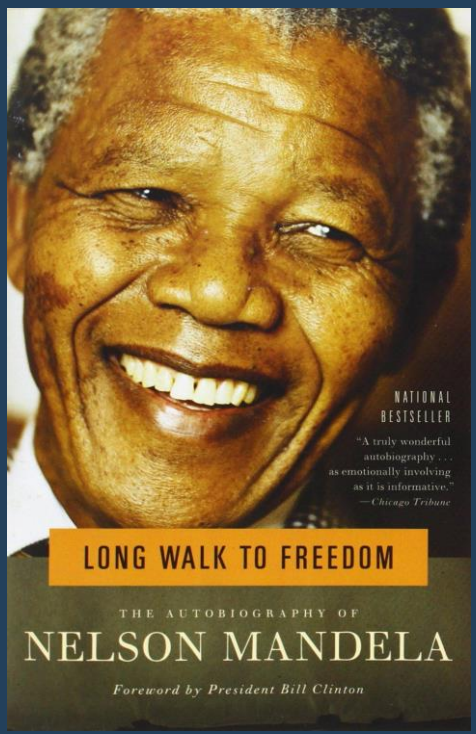

Long Walk to Freedom

Year of publication: 2016
Author: Nelson Mandela
638 pages
Link for purchase: https://amzn.to/2xm0UxN

The book Long Walk to Freedom was published in 1994 and portrays Nelson Mandela's autobiography from the day he was born to the date of his inauguration as president of South Africa in 1994. All these 76 years are described on the basis of his memoirs, reminiscent of important events with incredible wealth of details.
There are also details about his life, education and the moments in which he remained in prison. In addition, it portrays the political advance and the arduous struggle to rebuild the segregated society of the country, causing him to gain international recognition.
All the content is very light and pleasant, causing an approximation and engagement of the reader.

Score

9

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

Main ideias of the book

The most important points raised by the book are:

- The awakening for justice began in his childhood in the countryside;
- The policy began in Johannesburg;
- Apartheid came from the promotion of the National Party in power;
- The beginning of the violence by militants was based on the harshest tactics that the government implanted;
- The struggle intensified proportionately with the persecution of Mandela;
- Mandela was arrested and kept his stance during the 27 years in prison, while violence was too much across the country;
- Freedom fighters have been able to get global support, and have begun negotiations with the government;
- Mandela was released and continued his negotiating work with the government;
- Mandela became president of South Africa.

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 who seek example of values, endurance, integrity and determination, contemplating practical examples of all the struggles and achievements of a great South African leader.

Overview of the book

Childhood and Adolescence

Nelson Mandela was born in a small village in South Africa in July 1918. His father was head of a tribe and named Mandela as "Rolihlahla," which means "troublemaker."
When his father died, his family sent him to live with Chief Jongintab. He often attended tribal meetings, getting to know the suffering of his people and witnessing the claim to white sovereignty.
Overall, Mandela received a good education for a South African, being the first of the family to go to school. The school he attended was entirely British, leaving black people and African culture alone aside.
In 1937, after completing the Junior Certificate at Healdtown College in two years, he moved to Fort Hare College, where he began studying law, politics, English, and anthropology.

> *A Nation should not be judged by how it treats its highest citizens, but it's lowest ones*

However, during the second year of school, Mandela was expelled for supporting a boycott of the students in order to gain greater representativeness of the students.

Policy Start

In 1941, Mandela moved to Johannesburg and got a job as night watchman in a gold mine. And there began an internal nuisance, because his view was that mines only benefited whites and Africans were enslaved.
According to Mandela, Walter Sisulu was a bridge for his desire to be fulfilled, because it was through him he got a new job in one of the largest law firms while studying law at the University of South Africa.
At that time, Mandela began attending the meetings of the African National Congress (ANC), which aims to ensure the citizenship of all Africans within South Africa, and a hope of change for the country.
Thus, he gained a taste for activism, effectively participating in the struggles for citizenship. In addition, Mandela has made strong friendships with other activists.

Introduction to Apartheid

In 1944, he joined the Youth League with support from the ANC, whose aim was get more support, since the Congress was small.
In the midst of all this, Mandela married for the first time, with the nurse Evelyn Mase.
In 1948, the National Party came to power in South Africa. Throughout the campaign, the party made announcements favoring a segregation. When he took power he was no different, he immediately took a series of measures that put the apartheid regime into practice.

Thus began a series of contestations. According to Mandela, an interesting milestone was in 1950, regarded as the National Day of Protest, which consisted of asking workers to stay at home because of the government announced act that racial groups should remain separate.
This act was a success, and made the ANC increase (much) the number of members.
Due to civil disobedience, the police quickly imprisoned Mandela for the first time. Subsequently, he and members of the ANC were arrested again, brought to trial and found guilty of opposing the government. But the nine-month sentence was suspended for lack of evidence.
In 1952, Mandela founded his law firm with the goal of helping Africans. Whenever he appeared in court, it was challenging. This has led the government to bar his participation in court.

Mandela reported that he and Walter Sisulu believed that one of the alternatives to face the increasingly harsh laws introduced, would be through violence.

