

The first time I picked up “What It Takes: Lessons in the Pursuit of Excellence” by Stephen Schwarzman, I wasn’t sure what to expect. As I turned the pages, I found myself drawn into a world of ambition, resilience, and relentless pursuit of excellence. This wasn’t just a book; it was a journey through the life of one of the most successful entrepreneurs of our time.

From the moment I read the first chapter, I was hooked. The book was like a mentor, guiding me through the highs and lows of Schwarzman’s career, offering invaluable lessons at every turn. It was as if I was sitting across from Schwarzman himself, listening to his stories, absorbing his wisdom.

Every chapter brought new insights, new lessons, and new perspectives. It was a rollercoaster ride of emotions - from the thrill of success to the despair of failure, and everything in between. But through it all, one thing remained constant - Schwarzman’s unwavering belief in the power of hard work and determination.

Reading “What It Takes” was more than just an enlightening experience; it was a transformative one. It challenged my beliefs, pushed my boundaries, and inspired me to strive for excellence in everything I do. This book is a must-read for anyone who dreams big and is willing to do what it takes to turn those dreams into reality.

**As long as you're excellent, things work out for you.**

Stephen A. Schwarzman

In this post, I’m eager to share my personal takeaways that could act as a quick overview of the book. This will sum up what I’ve learned and hopefully, it will either remind you of some hidden insights from the book if you’ve already read it, or motivate you to give it a read if you haven’t yet.

## **Key Takeaways**

The book is really a guide to doing your best, packed with ideas that are still useful today. In this section, I’ll try to sum up what I found most helpful to learn and use in our day-to-day life, both at home and at work.

### **Leadership is Learned, Not Inherited**

One of the most impactful lessons from the book is that the best leaders are made, not born. This concept really resonated with me. I’ve always believed that leadership is a skill that can be developed over time. It’s about absorbing information, learning from your own experiences, and growing from your mistakes. It’s a continuous journey of self-improvement and personal growth. This book reinforced my belief and gave me a new perspective on leadership.

### **Aim Big, Achieve Big**

The book explores the idea that it's just as easy to do something big as it is to do something small. This was a real eye-opener for me. It made me realize that we should all aim high, reach for our dreams, and the rewards will be worth the effort. This idea has inspired me to set bigger goals for myself and to not be afraid of dreaming big.

## **The Power of Continuous Learning**

Another key takeaway for me was the importance of continuous learning and studying successful people and organizations. It's about being open to new ideas, constantly learning, and applying these lessons to our own lives. This resonated with me as I've always been a firm believer in lifelong learning. The book reinforced this belief and inspired me to continue learning and growing.

## **The Ambition of Aiming Big**

Finally, the story of Schwarzman's ambitious goal of raising money for Blackstone's first investment fund really stood out. It's a powerful illustration of the concept of aiming big. It's not just about setting goals, but about having the courage and determination to pursue them, no matter how big they may seem. This story inspired me to be more ambitious in my own goals and to not be afraid of aiming big.

These are just a few of the many insights I gained from reading "What It Takes: Lessons in the Pursuit of Excellence". It's a book that has truly transformed the way I think about success and excellence.

**The best executives are made, not born. They absorb information, study their own experiences, learn from their mistakes, and evolve.**

Stephen A. Schwarzman

## **Personal Reflections**

Reflecting on the key takeaways from the book, I found myself deeply impacted by the lessons it imparted. The idea that the best leaders are made, not born, resonated with me on a personal level. It made me realize that every experience, every mistake is an opportunity to learn and grow.

The concept of aiming big and achieving big was another takeaway that had a profound impact on me. It inspired me to set higher goals for myself and reinforced my belief that with hard work and determination, no dream is too big.

The importance of continuous learning was another lesson that struck a chord with me. It reminded me of the need to stay open to new ideas, to constantly learn and evolve, both personally and professionally.

Finally, Schwarzman's ambitious goal of raising money for Blackstone's first investment fund was a powerful illustration of the concept of aiming big. It served as a reminder that setting high goals and having the courage to pursue them can lead to extraordinary achievements.

These lessons from the book have not only enriched my understanding but have also found practical application in my life. They have helped me in setting my personal and professional goals, in making decisions, and in my approach towards learning and growth. I believe these insights can be equally beneficial for anyone looking to enhance their personal and professional life.

## Take Action

I highly encourage everyone to read this book and apply these lessons in their own lives. It's a book that truly has the potential to transform the way you think about success and excellence. I'd love to hear your thoughts on the book. Have you read it? What were your key takeaways? How have you applied these lessons in your life? Feel free to share your experiences and insights in the comments below. Let's get the discussion going!

---

### You Might Also Like:

- [Hidden Potential by Adam Grant: Book Summary and Insights](#)
- [A Dose of Excellence: A Summary of What It Takes Book by Stephen Schwarzman](#)
- [Practical Insights and Book Summary: The Power of Now by Eckhart Tolle](#)