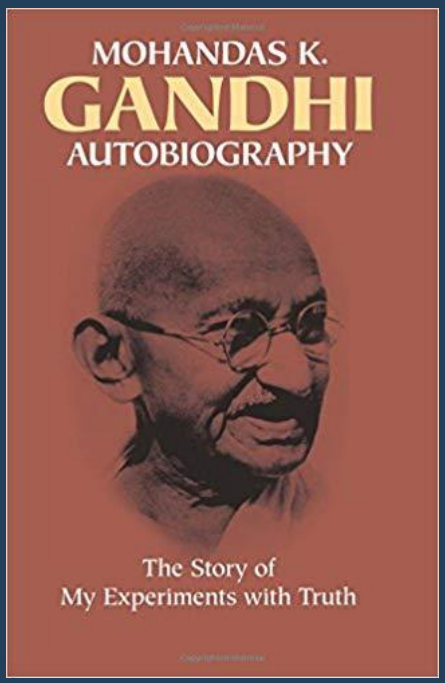

An Autobiography: The Life of My Experiences with Truth

Year of publication: 1983
Author: Mohandas Gandhi
494 pages
Link for purchase: https://amzn.to/2Y6jDIV

The book "An Autobiography: The Story of My Experiments with Truth" was first published in 1927.
In his autobiography, Gandhi explores the spiritual, mental, and physical dimensions of a journey through his life and his principles of nonviolence, truth, and concern for others.
Gandhi is very objective in his topics. Most topics are short and performed in chronological order. The book is divided into 5 parts, in addition to the introduction and conclusion, all this content is distributed throughout its 440 pages.

Score

8

7 Aplicability
9 Inspiration
8 Innovation
8 Impact on results
8 Structure

Main ideias of the book

- Gandhi was born into a simple family and possessed great values;
- He married at age 13;
- He was responsible for creating the Satyagraha philosophy, aiming at non-violence and willpower;
- Even with the death of his mother, Gandhi kept all the commitments made with her.
- Forgiveness is the attribute of strong people;
- Spread love in all environments. Only love can beat the adversary;
- The fullness of love neutralizes the hatred of thousands;
- Be the change you want to see in the world;
- Take action, as it will take you to the desired place;
- Live based on what you believe.

For whom is this book suitable?

The content of the book is ideal for you who likes great biographies that are responsible for influencing millions of people.
In addition, the content is for you that seeks example of values, commitment, love and determination, contemplating practical examples of all the struggles and achievements marked by leadership and non-violence.

Overview of the book

1 - Childhood and Adolescence

In this first part of the book, Gandhi reports on his birth, childhood, religion, his marriage, and all the experiences and tragedies that occurred during this period.
Gandhi was born on October 2, 1869 in Porbandar, an Indian city. As a child, he was totally influenced by the practices of his religious political father and his devout mother.
He started school at age 7, and he was always regarded as a very shy and middle-aged student, and he was never willing to cheat in front of his friends.
At age 13, his parents decide that he should marry, a practice that was not much supported by him. In addition, he recounts some tragedies he encountered in his teens.

> *Remember that all through history, there have been tyrants and murderers, and for a time, they seem invincible. But in the end, they always fall. Always*

When his father died, a family friend suggested that he could go to study in England. However, Gandhi had to make serious wishes to his mother, because her greatest concern was that he would lose family culture and start eating meat, drinking alcohol and sleeping with other women.
With that, in 1888 he went to England to study law. He tried to adapt to the new culture, but it did not last long and he preferred to live a life of intense studies and humility. After 3 years of study, he passed the exams and was able to practice law. Because of this he returned to India.

2 - Career Start

Upon returning to India, Gandhi discovered that his mother had died. In this same period, it was time for him to begin his professional life.
He began working in Bombay at the Supreme Court. There he gained experience and deepened his studies in law. However, his shyness caused him to get in the way of his work, driving him back to Rajkot and opening his own office there.
His older brother was always willing to solve his problems and helped him a lot. Thus, he had great influence so that Gandhi was transferred and occupied a position of advocacy in South Africa.
During the time he stayed in South Africa, Gandhi suffered several prejudices because of his color. He reports in the book some events like when he was kicked out of the train, and when he was invited to dine in his room to not offend the guests in the hotel. In those moments, he said that he always discussed about the situation, but without violence.
In addition, during that experience he was responsible for engaging in a good deal of self-confidence and good legal knowledge, thereby helping to found the Indian Christmas Congress, which helped the Indian community to unite as a political force . Gandhi also began to study about the Christian religion.
Gandhi returned to India to find his wife and two daughters, and brought them to South Africa, where he would continue his activism work.

