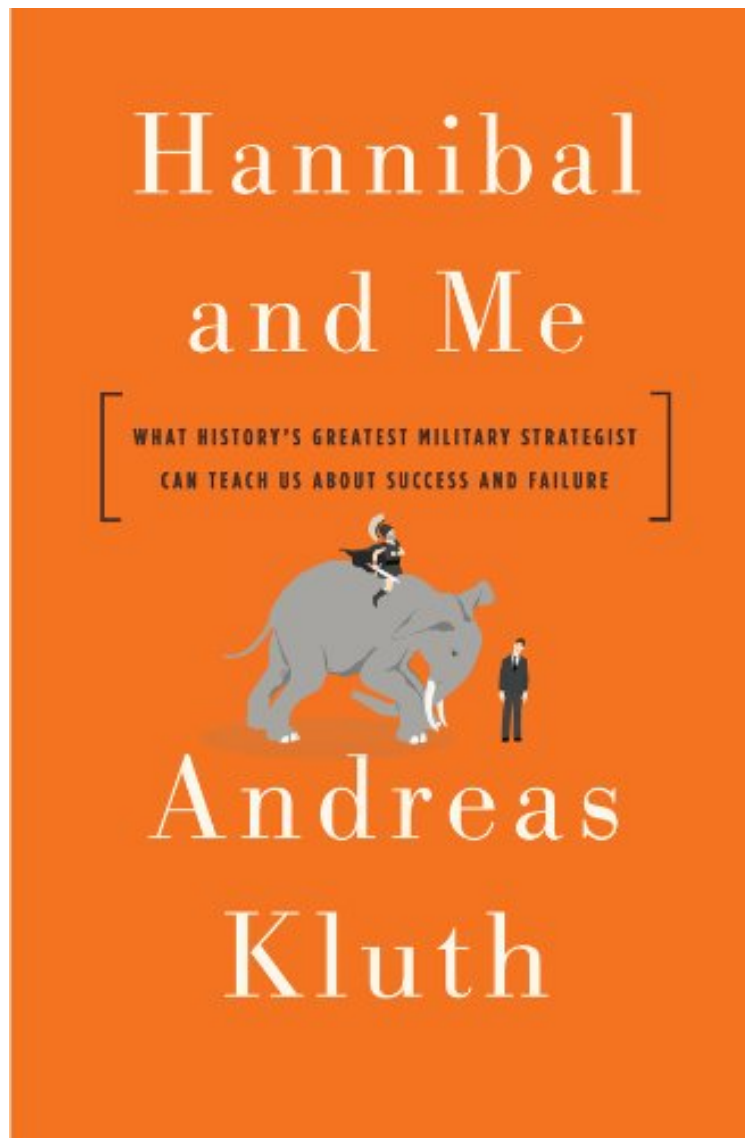


(Free) Hannibal and Me: What History's Greatest Military Strategist Can Teach Us About Success and Failure

Hannibal and Me: What History's Greatest Military Strategist Can Teach Us About Success and Failure

Andreas Kluth

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Andreas Kluth : Hannibal and Me: What History's Greatest Military Strategist Can Teach Us About Success and Failure before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Hannibal and Me: What History's Greatest Military Strategist Can Teach Us About Success and Failure:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. The subtitle of this book is "What history's greatest

