

Forward

Enthusiastic, gregarious, and energetic describes George Casey when I first met him a few years ago at a Toastmaster function. He had a smile that not only lighted his face, but everyone else around him. Once an active duty member of the United States Marine Corps (years ago I was corrected that there are no former Marines), he dressed himself with the confidence and determination one would expect from a Marine.

As I read his story, I was shocked to find that there have been two George Caseys. The pre- Marine Corps George Casey was a juvenile delinquent basically who later became an adult delinquent. He and his two best friends made a life of everything that we consider inappropriate: partying to all hours, booze, drugs, no real purpose and more than one encounter with the law and a few days in court.

Fortunately, through the faith of a family member, he had an epiphany. That epiphany marked the transition moment in his life and the United States Marine Corps provided the structure to start his transition process. His two best buddies were not so fortunate. They did not have their epiphany and continued their life style until their demise: one natural and one not natural.

George Casey's life can be used as an example of two major points: without guidance and structure, young men will be tempted and many will succumb to the darker side of life. Anyone with will, determination, and a purpose can change his life one hundred eighty degrees. If you have any doubts, look at George Casey.

Has he completed his journey? Hardly. He is still on a path of self-improvement and he is trying to get as many people as he can to join him. Once you have him on your side, you have an unstoppable train next to you.

I hope each of you have the opportunity to meet George Casey in person. The experience will be awesome for you. If you cannot meet him in person, then meet him in his writings. Learn the lessons he learned without the experiences he had. Then, set yourself on a path to be that awesome person you can be.

Lawrence W. Shivertaker MD

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Acknowledgement

“No one is self-sufficient; everyone relies on others.” This saying comes from a sermon by the seventeenth-century English author John Donne. With that stated, I would first like to thank my family and friends for always believing in me, even when I stopped believing in myself. It was your encouraging words and great attitudes that have contributed to making me the man that I have become.

Special thanks to my team who without your support and trust, none of this would be possible. It was only through countless hours of debates, reviews and revisions this book has now come to fruition. Thank you, Christina M. Gonzalez, Will Koon, Will “Steady” Stewart, Lafayette Bonner, Derryck Arnold, Melvin Jordan, Clifford Johnson, Michelle Sharp, Terrance Jones, Ron Young, Earl Kitchings, Author Wilson, Rick Johnson, and Angela Koon this book is a win for the team.

I am forever grateful to every reader that will take this journey of the “*Unexamined Life*” with me. Notating that I have finally allowed and accepted God’s thorough examination and healing to manifest through this book.
George Casey, Jr.

The Unexamined Life

Reflections of Lessons Learned

George Casey, Jr.

My mind begins unraveling as I start traveling through time.
I shall not *fear* for my destiny lies greater than which is here
Through tunnels of darkness grows light . . . but it's suppressed by no
movement.

Motion becomes only a thought.

As I am brought for just a second . . . back to reality.

But *realness* has no meaning.

Meaning, still I am lost!

Yet, found.

Bound by the shackles and chains that enslave my brain . . .

Leaving me motionless and standing still.

Yet, *still standing!*

Demanding more from *life* than *life* demands from me.

Releasing my inhibitions.

Allowing my S-O-U-L . . . to be free!

You see *free* is an idea that has been made a *promise*.

And promises are made to be broken.

So they break.

Like glass.

But like glass *I* see through them . . .

No, past them.

For pass them has no limitations.

Pass them lies that *freedom* that remains to be seen.

That *piece* of the American *dream*.

That *piece* that calls for *peace*.

So *I* can be at *peace* and I pray that *peace* be with *you*.

INTRODUCTION

At the time I connected my thoughts to a piece of paper, I will admit, they were no more than that, just words. I had recited those same words hundreds of times in gymnasiums, classrooms and on stages throughout the United States. They had grown to be the soundtrack of my life. It was as if the words were embedded in both my memory, as well as my heart and had served as my personal awakening and call to action.

