How the heck did Jackson do this?

Now time for the full review.

Somehow, Phil Jackson went on to win 13 championships in his career and 11 as a coach. He was able to control the egos and focus MJ, Scottie Pippen, Kobe, and Shaq. Although he was given greatness twice, he was able to maintain this greatness by being a great, passive coach. He understood that by using zen and Lakota Sioux, he could teach his players a new way to see the game. This helped all of his teams remain calm collected, and always ready for games. Regardless of attitudes or egos, Jackson was able to teach these techniques to almost everyone he coached. He takes us through his time as a coach in Puerto Rico and Albany, learning how to reach players despite differences. Overall, this book teaches you a new way to see life: through a calm and clear mind.

Jonah Ogunsanya says

Whether one believes in Zen meditation or not, it is easy to agree that Sacred Hoops is an excellent story on one simple man's journey from humble church-goer to 11-time NBA championship head coach. Phil Jackson's autobiography teaches one with a conflicted mind to clear their head, and move past roadblocks.

This book begins with Jackson in his mid-teens. His family has been forcing him to study the Catholic religion for years now, and Phil is beginning to disagree with some terms the religion contains. He becomes a rebel. He listens to Rock and Roll, gets a car without consent, goes to parties, and creates a separation between him and his parents that is never fixed. This affects his performance in his career of basketball, and he uses zen meditation to come to peace with his mind, and later on his players. The way Phil Jackson illustrates his story really captivates the reader, and even encourages one to practice zen on their own.

While this book has many positives, there are some downfalls to the book. Jackson can be very repetitive when referring to Michael Jordan and the Bulls. He seems to be retelling the same story on how he created a bond within the team, and can somewhat dull the reader's mind. Jackson also assumes that the reader is Christian, as he refers to Jesus and God throughout the book, disregarding other religions. Other than those two setbacks, Phil Jackson's Sacred Hoops is an excellent read, and gets a four out of five stars from yours truly. -Jonah Ogunsanya

Susan says

After March Madness I heard of and tried to read *When the Garden Was Eden* (about the NY Knicks in the 1970's) but it was too much of an insider's story for me. But that got me poking around for more books of those players and teams, and somehow I landed on Phil Jackson's book. Jackson was a player on the Knicks back in the day, and then coached the Chicago Bulls during the years of Michael Jordan's meteoric return to the game and the Bulls' taking the NBA championship.

But what made this book really neat is that it wasn't so much a book about basketball, or about the particular players that he worked with, either as a player or as a coach. It was about how to deal with life's challenges, how to work in and as a team, how to figure out your priorities, and how to achieve your goals when the world is pushing on you in all kinds of ways. Or at least, how he walked himself and a really headstrong group of high-profile, strong personality basketball players through all that.

He tells the story well. You can read it as a story, or you can read it as a lesson for life. Your choice. But for a random find located by poking through book review and following names and titles around, this was a really great read.

ba says

I've read better books about the glory years of the Chicago Bulls. I've read better books about Zen and other non-western styles of thought. I've read better books in general. However, I quite enjoyed reading this. It's a fast read, and very simply written, yet there's a lot to think about.

It's easier to take it seriously if you pretend that Phil Jackson died when he left The Bulls rather than ditching his wife and family to babysit a bunch of date-rapists in L.A.

Grant Whitebloom says

I thought this book was interesting and enlightening, but it was not really what I thought it was going to be. While I initially had the idea that *Spiritual Hoops* was going to have lots of player stories and inside notes from the famous Phil Jackson, I found that it was a lot deeper than that. Jackson talked about his Zen Buddhist religion quite a bit throughout the story, and at points I felt it was too much. However, the book did provide lots of good lessons that can be applied not only to basketball, but to life as well. As the story went on, I liked Jackson more and more because of how he was not just a great coach but a great person as well. I would recommend this book to anyone who likes to read about religion and/or basketball. I gave this book three out of five stars because it was fascinating at the parts when Jackson talked about basketball, but I lost interest when Jackson talked about his religion. Ultimately, while this was a good-book, I would not consider it a must-read for anyone.

Mike W says

"Sacred Hoops" is an engrossing account of Phil Jackson's career as a basketball player and a coach with special focus the evolution of his thinking that led to unparalleled success with the Chicago Bulls and later with the Los Angeles Lakers.

I despised the Bulls when I was younger. I couldn't forgive them for displacing the Lakers as the dominant team in the NBA. But then, Kareem had retired, and the other Laker stars were aging, so decline was inevitable. Meanwhile, the Bulls were a truly awesome team through the 1990's, partly because of Michael Jordan's tremendous gifts as an athlete and competitor, but also because of Jackson's wisdom as a coach in tutoring Jordan, Scottie Pippen and the rest of the Bulls to think as a team rather than a collection of individuals.