strategist can teach us about success and failure

By Ian Mann

The subtitle of this book is "What history's greatest strategist can teach us about success and failure." It could be classified as a "self-help book," but that genre is generally so thin and superficial. There are no self-help tips, no exercises to be done or mind-sets to be adopted; rather it provides profound insights through a thought-provoking analysis of well-known historical figures. The theme of the book is career success and failure (in the full sense of the term career,) how they are linked and how they unfolded in the lives of historical figures. Kluth, a writer for the prestigious Economist magazine has a fluent writing style, his knowledge broad and deep, and the subject nothing short of riveting. The central character of the book, the Carthaginian military genius, Hannibal, sees his life's work as the fulfilment of his father's ambition, the conquest of Rome. His methods are daring, his tactics are works of creative brilliance that are studied to this day in military academies and by students of strategy. Most people have heard of his spectacular exploits if only of his crossing of the Alps in winter (no less) with elephants to launch a surprise attack on the Romans. Hannibal has no obvious means of retreat if he fails, no way to return home safely and surely. He does win every battle against the Romans, slaughtering their leadership and finest sons on the battlefield. He terrifies the population and wins the admiration of their finest generals who seem incapable of defeating him. But Hannibal never conquers Rome. His tactics were brilliant, but there was no overall strategy behind it. Kluth uses Hannibal (and others) as an instructive metaphor for our personal success journey. Some of us choose careers to fulfil parental aspirations, or our own aspirations and are successful at winning all the corporate battles. However, the strategy the battles were intended to achieve was never really clear. The result, for us, as for Hannibal, is a victory that was vaguely intended to produce a desirable lifestyle, but only leaves us with a family we never see and achievements without value. Where Kluth parts company with the popular self-help genre is that he recognizes the complexity inherent in success and failure. Parental aspirations often play a part in forming the path we pursue, and even parental absence has an influence. The quest sometimes takes the form not of parental emulation, but for the "search" for the absent father or mother and the identity that comes with that. Whether it was Barack Obama's metaphorical search for his father, a Kenyan man he had met only once, or Eleanor Roosevelt's search for an idea of her mother and father who died when she was a young child. Hannibal, like Picasso, Meriwether Lewis (the American explorer) and Shackleton were clear about their goals as young men. Others, like Harry Truman and Ludwig Erhard, had no "lifelong" goals; nor any clear direction and both were perceived as failures for the better part of their lives. Both Truman and Erhard, later in their lives, rose to the highest offices in their respective countries, America and Germany and made significant and memorable contributions. Many of those who had early goals and succeeded young, never repeated the bold successes of their younger years and many of the late bloomer achieved successes only possible after years of wandering aimlessly. Treachery and enemies lurked in the shadows behind Hannibal who was ultimately forced to leave the city he had sacrificed his youth, his family and his whole life for. The Roman who had defeated him and driven the invincible enemy from Europe suffered the same fate - as did Erhard, Cleopatra, Carl Jung and so many others. While it is clear to all, that astonishing success threatens others, why is it so often not clear to the hero? In some it is an innocence that makes one vulnerable, in others a deliberate desire to rise above the petty, the small. The title, Hannibal and Me is explained with a brief recap of how Kluth left his first job in London's financial sector to become a journalist. His desire for a balanced life and his disdain for ostentation make his analysis of great people nuanced and quite unique. Few books about historical figures make such entertaining reading while never diluting the complexities of world events. Polybius, arguably the best ancient source about Hannibal, would, I think, appreciate Kluth's book for psychological insights and his fresh take on an old mystery. The influence of Carl Jung can be felt throughout the book as Kluth digs into the psyches of the personalities he surveys. The book is a study of the ephemeral nature of power, and the struggle with the meaning of true happiness. It is a rare book.

Readability Light ---
+ Serious Insights High +---
- Low Practical High ---+
- Low

Ian Mann of Gateways consults internationally on leadership and strategy

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. One of the best books I've read in a long while.

By Clark the Shark

Were you successful early on in your life or career and you've been chasing that same thrill ever since? Or were you like me, someone whose "wandered" through life, with great ambitions, but not sure how to achieve them? There are the rare few individuals in life who attain success at an early age and then maintain it throughout their entire careers and lives. I think it would be unfair to say this book is not for those people, but I do think every person, no matter what their standing is in life, can benefit from reading this book. I've never come across a book in all my years that deals more directly with success and its companion, failure, than this one. It is hard to believe that in an era of self-help and business/career success literature, such as the 21st Century, we didn't have a book like this before. This is a book about success, failure and their impostors, just the same. However, there is so much more to it than just that. In it, Kluth explores the lives of numerous historical figures in a way that I've never thought of them before. Eleanor Roosevelt, Carl Jung, novelist Amy Tan, Roman dictator/hero Scipio, Hannibal Barca, Egyptian princess Cleopatra, Albert Einstein and many others' lives are discussed through the prism of a holistic approach. Kluth doesn't stop with one or two events from each person's life, but instead weaves an unforgettable tapestry of these lives and how their narratives relate to us all. He also has extensive references throughout the book.