Beginning of violence and persecution

The police had already begun to restrain Mandela, and at first kept him out of politics. And in 1956, he was arrested (along with many others leading campaigns against the government) by police who claimed that Mandela had planned violent acts in defense campaigns.
As the judicial process slipped, external conflicts were at full throttle. In 1960, police killed 69 and injured more than 400 people during the Sharpeville tragedy. This led to national protests, prompting the government to declare a state of emergency.
Shortly thereafter, the judicial process improved, and the accused were acquitted because the evidence was insufficient.
As a result, the debate on violence within the ANC had been long overdue. In a secret meeting with other ANC members, Mandela pointed out that violence would become a norm. So he formed a military organization to fight the government, named as MK.
That way, they began to prepare. He moved to the Liliesleaf farm, where he served as a hideout and training camp. The group's idea was to sabotage government buildings, power plants and similar targets, announcing the arrival of the MK and taking the government by surprise.

Mandela's Prison

At this point, Mandela said the government was crazy to get him. And this happened on August 5, 1962, when he was returning to the Liliesleaf farm after a secret MK meeting.

> *And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others*

Freedom is indivisible; the chains on any one of my people were the chains on all of them, the chains on all of my people were the chains on me

Mandela tried to defend himself, but the judge sentenced him to 5 years in prison without parole, and was sent to Robben Island.
After many witnesses and government investigations, Mandela was found guilty on all counts, and all resulted in death penalty. But the ONU instructed the amnesty for all those who opposed apartheid, making his final sentence resulting in life imprisonment on Robben Island.
Life on the Island was very somber, had rigid systems of visitation and many things were censored, such as the news about politics, books and magazines.
Meanwhile, the external situation only worsened, resulting in an increase in the number of protests and militants across Africa. In 1976, police massacred students during demonstrations in Soweto.This massacre reverberated around the world and caused great fury in the global and national media, not only the massacre, but also apartheid.

Exalted feelings and early negotiations

In the early 80's, the feelings became more and more heated and everything was already out of control. It significantly increased the number of black people to the struggle for freedom, new groups of militants and the popularity of the ANC.
At that time, everything was already in conflict and violence on all sides. With that, Mandela saw the need to negotiate with the government, as the ANC had already stated that it would not negotiate with a racist government.
The first step to the negotiation came in 1986, when Mandela requested a meeting with the Defense Minister and, to his surprise, it was accepted. After that, he was taken to the minister's house.
But things started to happen even in 1988, when the situation was chaotic, and the government saw that it had no way but to resort to the negotiations with Mandela.
This has led to a series of secret meetings between Mandela and the government officials' committee. In 1989, the meeting between the new president and Mandela took place, in order to hear what Mandela had to say to promote peace.

The Beginning of Hope

Months after the meeting, it was decreed that Mandela would be released, as well as all arrested for non-violent activities, in order to promote peace.
After 27 years in prison, Mandela was able to generate the impetus so that black freedom suddenly change with great speed. But there were still many bridges to cross to end the violence and begin reconciliation.
According to Mandela, the nationalists issued an emergency decree, and the ANC negotiated with the government to end the armed struggle against the apartheid government. Subsequently, Mandela was elected as the president of the ANC.

The next steps were taken by the formal negotiations with the government, which allowed the ANC to gain significant importance and representation in the cabinet. Do you know the consequence of this? ANC and National Party working side by side.

Mandela won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1993 with Klerk, who was president at that time and who negotiated with Mandela

On 27 April 1994, the ANC won 62.6% of the votes in the presidential election and Mandela took over as president until 1999.

The work continued to be done, taking courageous steps and great breaks of barriers. According to Mandela, the initial goal has not yet been achieved, but the desire to be free and not to be oppressed has been achieved.

I have never cared very much for personal prizes. A person does not become a freedom fighter in the hope of winning awards

What other authors say about it?

According to the author John Maxwell, as he says in his book Developing The Leader Within You 2.0, Mandela is cited as an example and reference to a personality of influence based on respect, and his followers are given the values he has.

John Maxwell also mentions Mandela in the book The 21 Irrefutable Leadership Laws, in the 2nd law on influence. The author says that leaders are able to influence people around them, by their causes and by their goals.
In Nelson Mandela - A Life Lesson, author Jack Lang compares Mandela with characters from literature like Prometheus, bound by racism and oppression.
Finally, a biography with the trajectory very similar to Mandela's, is Gandhi's history, reported in the book My Life and My Experiences with the Truth. Both had similar traits such as admirable leadership, the struggle for rights, and commitment.
In addition, both faced hateful enemies, but Gandhi diverged from Mandela for supporting nonviolence.

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

Throughout Mandela's biography, he indirectly presents us with various ways of seeing the obstacles and how to exert a effective leadership.
Based on his speeches and his actions throughout life, Mandela demonstrates that we must keep our adversaries close to us, and that courage is much more than just lack of fear.
Gathering the two lessons of Mandela as a leader, we have:

- You have to give autonomy at the right time. During meetings, Mandela was always the last to speak. He summed up everyone's opinion and matched their ideas, directing everyone to a desired goal.

- The purpose need not only be in you, it is necessary to think how actions affect others in all fields.

Finally, Mandela leaves a legacy that he was a man of gestures and proves to you that characteristics such as hope, commitment and determination are essential to win, even in an uneven world and when you are in prison.

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