

Review of **Be the Star You Are! 99 gifts for Living, Loving, Laughing, and Learning to Make a Difference** by Cynthia Brian

REVIEWED by Bud Bilanch, The Common Sense Guy

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On November 8, I attended a great event: Amazing Woman's Day, a Marsh Engle production. And sure enough, I met a really amazing woman, Cynthia Brian. Cynthia is the author of a great book, *Be the Star You Are: 99 Gifts for Living, Loving, Laughing and Learning to Make a Difference*. Big title, big book, filled with big ideas.

I like everything about this book, beginning with the title. Like Cynthia, I believe that we are all stars – we just need to find ways to showcase our brilliance. In *Be the Star You Are*, Cynthia provides 99 ideas, she calls them gifts, to help you showcase your brilliance.

Each gift is explained in a few pages, followed by an exercise to help the reader make the most of it. For example the exercise that accompanies “The Gift of Optimism,” one of my favorite topics goes like this...

- Stand up tall. Reach as high as you dare. Stand on your toes, and reach for the stars. Imaging yourself flying to the stars and landing on a twinkling surface of heavenly light.
- Now, bend over and fall limply to the ground. Imagine yourself continuing to fall, being sucked deeper and deeper into the earth's molten core.
- Stretch upward again. Make circles in the air with your arms, sweeping them around you as you jump high off the ground.
- Which feels better? Do you want to reach and soar? Or fall and sink? In life, you can be an optimist and reach for the stars, or be a pessimist and collapse into the earth. That's your choice.

“Twinkling surface of heavenly light,” “earth's molten core;” Cynthia certainly has a way with words.

More important, she shows her readers how to make the most of the 99 gifts in her book by providing such interesting, fun and useful exercises.

I won't list all of the gifts that Cynthia discusses in *Be the Star You Are*, but here are a few of my favorites....

I am grateful for Cynthia's words about the gifts of abundance, acceptance, affirmation, balance, celebration, choice, cooperation, determination, dreams, enthusiasm, forgiveness,

friendship, gratitude, hope, humor, joy, knowledge, miracles, passion, perseverance, reflection, responsibility, serendipity, spontaneity, truth, understanding, wisdom and you.

Last week I featured President Elect Obama's book, *The Audacity of Hope*. Hope is powerful. *Be the Star You Are* is a hopeful book. But with hope comes responsibility. Cynthia challenges her readers to accept responsibility for their lives and success. She says, "You are unique. No one has ever walked the earth with your exact combination of inborn and acquired strengths, weaknesses, skills, foibles, talents, frailties and experiences...I challenge you to become the star you already are...I'll provide the guidance. You provide the guts."

I like the way she thinks. Do yourself a favor. Pick up a copy of *Be the Star You Are*. Read it. Savor the writing. Do the exercises. And become the star you are.