Jackson would be easy to parody with all his trendy Zen and native American mysticism, if only he hadn't been the most successful coach in NBA history. Some might argue that anyone could win with Jordan, Shaq or Kobe on their teams. Indeed, this criticism is mentioned in the forward by Senator Bill Bradley: "Anybody can coach a team led by Michael Jordan to the World Championship." But each of those players went through long stretches in their careers without winning NBA championships. They were performing admirably as individuals, but their teams were not functioning harmoniously together a wholes.

So how was Jackson so successful? Having great players was certainly part of it, but so was a philosophical outlook. Jackson tells us that his dream was "not just to win championships, but to do it in a way that wove together my two greatest passions: basketball and spiritual exploration." This is not the usual talk from a coach. One thinks of the contrast with Raider owner (and former coach) Al Davis, whose motto is "Just Win, Baby."

Jackson culls his philosophical maxims from Eastern thought, especially Zen Buddhism, and also from his own Pentacostal Christian upbringing. Above all he emphasizes what Buddhists call "mindfulness", an idea he summarizes thusly: "In basketball--as in life--true joy comes from being present in every moment, not just

when things are going your way." This is an important insight, and seems to have been an important part of his teams' success. The ability to free one's mind from clutter, to cease worrying about what happened before or what might happen in the future, and instead to focus attentively on what one is doing now is crucial to success. Any fan can see this intense focus on the faces of Jordan or Kobe as they play. And not just in the playoffs, but in every game.

Jackson doesn't mention the great American writer Ralph Waldo Emerson, but the two have similar ideas. When Emerson wrote, "In the woods, we return to reason and faith. There I feel that nothing can befall me in life, -- no disgrace, no calamity (leaving me my eyes), which nature cannot repair. Standing on the bare ground, -- my head bathed by the blithe air and uplifted into infinite space, -- all mean egotism vanishes. I become a transparent eyeball; I am nothing; I see all; the currents of the Universal Being circulate through me; I am part and parcel of God," he is describing an experience very similar to the mindfulness Jackson describes. And when Emerson the Preacher implores us to "Pray without ceasing" he sounds like Jackson, the Preacher's son, describing all of life as a "spiritual quest."

Jackson is not an academic philosopher, and that shows in his writing. For academic philosophers now mainly devote themselves in the US to idle debate about syntax, or in Europe toward metaphysical obfuscation. What's clear is that most of them have less to say about the meaning of life than Al Davis, who at least has a clear idea of how life should be lived. So Jackson has more to offer than most academics. He reminds us that real philosophy is not idle speculation, clever sophistry or pale ratiocination--it is essential to living a full and successful life. Philosophy is a necessity, not a luxury. And even those who despise philosophy, are really prisoners of some philosopher's ideas, without realizing it--perhaps the religious Thomas Aquinas, or the atheist Hobbes.

So anyone who enjoys basketball, and who marveled at the success of Jackson's Bulls in the 1990's and Lakers in more recent years, would do well to read this book. It is full of insights about basketball and about life.

07EthanH says

Born in North Dakota, Phil Jackson was raised in a very Christian home. He played basketball as a kid and fell in love with it. It was more his religion than Christianity. He played all through high school and managed to get recruited at North Dakota University.

While in college, a friend introduced Jackson to Zen. Being a Christian, he found this strange. Over time, Jackson became very interested in Zen and began to meditate. Meditation calmed his mind and helped him concentrate on things. He still remained with his faith but meditated without clashing beliefs.

Jackson played several seasons in the NBA. He played several seasons for the Knicks as well as a few seasons bouncing around with the Nets and Bucks. A few years later, he came out of retirement to coach. Jackson earned 6 rings with the Chicago Bulls, including two three-peats. The book jumps into a time of mourning – Jordan is gone and playing baseball. Jackson elaborates on the events leading up to MJ's return and the controversy that came with it.

The main theme of the book is the Bulls overcoming that stardom of Jordan and playing like a real team again. Basketball is not a one man game; it is a five man game. Jordan had to put himself with the team rather than putting himself above them as many fans did.

I would recommend this book to anyone that likes a good read, mainly about sports. I enjoyed how Jackson would use his Christian roots and meditation skills learned in Zen to calm himself and make him a better coach. It was very interesting.

David says

I loved this, and I haven't a clue about Basketball.

A book about spirituality and zen, the power of being in the moment and what we can achieve as a collective rather than as an individual.

Strong link games vs weak link games and where we fit in.

Useful lessons for work and for the soul, highly recommended.

Wilde says

Mix of sports writing, Lakota Sioux, Zen and Christian insights and reflections. Jackson describes the different basketball championships he won with the Chicago Bulls.

Funny quote on a meta-level: "I find it amusing when people ask me where I get my ideas for motivating players. The answer is: in the moment. My approach to problem-solving is the same as my approach to the game. When a problem arises, I try to read the situation as accurately as possible and respond spontaneously to whatever's happening. I rarely try to apply someone else's ideas to the problem -something I've read in a book, for instance- because that would keep me from tuning in and discovering a fresh, original solution, the most skillful means." (P163-164)

Funny, because the book is filled with wisdom from others and from books, and I suppose this book was also written to share his wisdom (which apparently cannot be learned from a book, go figure).

