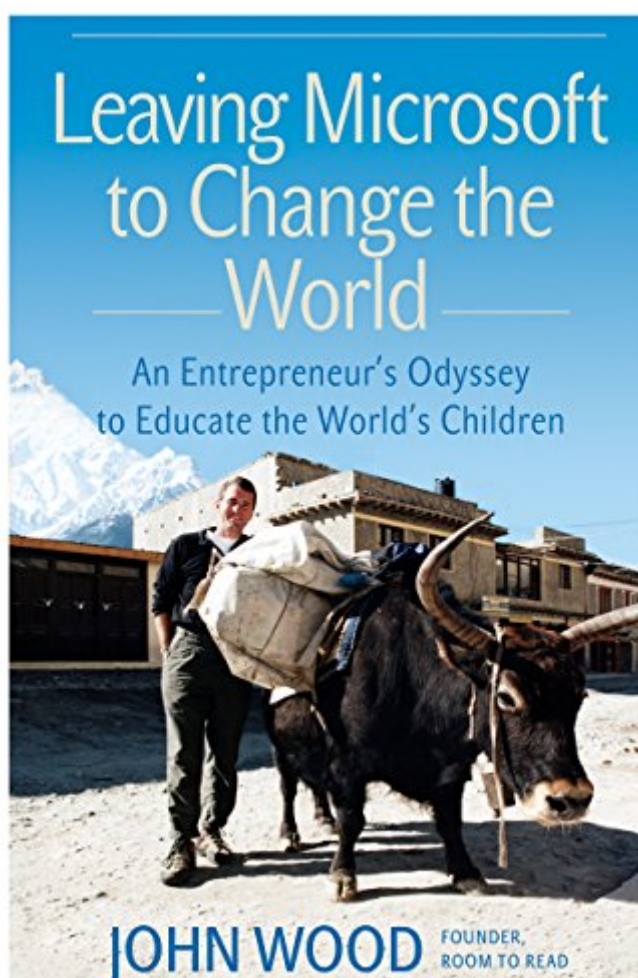


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Leaving Microsoft To Change The World: An Entrepreneur's Odyssey To Educate The World's Children



Synopsis

John Wood discovered his passion, his greatest success, and his life's work not at business school or helping lead Microsoft's charge into Asia in the 1990s but on a soul-searching trip to the Himalayas. He made the difficult decision to walk away from his lucrative career to create Room to Read, a nonprofit organization that promotes education across the developing world. By the end of 2007, the organization will have established over 5,000 libraries and 400 schools, and awarded long-term scholarships to more than 3,000 girls, giving more than one million children the lifelong gift of education. If you have ever pondered abandoning your desk job for an adventure and an opportunity to give back, Wood's story will inspire you. He offers a vivid, emotional, and absorbing tale of how to take the lessons learned at a hard-charging company like Microsoft and apply them to the world's most pressing social problems.

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Customer Reviews

I had this book on backorder and raced through it as soon as it arrived. In a busy world preoccupied with success and materialistic pursuits, this was a breath of fresh air. A well written account of one man's journey from corporate America to making a real change in children's lives. This is a must

read for all - it reminds us that we can all make a difference if we choose to do so. Also loved the inside peek at Microsoft and those who are at the helm. John Wood is funny, honest and a great storyteller. A great gift for young adults heading off to college or those starting on their own career path!

If you're one of those people who always has a book in your bag, who snatches moments to read just one more page on the morning commute, and who really can't imagine growing up without a library close at hand ... this book is for you. John Wood did what most people only dream of- he left a lucrative position in one of the world's top companies to form a non-profit organization whose purpose it is to bring books, computers and a chance at education to children through South and Southeast Asia. And then he wrote a book about it. In it, he says that non-profit companies should work, in practical matters, very much like for-profit companies. They should be organized, passionate and focused. Wood takes some time to give readers pointers as to how to achieve this. The success of the idea for the Room to Read organization has been amazing. I hope the success of the book matches that. I only have one quibble with this book and that is that at some points, Wood seems almost whiny. There are at least a handful of times in which he is close to tears, and a few more in which he does some real soul-searching. Luckily for us readers, Wood writes more about these instances in his journal than in his book. The book is passionate, upbeat and interesting- it really will make you want to do your part to make the world a better place.

It is a rare find to have top-tier business skills, a fierce compassion for people and a successful track-record of reaching for the stars, and pulling them in; John Wood is such a find, and his book, "Leaving Microsoft to Change the World" gives us the opportunity to find it as well. John's heroic odyssey is so captivating and honest, that it's enjoyment factor almost masks the plethora of lessons and insights coming through page after page. This is a must read for anyone wanting to up-the-ante on their own expectations for life, leadership or impact in the world. Not only does John's story inspire the heart to aim higher, it pinpoints the rigor and awareness required to get there. It is impossible to read this book and see your own potential in the same way ever again. John Wood has us believe there's more -- lots more -- and he provides the hope, example and means, to pursue it!

This is a fantastic book - for people in the business or the non-profit world who want to be inspired by a single individual's ability to produce amazing results. It's an unapologetic look at what it takes -

personally and professionally - to accomplish the most daunting of goals. John and Erin's model clearly works and will continue to scale and change the lives of generations and generations of families around the world. Literacy is one of the most powerful tools in any country. This is a must-read for anyone who has ever wondered, "how can I make a difference?" I suggested this for book club and everyone loved it ... I also gave this book to a number of friends at Christmas and received rave reviews back.[...]

John Wood has an epiphany while trekking through Nepal. He was a highly compensated leader at Microsoft and yet when confronted with a simple request from a poor Nepal educator - "Next time you come maybe you can bring some books" - little did John know that this would change his life, and the life of countless others. This is a truly inspiring story of someone who realized that there is more to life than the endless meetings and business strategy, and chose to leave that world behind to focus on making a difference to the education and literacy of countless children in Nepal. The book is well written, engaging, funny, touching and at times depressing. I have been employed at Microsoft for a while and found it sad that John felt he could not have this kind of impact from within the company. There are so many great things the company is doing to help bring literacy and education to the world through technology, and it's a sad testament to those he worked with that someone as courageous and obviously talented as John couldn't have been used by the company with its resources to make this kind of impact from within. There are some hilarious bits in here about Microsoft, but overall I was left wondering "what if". The book is enlightening in more ways than just the wasted potential of major multi-national companies; it also addresses some of the short sightedness of many charitable organizations he sought to partner with. Most importantly though it sends the message that one person really can make a difference. I was reminded of the wisdom of gaining wealth but losing your soul. John found the courage to find his, despite what he had to leave behind. Overall, I recommend this book highly. It is well written, enjoyable, and inspiring. If John can make a difference, then so can we.

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