Excellent book.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A very enjoyable way of reading history

By Peter Gregoire

This book

may be one that purist historiographers - who view the study of the past as its own virtue - may bristle at. But Andreas Kluth very much follows the Confucian line of studying the past, to understand the present and to foresee the future. In doing so he takes the story of the Carthaginian general, Hannibal and makes it relevant to our times. For in Hannibal and the other two protagonists in the Hannibal story - Fabius and Scipio - we see all sides of humanity and learn lessons about the real meaning of success and failure or, as Kipling called them, the twin imposters that are triumph and disaster. Weaved into the story of Hannibal, Kluth brings us lessons from the lives of other great historical figures, from Truman to Steve Jobs, from Einstein to Eleanor Roosevelt, from the tragedy of Liu Shaoqi to the hubris of Eliot Spitzer. But most compelling of all are the lessons that Kluth shows he has drawn himself, recognizing the success he achieved in his twenties working long hours in an investment bank for the imposter it was and (with a little help from the study of Hannibal) pursuing a career in journalism instead, which has led ultimately to this excellent work. One which ties together history, philosophy and (perhaps a little) life guidance, and demonstrates an astounding breadth of knowledge. Well worth a read.

A dynamic and exciting way to understand success and failure, through the life of Hannibal, one of history's greatest generals. The life of Hannibal, the Carthaginian general who crossed the Alps with his army in 218 B.C.E., is the stuff of legend. And the epic choices he and his opponents made on the battlefield and elsewhere in life offer lessons about responding to our victories and our defeats that are as relevant today as they were more than 2,000 years ago. A big new idea book inspired by ancient history, *Hannibal and Me* explores the truths behind triumph and disaster in our lives by examining the decisions made by Hannibal and others, including Albert Einstein, Eleanor Roosevelt, Steve Jobs, Ernest Shackleton, and Paul Cézanne; men and women who learned from their mistakes. By showing why some people overcome failure and others succumb to it, and why some fall victim to success while others thrive on it, *Hannibal and Me* demonstrates how to recognize the seeds of success within our own failures and the threats of failure hidden in our successes. The result is a page-turning adventure tale, a compelling human drama, and an insightful guide to understanding behavior. This is essential reading for anyone who seeks to transform misfortune into success at work, at home, and in life.

From Booklist: "An intriguing premise: show, through the life and career of the Carthaginian military genius Hannibal (and other history-makers), how the line between success and failure can sometimes be blurry, not to mention how success can turn into failure when least expected, and vice versa. Always outnumbered, Hannibal planned meticulously and never lost a war against Rome in 16 years of battle. On the other hand, he never conquered Rome. So was his career triumph or tragedy? How about General MacArthur, whose surprise landing at Inchon, South Korea, led to immediate triumph and, later, embarrassing failure? Kluth's main thesis seems to be that triumph and tragedy, success and failure, are merely points on a line, and that we make our way in life by cultivating the ability to turn failure into success and recognizing that success can breed failure, if we're not careful. This isn't the first book to tackle this subject, but its historical perspective, drawing on the life of a warrior who lived more than two millennia ago, gives it fresh appeal. --David Pitt "Realistic and timely, Kluth's book uses historic truths to move us past the frequent traps of success and failure to mold practical, productive lives." ---Publishers Weekly

About the Author: Andreas Kluth has been writing for the Economist since 1997 and is currently the U.S. West Coast correspondent. Sean Runnette, a multiple AudioFile Earphones Award winner, has also produced several Audie Award-winning audiobooks. His film and television appearances include *Two If by Sea*, *Copland*, *Sex and the City*, *Law Order*, *Third Watch*, and lots and lots of commercials.