Vita Watson says

In this book Phil Jackson explains to readers his coaching methods in sports and his beliefs throughout his life. I loved the spiritual element he added into coaching and being part of a team. I also really liked how he didn't focus on one religion, but took ideas from multiple and lived off of those, allowing him to grow and help others grow too. The book was a little boring at times, but some stories he told were incredible. The lessons you learn in this book are to be selfless and accepting, which is a big reason why I really enjoyed this book, and the fact that he incorporated stories about basketball and baseball into it.

Jmorgan1314 says

I thought that this book was very inspirational and encouraging. Phil Jackson was raised in a Christian household just like me, so off the bat, I felt like I had a connection with his story. One of my favorite parts of this book was the religious standpoint. Phil Jackson showed a perfect example of how to bring religion into your everyday life. Also, he expressed how you don't need to only believe in one religion. Jackson was

Christian and zen. Zen's origin is Chinese and is all about meditation and intuition. But somehow Phil Jackson managed to bring the idea of zen, into the game of basketball. He explains how you have to be focused on everything and everybody in that play at the same time, and practicing zen helps with that.

Now the pros and cons of the book. The first perk is that you learn a lot about the game of basketball. Phil talks about his journey from playing on the driveway to playing on the New York Knicks in the NBA. There are a lot of life lessons he teaches you along the way that could help you if you are a basketball player or not. Secondly, you will learn a lot about religion. As I said earlier, Phil Jackson is Christian and also practices Zen. On top of Zen being a religion, there are a lot of health benefits of meditation. Some of the gains of reflection include: reducing of stress, improves concentration, the increase of happiness, and slows aging. Lastly, I like the structure. This book had long chapters, but within them were headings. I thought that this was very helpful to the reader. If you are only interested in basketball and his teachings, you can skip the parts of the book that talk about Zen and religion, or visa versa. In my opinion, the first con of this book is the pacing. I thought that the book was a little bit slow. Sometimes Jackson drags on some of the stories that he tells, which caused some boredom for me.

Another review that comes from the name of Michael says a significant quote from the book. It is "In basketball -- as in life -- true joy comes from being fully present in each and every moment, not just when things are going your way." I 100% agree with this statement. I believe in living in the moment and going with the flow. If you are entirely focused on the task at hand every day, you will succeed. But, if you are worried about a test that is coming up or something you have to do later that day, you will not be focused. Overall, I thought that this book was informative. I recommend this book to anyone of inspiration and athletes.

Tessa Fusilero says

I read the book "Sacred Hoops" by Phil Jackson. This book is about how Phil Jackson's story and how he combined both religion and basketball. I really enjoyed this book. It had a lot of good qualities and I learned many lessons. One quality of the book that I liked was how well it combined religion and basketball. He did not just talk about basketball he talked about religion. He combined the two together and made them like they were one topic. Another quality of the book that I liked was how Phil Jackson didn't shy away from saying the bad. I think that anyone can tell the story of all the good things that happen, but it's hard to tell about all the hardships and tragedies. For example, he tells us about his down times without Jordan when he left to play baseball, but he also spoke about all of the championships they won together. The last qualities that I enjoyed in this book was how inspirational it was. It was almost like you were being spoken to by a motivational speaker. He included different quotes and stories about himself and his players that got themselves to where they are today. He was talking about the ups and downs of the game.

Other reviewers also had opinions on the book. One reviewer said, "Phil was not your typical coach..." I agree with this. Phil really cared about his team and made sure that they worked together and that they all had a role on the team and knew what it was. Phil's philosophy was also different. He focused on making his team be as wholesome as possible and for them to not only be good players, but good people. Another reviewer said, "He uses Zen ideas and practices to enhance his own abilities as a coach and those of his own players." I also noticed and agreed with this too. He would make the players do Zen meditation or activities like that. The players at first thought it was goofy, but some later learned to appreciate it.

I recommend this book to people who like both religion processes and basketball. Even if you do or don't like basketball you will like this book because of how inspirational it is. It also does a good job of not making it just a basketball book but about life experiences and about Phil Jackson's story,

Michael Scott says

I first discovered this book in the late nineties during a time of great discord and transition in my life. Phil's approach to life, which embodies merging one's vocation with a larger spiritual quest, was transformational for me. His book offers a unique look at the bizarre tactics he used to build a winning formula as a basketball coach as well in his own life exploration. I found myself particularly enamored with the following sentence in his book:

"In basketball -- as in life -- true joy comes from being fully present in each and every moment, not just when things are going your way."

Digesting this passage was like having a light switch go on in terms of that peaceful elixir I had been seeking my entire life. I immediately put this principle to work and have found it to be quite beneficial over the years in staying grounded amidst today's chaotic world

I have since read this book a dozen times and consider it to be my all-time favorite.
