



S.H.A.P.E.: Finding and Fulfilling Your Unique Purpose for Life

Erik Rees

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Illustrated with real-life stories, this inspiring and deeply insightful book guides you through a series of challenges that will help you uncover your God-given S.H.A.P.E.—your unique blend of Spiritual Gifts, Heart, Abilities, Personality, and Experiences—and apply it in ways that bring confidence, freedom, clarity, and significance.

S.H.A.P.E.: Finding and Fulfilling Your Unique Purpose for Life Details

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From Reader Review S.H.A.P.E.: Finding and Fulfilling Your Unique Purpose for Life for online ebook

Tami says

Every single person on this earth was born for a particular reason. Each of us has a particular job to do while we are on this earth. Our unique personality, abilities, and life experiences were specifically chosen to support and guide each of us towards this unique life purpose.

S.H.A.P.E.: Finding & Fulfilling Your Unique Purpose for Life helps the reader pinpoint his or her own life direction. As this book is written from a Christian perspective, the life purposes center around how individuals can use their unique gifts and experiences to serve God's purpose while on earth. Nonetheless, I believe that the framework of the S.H.A.P.E. model would be equally useful for Non-Christian individuals in identifying and seeking their life purpose or even those of the general public looking for career advice.

I felt that S.H.A.P.E. was very well thought out and brought together in a very realistic, easy to use series of exercises. I also really appreciated the Better Together section, which encourages the reader to gain support from other individuals. Too often, we think that we have to do everything alone.

Tim Chavel says

Erik Rees does an excellent job explaining how to find the S.H.A.P.E. that God made you. The letters in S.H.A.P.E. stand for: S-Spiritual Gifts; H-Heart; A-Abilities; P-Personality; E-Experiences. Eric is a staff member at Rick Warren's Saddleback Church. The church uses this concept to help their members find the ministry that best fits their S.H.A.P.E. Erik shares many good helps in the book to help the reader discover the way God created him. I would highly recommend this book to anyone who is interested of finding his place in God's body.

Sarah Michele says

I went through this book with a youth group some years ago and found it instrumental in understanding myself and how I was uniquely made to help others who've been through similar experiences. Chapter 6 ended up being a break through moment where I opened up and shared with my group some of my darkest days and secrets but after I found the amazing light of God and truth at the end. Something within me changed forever and it was an amazing night of Grace, Redemption Stories, Confession, and Forgiveness. The depths at which God was willing to dive for each of us in the group was astounding to our group members and we talked about the experience for months to come.

In addition, when I try to give advice or counsel others, I often refer back to this book to help others determine their purpose and aid them in what they might be made to do in this life. I have recommended it to many people and also recommend it out to you.

Steve Penner says

We will be using this book and its dvd and study guide counterparts in a fall campaign at the Weiser Community Church. The book is based on Rick Warren's teachings about how God has designed and formed us to serve His (God's not Warren's for all you scoffers) Kingdom. It is simple and straightforward and will make for good preaching (I hope) and good small group discussion.

Neville Ridley-Smith says

This is a book that requires work - at times it can be rather daunting, presenting multiple questions at a time, which could each take half an hour to really answer thoroughly.

The introduction was initially off-putting – it's a bit fluffy for me but may be fine for others – I found my mind switching off with the repetition and vague, hand-wavy American feel. Fortunately the rest of the book didn't suffer from this.

Compared to the Bible study guide, the parts of this book feel more integrated – they all work together. I found the section on spiritual gifts much clearer than the study guide – it goes into more detail. A key point – you may not be able to discover your gifts without experimenting with different types of service.

The first half of the book is spent identifying your SHAPE. Some top points:

- God created us with a unique shape – don't waste energy doing things that don't fit your shape.
- If we are the clay that God moulds, then it's our job to remain pliable!
- Abilities are not just the things you can do or do well but what you **love** to do.