3 - Development of Political Power

However, upon arriving in the port of South Africa, the white citizens were furious with him and attacked him, accusing him of false imputations. But Gandhi proved his innocence to the press and said he did not want to sue anyone who attacked him.
Gandhi increased his public work by the indigenous community, and every day he developed an affection for help and simplicity. During the Boer War, he showed all these characteristics, where an ambulance body was created to take the wounded.
After the war, he returned to India through a long excursion. Gandhi's goal was to understand the difficulties of third-class passengers. So he decides to leave his family in India and returns to South Africa to solve the main problems.

4 - Beginning of the Fight

On his return, South Africa was under an epidemic of color prejudice. In addition, government laws have made the Indians find themselves in a difficult situation.
According to Gandhi, he was heavily influenced by a book he read that is called "Unto This Last." He adopted several teachings from it and changed many points in his life. At this same time, Gandhi founded the Phoenix Settlement, a farm where he would live with his supporters and later became a small village.
In 1906, the British government declared war on the Zulus, and Gandhi was there again. He acted with his ambulance corps, aiming to help transport and care for the innocent and wounded Zulus.
As the war drew to a close, Gandhi's next step was the ambition to live the lives of the poorest people. With this, he practiced fasting and then a diet of pure fruits.
Even in great times when he fell ill, Gandhi said he did not abandon vegetarianism and kept the mantle of his vote with his mother.
During all this time in Africa, Gandhi developed what would be called "satyagraha". It translates as "firmness in truth" and refers to non-violent protests and resistances.

5 - The Peak of Political Power

In 1914, Gandhi returned to India and made major transformations.
In this way, he decided to open primary schools in six villages and improved their sanitary conditions. In addition, he attempted to spread the "satyagraha", that is, to spread nonviolent civil disobedience and obtained significant results, increasing his popularity.
Despite this, many peaceful Indian civilians were killed by the British, but this made the movement stronger.
With that, the true entry of Gandhi into Congressional politics was taking place, making him organize a new constitution that would push for complete independence.
For Gandhi, one of the ways to achieve independence is by removing poverty, and by manufacturing products that India was dependent on.
At the end of his autobiography, Gandhi states that his achievements in Congress still left the story under construction and had nothing decisive. But, now history confirms that India's independence has been very successful and has influenced rights movements around the world.

> *What barrier is there that love cannot break?”*

What other authors say about it?

In the book Unshakeable, author Tony Robbins says you need to give yourself: give your attention, donate your time. Making contributions is what brings meaning to the lives of many people. This is perfectly understood in Gandhi's life.
For the author of the Psychology of Selling, Brian Tracy, successful people enhance their inner dialogue with optimistic and confident phrases. For example, if you repeat the phrase "I like myself" throughout the day, your self-esteem will certainly increase. You can clearly see this behavior in Gandhi, through his faith, love, forgiveness and all his positive energies.
Finally, a history of autobiography with the trajectory very similar to Gandhi's is that of Nelson Mandela, reported in the book Long Walk to Freedom. Both had similar traits such as admirable leadership, the struggle for rights, and commitment. In addition, both faced hateful enemies, but Mandela diverged from Gandhi by using violence and weapons in his struggles.

Okay, but how can I apply this in my life?

Throughout Gandhi's biography, he indirectly presents us with various ways of looking at obstacles and how to exert leadership based on your values.

Based on his speeches and his actions during his lifetime, Gandhi demonstrates that we must keep our adversaries close to us, and we achieve results by acting without violence.
I have gathered together the four main lessons of Gandhi:

- Pardon: Gandhi practiced it in a simple and direct way. Do not forgive is to be stuck in the past, causing only suffering.
- Commitment: For Gandhi the main commitment that can exist is with the truth in itself, therefore, it leads to happiness and fulfillment, not requiring external approval.
- Respect: Choose non-violence, both in physical form, as well as through discussion and judgments. We can not see our adversaries as enemies.
- Love: Gandhi never showed changes in his mood, always being serene and loving all events. According to him, we can only overcome an opponent through love.

Finally, Gandhi leaves a legacy that he was a man of good gestures and proves to you that the above characteristics are essential to win even in an uneven world.

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