

Barking to the Choir – Gregory Boyle

Summary:

This book is a memoir about a Jesuit Priest, Gregory Boyle, who founded Homeboy Industries, the largest gang-intervention program in the world. The text is an account of his experiences about compassion and how it can change all communities, including the marginalized.

Key concepts of kinship:

1. Show up (chapter one).
2. Recognize holiness everywhere (chapter two).
3. Stay in awe (chapter three).
4. Receive not Rescue people (chapter four).
5. Everyone is invited (chapter five).
6. Grateful heart (chapter six).
7. Walking back is often arriving (chapter six).
8. Have no enemies (chapter seven).
9. Actions aren't who we are, they are what we do (chapter seven).
10. Love and more love (chapter eight).
11. Everyone is part of the choir (chapter eight).
12. I am everybody (chapter eight).
13. Hope is an engine (chapter ten).
14. "Already and not yet" (epilogue).

Notable Quotes:

"Deciding to be determined and finally astonished. When judgement ceases to consume all the oxygen in the room, an astonishing love takes its place and we can then be touched by it all." (60)

"Awe trading places with judgment, swiftly and cleanly, 'for fond love and for shame.'" (66)

"We still need to contend with the original prejudice that some people are important and others don't count. Our ego clings to self-importance and puts us on a path that draws us further from our soul's truth. Humility can keep us from moving into this territory." (95)

Richard Rohr: "If we do not transform our pain, we will most assuredly transmit it." (126)

"Denial is perfectly beneficial until it's not anymore. Then we need to find the safe place to peel back the layers of our own pain." (133)

"Choosing to be fearless for the other, awakens in us a courageous heart and fosters a selflessness where true joy is born." (155)

"One of the things that keeps us from the margins and the joy of mutuality we find there is our constant disqualifying of ourselves." (178)

“This larger sense of belonging to each other acknowledges that many are the things that connect us, and those things that divide are few and no match for our kinship.” (195)