The second half of the book goes further than the Bible study guide. It's about trying to discover your Kingdom purpose. Although it sometimes suffers from contrivance, most of this section is quite good. An interesting fact is that giving is mentioned more in the Bible than faith and hope.

A main take away for me is this point by Erik Rees: the key to spiritual transformation is meeting God in vulnerability – the inclination is to show presentable parts – that's like going to the dentist and only showing him your good teeth. Trust God to meet our shame, weaknesses and sin with his love.

Overall, reasonably worthwhile.

Lydia Cordova says

This book by Erik Rees is really an eye opener especially for "Soul Searchers" S.H.A.P.E. stands for Spiritual Gifts, Heart, Abilities, Personality, and Experiences. The book helped me discover my spiritual gifts which I thought I didn't have. It outlined guidelines on where I am, where/what I want to be, and where/what I can be using the God given gifts I have. It gives a clear explanation of situations or ways that will bring fulfillment to the reader, increase one's confidence and risk the challenge of exploring outside the comfort zone where you can use the new found gifts.

Juan Flores Zuñiga says

This book was a real helper to grasp the purpose driven process in the CLASS program, specially class 301 on how to discover your ministry. I'd met Erik while he was pastor of ministry and lead a small group who did missions in Costa Rica with our team. Deep thinker, sort of introvert, that fully develop the concept and tool of how to discover your spiritual SHAPE. Highly recommend this book if your are in the process of determining your calling and ministry.

Heather Campbell says

I did this study with my work bible study group. It was a wonderful journey and I discovered so much in this. I highly recommend it - if you have read Purpose Driven Life, this is a wonderful follow up!

Ntombezinhle Nzama says

This book has really challenged me to look within. To dicover how God "SHAPEd" me in order to fulfill his purpose for my life. I regularly took breaks to write down the things I was learning and to do the excercises. I feel empowered and will be going forward in using my S.H.A.P.E to fulfill my purpose

Nancy Tuck says

Not really what I needed at this point.

Izunna Okpala says

After reading this book, i got a deeper insight on how to live a life of purpose, and also channel my gifts to a reasonable cause.

Cara says

I read this as a part of a study I did with a small group from church. It really impacted me. As far as my Kingdom purpose I feel like I shy away. I have one foot in the water but the other is still on shore in its comfort zone. I learned a lot about myself and was really able to narrow down what I think could be my way of serving through my talents. It was really sure opening to have big ideas that I've been told all my life like giving everything to God and breaking it down into sections. Super helpful. I kinda skimmed the ending wrap-up.

Sherry says

It's hard to evaluate a self-help motivational book until you've seen the benefit in your own life. This book was hard to stick with as far as doing the homework part of it. Some of it is not geared towards certain personality types - it's a high energy, high relationship book, so if you're not that type of person it's hard to follow through on all of the assignments. I gave up about halfway through with the homework part. I did take quite a few things away from this book - the best way to serve God is to try. God needs to be a daily focus. We must live intentional lives. There were a lot of quotes in this book - both scripture and referencing other books - that have expanded my reading list for the future. This will be one I hang on to for when I feel my well running dry.

Honeybee says

I had something of a love/hate relationship with this book. I got it as research material for a book I am writing about Spiritual gifts. I have taken a lot of classes at various churches which have adapted materials from this resource, so I decided to check it out. I was both delighted and disappointed for several reasons.

First, this book is written to serve multiple purposes. You can use it for personal study, as I did, work through it with a group, or use it to disciple someone one-on-one. There are questions at the end of each chapter and in the back of the book to help you review and apply what you read right away. It's also chock full of quizzes, questionnaires and diagrams that help you analyze your unique S.H.A.P.E. and determine what sort of ministry you are designed to do.

S.H.A.P.E. is an acronym first coined by Rick Warren, famous for his bestseller, *The Purpose Driven Life*. It stands for Spiritual gifts, Heart, Abilities, Personality and Experiences. It's a nice way to help people think about and analyze their individual characteristics that God has invested in them for ministry.

