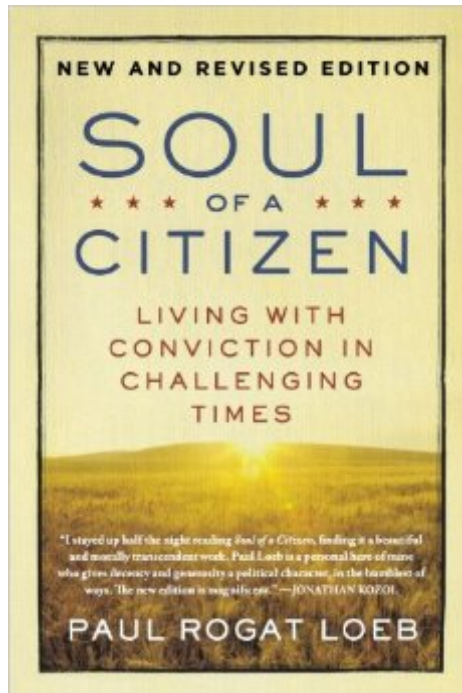


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Soul Of A Citizen: Living With Conviction In Challenging Times



Synopsis

Soul of a Citizen awakens within us the desire and the ability to make our voices heard and our actions count. We can lead lives worthy of our convictions. A book of inspiration and integrity, Soul of a Citizen is an antidote to the twin scourges of modern life--powerlessness and cynicism. In his evocative style, Paul Loeb tells moving stories of ordinary Americans who have found unexpected fulfillment in social involvement. Through their example and Loeb's own wise and powerful lessons, we are compelled to move from passivity to participation. The reward of our action, we learn, is nothing less than a sense of connection and purpose not found in a purely personal life. Soul of a Citizen has become the handbook for budding social activists, veteran organizers, and anybody who wants to make a change—big or small—in the world around them. At this critical historical time, Paul Loeb's completely revised edition—and inspiring message—is more urgently important than ever.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

First off, I have to say that this was not a light read. It took me twice as long to read this book as most other books do. I found myself reading and re-reading the early parts of the book. Loeb seemed to me to drift in the early chapters, heading in directions that seemed incongruent. I think the book would have been just as good if it were about 100 pages shorter. The last chapters of the book, from the chapter about burnout on, were very good. However, having waded through it, I found the message that Loeb was trying to get across hit home with me. While I would not consider myself

inactive, I would also not consider myself an activist. Paul Loeb has inspired me to become more of an activist. To find a cause that is most important to me and take a stand. If you are not active now, this book can be the spark to ignite your fire.

This incredible book teaches us that everyone can work for social justice and claim their right to participate as a citizen in everyday life. In a time where many small groups of ordinary citizens are choosing to re-engage in American democracy through Salons and Circles, we are grateful for this book to inspire and empower us. Loeb uses storytelling to illustrate how involvement in citizenship is surprisingly powerful and creates a tremendous sense of personal and spiritual growth. This hopeful and transformative book invites each of us to choose to take responsible action instead of choosing the civic apathy that has allowed America's governing bodies to listen to the wishes of the most powerful and profitable over the majority of its people. It is time for each of us to choose a better way -- our children, our communities, our democracy, and our natural world depend on us. This book is a great step in the right direction!

My husband and I have always wanted to help improve the world, especially on environmental and sustainability issues. In the past we have felt overwhelmed to do anything. All issues appeared to big, the gov't too far away and unreachable. Then we both read the book "Soul of a Citizen" by Paul Roget Loeb, we now know that our efforts do add up and make a difference. We are currently working on a letter writing campaign to get the Children's Environmental Protection Act passed. This is an excellent book. Read it today and start changing the world!

According to Soul of a Citizen, recognition of the economic and political imbalances in the world will likely result in either cynicism or activism. But only activism, or social involvement, is consistent with our democracy and can result in psychological or spiritual growth. The nature or the scope of the cause to be pursued is basically secondary next to the soul-enhancing nature of activism. Loeb tells the story of about twenty-five citizens who reacted against some sort of economic or political situation that was thrust upon them by enlisting the aid of other citizens to combat the situation. Loeb is concerned with showing that imperfect knowledge and starting small can effect change. He stresses that activists must be patient, that success may be slow, that support is needed, and that burnout can easily occur. Loeb tries to link his activists with social movements from the past. But the kinds of systemic change that concerned the Knights of Labor, the Populists, the Wobblies, and the Socialists around the turn of the century are not what the activists that Loeb profiles are all about. In

fact, Loeb eschews the detailed critiques of society that those historical groups produced. While Loeb contends that structural changes are needed for our society, he downplays the need to develop the kind of expertise needed to engage in that level of change. Loeb speaks of the isolating tendencies of television, but says nothing about its potential as a propaganda tool to get across a particular message or to limit the free exchange of ideas. His talk of the village square seems strange in an era of corporate-controlled media and the pseudo village squares of suburban mega-malls. Loeb talks about "our" choices that cause economic harm which neatly obscures the central role of the huge private concerns that dictate economic policy in this country. Loeb's failure to address large and controlling forces in our society gives the impression that piecemeal acts by randomly placed activists have a greater impact than they really do. Soul of a Citizen has the feel of a self-help book. If one is feeling down about some aspect of society, most any form of activism will help alleviate that personal distress. But for those who accept ideas about a "web of domination" in society, piecemeal actions may not be so satisfying. Of course, Loeb is quick to label those folks as cynics. That is why Soul of a Citizen only marginally contributes to the dialog of significant change.

This book is a keeper. It's a good, inspiring read, plus it's good to simply have around, reminding you of its contents. It struck me as a political version of Julia Cameron's "The Artist's Way." While she explains that "born" artists are a myth, Loeb describes community activists who aren't saints or crazies. Both writers try to motivate flawed, busy people to forget about perfection and take the plunge-whether it be into playful creativity or a social cause-in order to feel more whole and alive. I recommend this personal guidebook to everyone, to every age and class, from the left to the right.

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