

Broken and Whole: A Leader's Path to Spiritual Transformation

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Making Strength Out of Weakness

In his nearly four decades of pastoral, parachurch and nonprofit ministry leadership, Steve Macchia has come to understand his own brokenness. He writes:

"I've experienced great success and embarrassing failure. I've considered myself effective, and I've watched myself implode. I've brought others a lot of joy, and I've dished out my share of disappointment. In essence, as much as I like to view myself as a good or very good leader, in fact I'm more truthfully a blessed and broken leader; one who is daily in need of being renewed by the Spirit of God who resides in me."

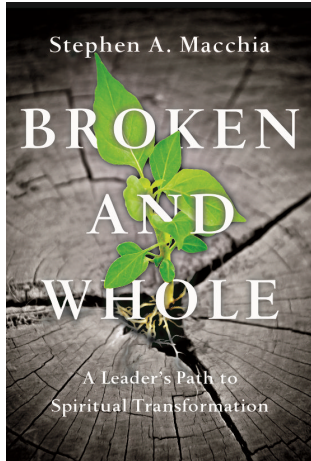
In these pages Steve offers the gifts of love found in 1 Corinthians 13 as the antidote to our brokenness. He writes with personal transparency from his own experience. Each chapter concludes with a powerful spiritual assessment tool for reflecting on our own leadership strengths and weaknesses.

Mark Buchanan, author of *Your Church Is Too Safe*, can speak firsthand to the challenges facing leaders and so celebrates the hope this text offers: "It takes audacity and humility to confess your own frailty and folly. It takes grace and wisdom to mine these things for enduring life lessons. Stephen brings all that to this book. He is a man who listens deeply to his own life and who flourishes because of, not in spite of, weakness and brokenness. And he writes so well, so honestly and so practically about these things that I feel a fresh rush of hope that my own weakness and brokenness is the path to wholeness."

By embracing and befriending our own brokenness we can find true wholeness in God's strength. In these pages you will discover a new way to live in freedom and joy.

Within these pages Macchia will address

- if it is acceptable to have a competitive spirit;
- how to keep pride from taking hold of the heart;
- what to do when fear and worry are hard to shake;
- ways to keep envy and jealousy at bay;
- the importance of patience in every relationship; and
- how God can redeem each specific area of weakness.



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An Invitation to Discover Strength in Weakness

The most dynamic spiritual leaders know they are both saint and sinner. Or, as Martin Luther noted long ago, “*Simul iustus et peccator*” – at the same time righteous and sinner. These leaders live with a burning desire to be honest about themselves – acknowledging their strengths as well as their struggles and mishaps. They live and lead from the depth of their soul, which is the essence of their existence. And, as a result, they become more attuned to an experiential knowledge of the truth about God and others within their reach.

Healthy spiritual leaders recognize the reality of living in the tension of the already-and-not-yet nature of the kingdom. They expect to experience both transformative redemption *and* continued brokenness in their generational lifetime. They know that Christ’s kingdom has been inaugurated and is being realized here on earth. But their complete redemption is not fully consummated until they are ushered into God’s kingdom for all eternity.

As continuously redeemed and transformed beings, they experience the abundant life of Christ with ever-increasing joy and thereby invite others around them to do likewise. Leaders who embrace their brokenness and submit it authentically into the hands of God are the ones who marvel at God’s redemptive work and serve others with renewed passion. Their spiritual eyesight is likened to St. Augustine, who once said, “In my deepest wound I saw your glory and it dazzled me.” They are an inspiration to all.

Consider this perspective on leadership as portrayed in the biblical text. For example, where would the story of Joseph’s tested faithfulness be without the jealousy of his brothers or the lure from Potiphar’s wife? Would we know about the leader Moses without his excuse of a speech impediment and shirking responsibilities? And – oh, by the way – what about his murder of an Egyptian? Wasn’t Rahab the harlot an instrument of grace for Joshua? What about Saul’s blatant hatred of Christians before being blinded by the light on the road to Damascus? And would we know the full gospel story without Jesus suffering from ridicule, beatings, humiliation and the excruciating pain of a broken body and shed blood on the cross?

I am profoundly motivated when I think of the woman who was abused by her mother growing up and who now serves as a mentor to young moms. I’m deeply touched by the severely disabled woman who is a faithful servant leader, stuffing envelopes and fervently praying for missionaries in the agency where she volunteers time and resources. I’m awestruck by the former drug addict and ex-con who now is clean and sober and leading troubled youth to Christ. I’m moved by the fallen leader who, once caught in a web of lies and an adulterous relationship, is back with his wife and together serving couples in marital difficulty. I’m equally delighted when I meet many other leaders who are simply willing to

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own their brokenness, no matter how messy or complex, and who humbly submit that weakness into the hands of Almighty God to become a redeemed strength unlike any of their natural abilities.

BLESSED AND BROKEN

I'm dearly loved by my heavenly Father and I'm deeply sinful – how can the two go together?

I've been a leader myself for nearly four decades. I've had the privilege of serving others in local church, parachurch and nonprofit environments. I've experienced great success and a few embarrassing failures. I've seen incredible highs and a handful of deep lows. I've considered myself effective and I've watched myself tire into utter exhaustion. I've brought others a lot of joy and I've both dished out and received from others my share of disappointment. In essence, as much as I like to view myself as a good or even a very good leader, I'm more truthfully a blessed and broken leader, one who is daily in need of being restored and renewed, refreshed and redeemed by the Spirit of God who resides in me.

Basically, I've come to grips with the reality that I am who I am. I'm a new creation in Christ Jesus. I have made many positive contributions as a leader. I've served faithfully as a pastor in a large and healthy church. I've experienced effectiveness as a leader of a one-hundred-year-old organization that grew significantly in my tenure. I've mentored many young and aspiring leaders. I've even founded a ministry that's been richly blessed by God.

But I also make mistakes. I blunder. I think horrible thoughts. I'm an internal quagmire more often than I desire and in continual need of God's grace. I know what it feels like to be a manipulator, and when not kept in check I can drive myself and others crazy with my perfectionistic tendencies. I've been deeply hurt by past failures. I've been disappointed by the attitudes and actions of others. And I see these same things in many others who are in leadership positions in the body of Christ.

I've discovered that when I'm authentic, honest and transparent about *all* my realities as a leader, I can relax more in the presence of those who previously intimidated me. I can laugh more at my own imperfections. I can live in a deep place of freedom and joy. Most importantly, I can embrace my brokenness, befriend it, and watch and wait in trust for God to birth hope in my heart for the redemptive way forward. In essence, by living in this reality I can experience the fullness of a loving God and the richness of an emancipated consciousness that leads me into genuine freedom and joy.

– Taken from the Introduction