I reminded myself early in the poem as mentioned above that, “*I shall not fear, for my destiny lies greater than that which is here.*” I had embraced the fact that life is all about the journey and not the destination. It’s not about where I was, but where I was trying to go. I realized everything I had encountered and would face in life, would be to challenge the *greatness* that was within me.

I was confident of the fact that I controlled my destiny, and I was bound only by self-imposed shackles and defeated thoughts. Many of the most intense battles I fought were battles that never existed beyond the borders of my mind. Through my thoughts, I created my imprisoned reality. Many times I would focus on the bombardment of obstacles and challenges that life had to offer, instead of the greatness within. I found

myself focusing on the idea that I was not progressing and felt as if I was *standing still*.

On many occasions, I had overlooked the idea in spite of life giving me some of the greatest blows humanity had ever seen . . . I endured them! “I AM STILL STANDING.”

I’ve had to learn to face life with a confidence that only comes from knowing the greatness lying within me. I had to demand more from life than life demanded of me. I had to stand up to life, face my opposition head on as if to say, “Hello, life let me show you just how great I am!”

It was in my release of fear that I was able to allow my soul to truly be free and be what God had called me to be. On my journey, my prayer was for peace not only for myself but also for those who encompassed this world.

“The unexamined life is not worth living.”

Socrates



Chapter One

The Unexamined Life



Socrates, credited as one of the founders of Western Philosophy, once uttered the words, “The unexamined life is not worth living.”

For centuries, this quote has been examined and debated among scholars and civilians alike. While there are various interpretations, I believe the message to be a personal call to action to those who are seeking to achieve greatness.

Socrates bold words, “**NOT WORTH LIVING**” illustrate just how imperative he thought examination to be. He understood the value in the pursuit of wisdom and knew, in order to obtain this pursued wisdom, one would have to be so daring as to take a personal account of their life’s occurrences. They would have to be so daring as to challenge the position of where they are as it correlates to the choices they’ve made. Socrates charged his students with the notion that every

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experience is a lesson to be learned. He made it clear that they could change their direction in life at any time through self-examination and positive action in the right direction. Something I wholeheartedly agree with.

As a Marine, I have come to know courage as doing what's right and necessary in spite of the circumstances or levels of difficulty. Examining the very depth of my existence took tremendous courage, especially when I started to consider the dark corners of my inner being. I can relate to William Butler Yeats who said, "*It takes more courage to examine the dark corners of your own soul than it does for a soldier to fight on a battlefield.*" There are plenty of things in my past I would love to forget ever happen, many I wish I could change. I knew going through with this self-exam would be a tough assignment, but the Marine in me knew it was the right thing to do.

As I began to dig out those cobwebs and examine my life, I was forced to come face to face with the old me. What was buried years ago yet still continued to haunt me. Over the years I had purposely kept my distance between the new me and the old me to avoid the pain of my past. Now for the first time, we were standing eye to eye. In spite of my dark corners, this was my opportunity to examine my life up-close and personal.

Although the man I am today is far from the child I used to be, I still cringe at the thought of the road I previously traveled. I am appalled by the person I once was. It is a disheartening feeling to know that much of my pain and suffering was avoidable, if only I had thought to make better choices.

The more I examined, the more there began to be burning questions at the core of my existence. *Does my life have a purpose? What are my values and am I true to them? What would I do if I weren't scared to live my dream? Who would I become? What is my destiny?* While I know that it is human nature to question ones current position in life, the truth of the matter is, I had to find a way to shine my light without fear and persistence through the darkness, otherwise known as my past. Now when I say fear, I am not speaking of the fear of darkness. For, it is not the darkness that I am afraid of. However, what does scare me is what will be exposed. In other words, when I shine my light into that dark corner, what will be uncovered for everyone to see? That is what I am most afraid of.

The truth I found is the truth I have to live with. The reason I have not become the person I said I would be was for one reason, and one reason alone. I was capital L-A-Z-Y! Hell, laziness and me went together like fat kids and cake. Laziness was my first class seat on *F#CK-IT Airlines*. Laziness persisted so long that it carried me away

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from where I said I would be. I would always tell myself, “*You would be so much further in life if you weren’t so damn lazy.*” Not only was I lazy, but I also had zero focus, little ambition and no drive. If that wasn’t enough, my self-image was not very favorable. It was a recipe for a disaster.

