



## STILL LOVING CHICKEN SOUP

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Many years back, I loved the Chicken Soup for the Soul series for the simple and practical day-to-day lessons they imparted to otherwise impractical people like me. Eliciting chuckles or tears, depending on the write-ups, the stories and motivational essays were refreshing in that they provided fresher perspectives on life in general. Highly-inspirational, the books in the series were also geared towards specific audiences, as well. They were also most likely what inspired many self-help and inspirational books that have come into existence in today's world. Even the daily bible guide that is often given out for free contains stories and essays that mimic those in the original Chicken Soup series. Although I no longer remember any specific story I have heard or read in the series, the feel-good setting which those books have motivated still stay in my heart.

What sets the series apart, aside from its being the originator of numerous inspirational and self-help books, is that it has been able to motivate in the simplest of ways without pretending to preach or change people's views on life. In a matter-of-fact way, the series explores the personal psyche, what makes it tick, what makes it unique, or what makes it common to others. It seeks to make readers see the beauty inherent in even the most minuscule aspects of life while teaching valuable lessons that withstand even the test of time. The stories are uncomplicated, daily-grind material that do not overwhelm nor understate.

There have been other books that have come out today and which have enjoyed great success, too. Several of them have explored the updated outlooks which have enveloped a more enlightened human mentality. They have succeeded because their views have remained the same as the original Chicken Soup series': fresh, believable and quite easily digestible without being too heavy on the seasonings. Pun intended!

All those literary successes have shared one other thing in common: they have optimized the strategies that humans employ for living their lives in an otherwise challenge-filled world. They have readily explored the strategies that we keep in our arsenals to face life in all its complexities and adversities. Reading about the frailties of others somehow inspires us to accept our own imperfections and to seek a higher purpose in whatever we do.

In our personal dealings and circumstances, let us not forget that help to overcome our inhibitions on strategizing is never far behind. We need only to go back to the experiences of other people to find guidance and the great advice we seek.

### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. What is your favorite inspirational/self-help book? What makes this piece special to you?
2. Do you find yourself referring to that specific literary work in certain instances in your life? How are you assisted by such works?
3. What do you think such inspirational literature ultimately give us?
4. Aside from reading, how else do you obtain inspiration for daily living strategies?
5. If you were writing an inspirational book, is there a particular aspect of your life that you would want to write about? Why would you write about that?