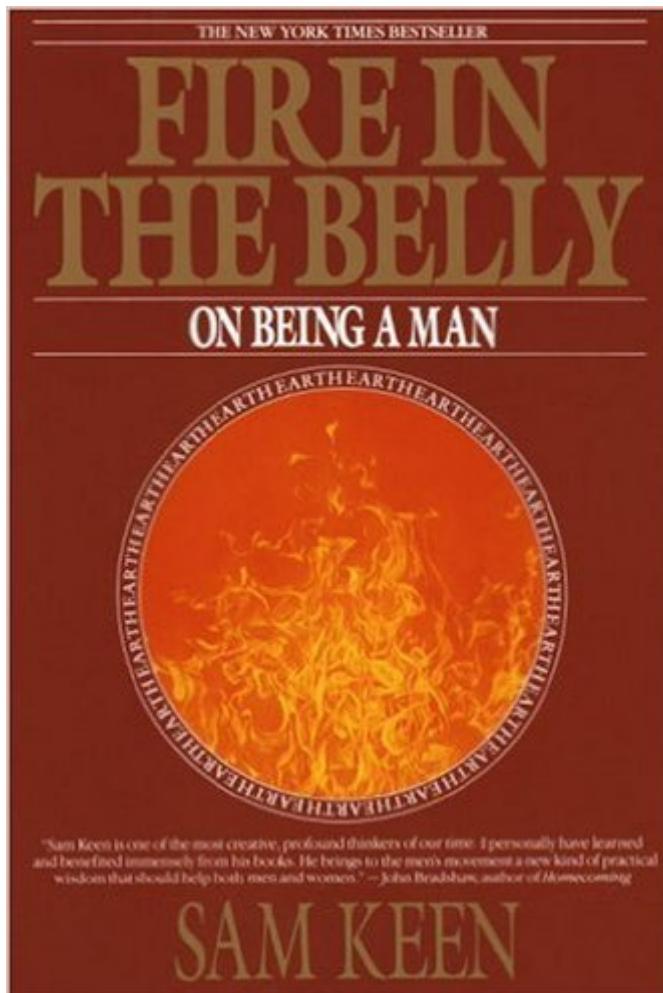


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Fire In The Belly: On Being A Man



Synopsis

Written for both men and women, this groundbreaking book takes the reader on a journey to discover new routes to authentic manhood and create alternatives to definitions of masculinity that no longer work in today's world.

Book Information

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Best Sellers Rank: #117,893 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #107 inÂ Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Social Sciences > Gender Studies > Men #1366 inÂ Books > Medical Books > Psychology > General #2905 inÂ Books > Self-Help > Personal Transformation

Customer Reviews

I had high expectations on this book and to be fair, it delivered for the first 20 or so pages (just like other reviewers have mentioned). Keen gives a great insight; for a man to get in touch with his manhood he has to leave the world of WOMAN. WOMAN, refers to not any specific person but the mental idea or ideal that men devote entirely too much energy in antagonizing, fearing, impressing, etc. that elusive idea. By separating from the world of WOMAN, as I got from the reading, a man can begin to be by and for himself, unhindered by the abstract. That insight garners the book some credit. Unfortunately, the book does not live up to the strong beginning. It weakens to a trickle with Keens' professorial lecturing and attention to the precise ideas that don't -in my view- work for men looking for their soul. For example, in the chapter relating to aggression, Keen expounds about how the "War System" has influenced all our human relationships; we want to get ahead, step over anyone who gets in our way and destroy our opponents. Really? Is that all there is to aggression? Right then it became obvious Keen has too narrow and ideological a view to help men find their Manhood. Most importantly, the aggression issue is not properly addressed. Keen devotes several pages to what is wrong with war-like behavior and only, as an afterthought, adds a page at the end of the chapter on the survival value it has. So in essence, after lecturing non-stop about the evils of

aggression he tells us that at some point we might need it. Most men reading books on masculinity, and I would underline this if I could, are looking for a justification and articulation of our fierceness, NOT blind destruction, but fierceness as a vital force.

What tells us we are men? Is it how we look on the outside? Is it the way we behave? Unfortunately, if you are looking for these questions, you might as well go away now, for this book is not meant to be read by ideologues who think they need an idea to know. We have all tread the mass of upgrades to our lives called "women," hopping from one to the next without fulfillment. Some of us have also played the nice guy/poindexter role into night and day until our wallets broke and then we were left without anything. We have tried to be male in so many different ways, but there is one that outshines them all. It is the one that lies above the grave of impossibility. In his excellent and thorough essay, Keen urges us at the end of the first chapter not to skirt through the book but to read carefully each passage. We've been stranded for too long on a desolate island, asking for attention. Our hearts and minds have been callously stupefied by our advances, and by our society and time, which have been of no help to us at all. Being manly doesn't mean we necessarily have to exaggerate our strength in order to *look* like a man. Instead, the prayer is that we might express something greater within ourselves and not be afraid of how manly we look to others. One of the first things we must do, Sam says, is to challenge our misconceptions about WOMAN. This is "WOMAN" with all caps. She's the undying witch who comes to scare us, night after night, after we have fallen asleep. The little boy who fears the witch is still there has not left us, for we have not gotten over our very private concerns about who She is. The quintessential journey into the heart, for a man, starts at the place where he begins to accept the uncertainty of his maleness.

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