I hated being at the point where there was no one else to blame but me. That’s a terrifying feeling. It’s always easier to point the finger and say someone else is at fault for not becoming what I said I would. For not achieving what I said I would achieve. For not owning what I said I would own. But when you reach a point where there is no one else to blame but yourself, you are forced to look inward, and ask yourself, what gift is within me? Have I opened it yet? What impact might it make if exposed to the world?

So many times in life we fear what we don’t know. But in many cases, the unknown is exactly what leads us to our greatness, if we allow it to. All we need is the courage to examine those dark corners of our souls, in order to reveal our true greatness. The things we go through are not intended to make us bitter, but to make us better. Self-examination gives us the authority to change our lives based on applied wisdom. Take a moment to reflect on your current position in life. Are you where you want to be? Have you achieved the things you said you would achieve? Are you the person you said you would become? Why or why

not? Take a few more moments, and ask yourself, what are you doing to make your goals possible?

Over the years I'd heard several excuses as to why someone else wasn't successful, or why someone else was not the person they should be in life. Reasons like: *My dad wasn't there for me, or my mom was on drugs.* There is always a tendency to place blame on someone else leaning on the excuse of other people blocking your blessing. As I stated earlier, this is where the finger pointing begins. The easiest thing to do is point a finger towards someone else, as if it were his or her fault. To say, *"I did not get that promotion because they don't like me."* To excuse oneself from blame by pointing the finger at an outside source is merely a diversion from accountability.

As a teenager, I imagined myself a millionaire by the age of thirty-five. Well as time went on, my dream of being a millionaire seemed to slip further and further from my grasp. In the blink of an eye, my thirty-fifth birthday had come and gone, and nothing was like I had envisioned it would be. By the age of forty, I was no closer to being a millionaire than I was at the age of thirty. I recently re-examined my goal of being a millionaire and understood that I was the sole blame for why I didn't reach the millionaire status. I wasn't accountable for all of the occurrences of my life, which had me to question my destiny to become a millionaire by my calculated birthday.

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It has become the norm in our society that our economic status determines who we are. Things like the house we live in, the car we drive, where we work, and how many zero's we have in our bank account are all determining factors in our status in life. We go about our daily lives in pursuit of these possessions and our rightful position in society. Keeping up with the *Joneses*, as it's best known, is living beyond your means just to impress onlookers. This term was given to those who give the impression of having large sums of money, but in actuality, they are penny pinchers. This is an inferiority complex and should be avoided at all cost.

I would often ask myself, "If all of my possessions were taken away and I had the lowest possible social status, then who would I be at my core?" On the surface, this would appear to be a simple question. However, this issue would prove to be one that was much harder to answer. It would take both courage and the commitment to answer truthfully.

I challenge you to examine the dark corners of your soul. I also challenge you to be accountable for who you are and who you have yet to become. If what you seek is a better quality of living, the only way this can be obtained is through the examined life. It is only in this pursuit of wisdom that one can indeed expect to grow. Remember, "The unexamined life is not worth living."

The Unexamined Life ~ Reflections of Lessons Learned

George Casey Jr.



Heartfelt and Explicative, this book opens up a view of your own life as you are reading it. Whether you were the kid that took to the streets or you were the prom queen that did things in order to fit in, George Casey Jr. made this book a relationship - a relationship between the words and the reader. I read it in one sitting because it was so powerful, and his artful way of using each chapter as a story within itself kept me captivated. I bought this book for a friend, but it could be used to tell anyone that you know that you love them. *The Unexamined Life*, is certainly not a life worth living - when you read George Casey Jr.'s book, and you derive the lessons out of those examinations it's more powerful than you ever imagined.

Great Gift for anyone that you love!

Ellen Little
Customer, The Unexamined Life

The Unexamined Life ~ Reflections of Lessons Learned

George Casey Jr.



About the Author

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