

Redemption Inc.: Why Offering Second Chances Makes Good Business Sense

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All of us have either encountered or heard of situations where someone makes a serious mistake or mistakes. It is easy to write off such people as bad seeds or as individuals who can no longer be trusted. In many such cases, however, those who fall from grace turn their lives around, either on their own or through assistance from others. They become reconciled to God. The challenge, though, is finding individuals and organizations who are willing to provide previously fallen individuals with job and personal growth opportunities.

If you have ever rooted for the underdog, if you enjoy stories of everyday people overcoming enormous setbacks, this book is for you. The book's message is clear: All of us are sinners. Therefore, the ONLY way any of us can be redeemed is through Christ. The blood shed on the cross represents redemption for those who accept Christ as their Savior. Therefore, everyone deserves a second chance. *Redemption, Inc.* takes on the challenge of identifying specific instances where people failed and/or overcame tremendous challenges and how they found redemption through Christ. The book explores the concept of redemption from a business standpoint.

In *Redemption, Inc.*, the author examines the redemption process and how it applies to finding employment. Through the grace of God, all of us can find personal redemption. However, from a practical standpoint, how does redemption relate to future employment opportunities? Once someone has gone through a redemptive process, what are their job prospects? It is one thing to be forgiven by God, but will employers follow suit? The author argues that it is in the interests of employers, and ultimately society, to give second chances to redeemed individuals. Former convicts and drug addicts are far more stable than conventional employees. In some companies, the turnover rate for such individuals is only half that of conventional employees. Why? Such individuals have far fewer job opportunities and are thus less likely to leave.

The information in this book comes from interviews conducted by the author with individuals who have either found redemption or have helped others find redemption.

The author begins his discussion of redemption by presenting 3 case studies.

The first case is about a minister who was forced to leave the ministry after having an extramarital affair with a parishioner. Few denominations and churches have a formal rehabilitation process for fallen ministers. The minister in this story, Pastor X, found himself in an ongoing affair. Rather than trying to hide or ignore his mistakes, he took full responsibility before God, his church, and his wife. He was forced to give up the ministry for two years while he participated in a very difficult re-ordination program. In the end, Pastor X was re-ordained and continued his ministry as a redeemed person and a wiser man.

The second case concerned a sailor who, after committing multiple infractions, saw his future options in the Navy limited. After his fourth infraction resulted in a disciplinary action, the Navy was in position to discharge him. However, rather than kick him out of the service, the Navy sent this man to a Navy Correctional Custodial Unit (NCCU), a rehabilitative program intended to counsel, train, and provide motivation to habitual rule-breakers. It was through this program that the sailor was able to find redemption, ultimately serving five more successful years in the Navy.

The third case discussed concerned a victim of spousal abuse. Sadly, many women are victims of such abuse. It can instill in them a sense of fear and lack of self-worth. It can be hard for a woman to escape an abuser. However, the woman in this case found the courage to leave her abusive spouse and found a new life through a battered women's shelter that provided a program which gave her the tools to find independence. She ultimately became a successful manager who could undertake difficult tasks with confidence.

Redemption, Inc. isn't afraid to tackle current issues facing our society. The justice system seems much more focused on punishment than rehabilitation. If rehabilitation is ignored, ex-cons will neither have insight into the behaviors that got them in prison nor possess any marketable skills for prospective employers. This can lead to a vicious cycle of reincarceration. The author interviewed a former inmate who was able to take correspondence courses for college and enroll in a program that provided a structure on how to handle future decisions. He was ultimately given managerial responsibilities in the prison and, more importantly, accepted Christ into his life. He went on to find gainful employment.

Another issue the author tackles is drug addiction. No drug addict starts taking drugs with the intention of getting hooked on them. The sad reality is that drugs create chemical dependencies. Nevertheless, society has created a stigma regarding drug addiction, often labeling drug addicts as morally deficient and of poor character. The author discusses multiple programs aimed at helping drug addicts, such as Teen Challenge and Alcoholics Anonymous. The importance of such programs cannot be understated as they have helped many drug addicts find the path to sobriety and redemption.

A major problem identified by the author is the way contemporary American society treats mistakes. American culture used to be heavily influenced by Judeo-Christian concepts. As such, Americans could comprehend how one could be redeemed through the redemptive power of Christ. This is in sharp contrast to the "honor-shame" culture seen in Japan. If employees make mistakes in Japanese culture, there is no redemption. They are dismissed from their jobs and are never given an opportunity to return. It is presumed that one mistake is an indication that a person is flawed in all aspects of their personality. They are seen as a threat to "group harmony." It is a mentality that has contributed to a high suicide rate.

It can be argued that America has shifted toward a culture like Japan. If a public figure makes a comment that is deemed inappropriate, the public typically shouts out for the person to be punished. Redemption becomes a foreign concept. For example, if a sportscaster says something controversial, he may not only be fired, but society may forever judge that person by whatever ill-fated remark he made. He will never be forgiven. Contemporary American society can be quick to condemn and slow to forgive.

Redemption, Inc. even exhibits how the concept of redemption can even become a cornerstone to an entire business model. It discusses an entrepreneur who uses his businesses to aid in the redemption process. This man takes former drug addicts and ex-cons and mentors them on how to run a particular business, in addition to teaching them

about the Gospel. This gives these individuals the sense of self-worth and confidence they need to become successful business managers. If people are given the opportunity and means to succeed, they often gravitate towards taking advantage of all the gifts God has given them.

The book ends with a discussion of specific organizations dedicated to helping people find redemption and how these organizations provide opportunities for those who have been redeemed. It also presents the concept of "entrepreneurial redemption," which addresses the fact that many start-up businesses fail. Many successful businesses owe their existence to people who were willing to take a second chance on someone. If this concept can apply to businesses, it can also apply to individuals as well. The pathway to success is often paved with failure. The Apostle Paul was originally an enemy to Christians and Christianity, yet he found redemption. God has given us a world of redemption. It is up to each of us to accept Christ's invitation to redemption and to then incorporate that redemption into all aspects of our lives.

Redemption, Inc. is written in a scholarly fashion, so it is recommended for scholars interested in exploring the Christian concept of redemption and how it can be applied to businesses. It would also make fine supplementary material for a course on Christian leadership. The author contrasts redemption found through Christ with redemption as defined by the public. Specifically, it is noted that corporate recruiting efforts make the false assumption that most applicants are low risk, but most employees (75%) engage in some behavior detrimental to their employer. Therefore, there is strong reason for managers to offer second chances to qualified individuals with a criminal past. By offering opportunities to such individuals, recidivism rates decrease and communities grow stronger.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



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