Second, I like that Erik Rees emphasizes that all of these characteristics are what equip you for service to others. We need to have servant hearts that are focused on glorifying God and meeting the needs of others, rather than vying for attention and accolades for ourselves. He emphasizes the importance of working with a team of believers to figure out what you were designed to do and then carry it out for God's glory. I wholeheartedly agree with what he says to pastors and church leaders in one of the helpful notes in his appendices in the back: "The Bible clearly tells you and me in Ephesians 4 that we need to be the administrators and let the members be the ministers..." There are too many paid professional Christians that are burning themselves out trying to be all things to all people in our churches, when God never intended for them to be the ministers and the rest of us mere spectators or consumers.

My main problems with this book are that, while his intentions are noble, the author bases some assumptions and teaches some ideas from questionable sources. Quite frequently, Rees quotes from *The Message* paraphrase and the *New Living Translation* of the Bible. These versions often misinterpret or distort the meaning of Scripture. He also quotes passages out of context, making it sound like they are saying something they do not (e.g.--Romans 12:6a, as used on pp. 67 & 69). He quotes from Wilferd Peterson, a proponent of "New Thought," a belief system that purports that we are all part of a "universal mind" and that humans have the potential of becoming one with the impersonal life force at work in the cosmos (p. 81). In chapter 5, he

talks about personality theories that originated in ancient astrology.

Secondly, having studied Spiritual gifts extensively, it is frustrating to see Erik Rees confuse qualities commanded of all believers (e.g.--hospitality) and ministry roles in the church (i.e.--apostleship, evangelism and pastoring) as Spiritual gifts. There are 15 charismata listed in three main passages about Spiritual gifts in the New Testament, and we don't need to add other things to the list. He also defines some of the gifts in ways that make it sound like these are run-of-the-mill abilities that even non-believers can manifest. Knowledge, for example, is something God tells you that you couldn't naturally know about a person or circumstance; not mere book-learning.

Finally, from start to finish, the author touts Rick Warren's book and various other resources produced by Saddleback Church. I felt like I was reading a printed infomercial half the time, rather than a helpful study guide. While I appreciate Erik Reese sharing the things he's learned about getting people plugged into ministry, I really don't think it's appropriate to be plugging his products all the way through.

For these reasons, I can only half-heartedly recommend this book, with the following reservations: 1) Don't give this to a new baby Christian. There's too much sketchy information in it, and they won't have the maturity or discernment to ferret it out. 2) When used as a group study, make sure you have at least one mature Christian in the group to explain and clarify the truth. 3) Have a good, solid translation of the Bible (e.g.--ESV, NASB, NKJV, NIV, etc.) handy, and look up what the Bible REALLY says in any instance that The Message or NLT are quoted. 4) Don't let this be the ONLY resource you reference when studying Spiritual gifts, ministry, etc. Check out books by Cindy Jacobs, Derek Prince and others.

Josh McCoey says

S.H.A.P.E. is a truly great book. Its one of those books you can tell was written by a true expert who has put his ideas into practice for years. His principles are tried, true, and they work - for everyone. I would highly recommend this book's material but I really think it would be better to go through this by using the group material they have with a group of friends. Here's why...

There is so much in this book. While the first half of the book was pretty easy to do on my own, answering questions after each chapter got old because there was nothing new. I was interested in the book because something in my life needed to change and here I was skimping on the work. What I really needed was someone to bounce ideas off of, someone who could tell me their opinions about what they saw as my strengths. And the second half of the book was really the thick of it all. I almost put the book down so I could work on what I had already read and come back a few months later.

The material is genius. Erik delivers on the promise of the book to help you discover the purpose for which God's created you. I feel a million times closer to that now that before I read the book. But...all great things in life must be shared. And I think when you're reorienting your life like this, you need tangible support from close friends and family.

In short, READ THIS BOOK!!! But don't go it alone.
