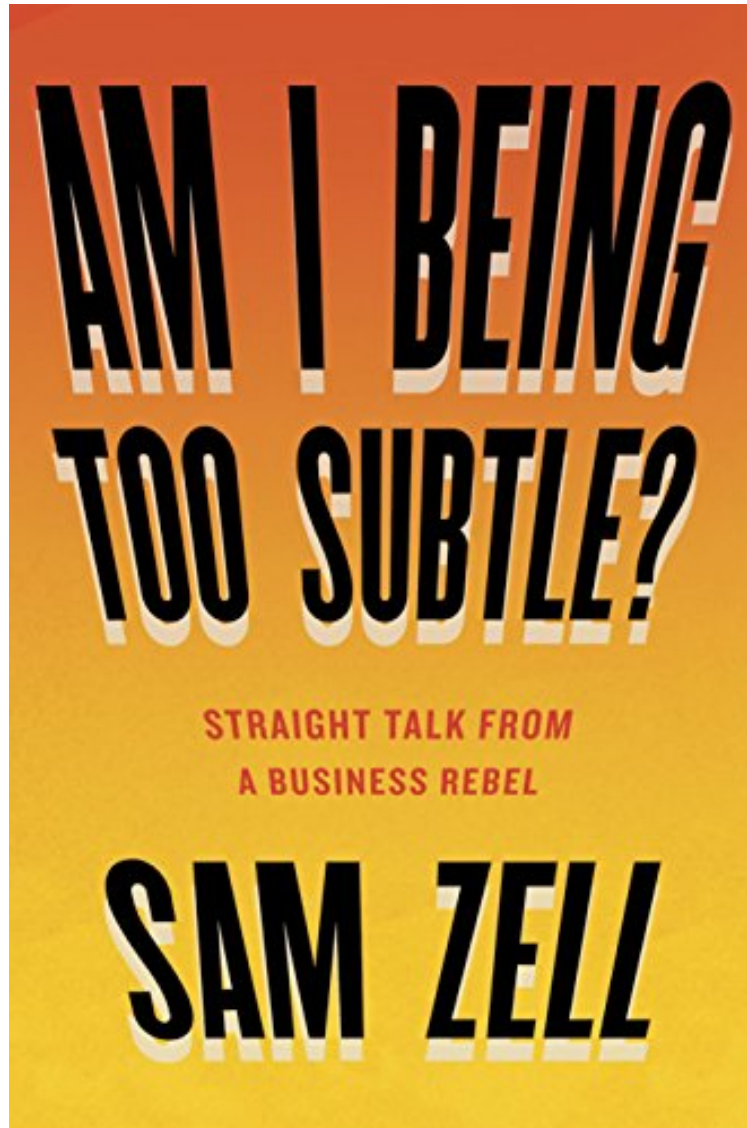


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## Am I Being Too Subtle?: Straight Talk From a Business Rebel

*Sam Zell*

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**Sam Zell : Am I Being Too Subtle?: Straight Talk From a Business Rebel** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Am I Being Too Subtle?: Straight Talk From a Business Rebel:

43 of 43 people found the following review helpful. Practical and actionable advice from a masterBy Valuable BookI have seen Sam Zell interviewed on CNBC and on other TV outlets over the years and I always came away thinking how smart he was. Zell is a true iconoclast and does not follow the herd mentality. Clearly this has held him in good stead as he has become a billionaire. I bought his book as soon as I knew it was being published as I figured there was

a lot to learn from him. His wisdom seemed pretty simple and homespun, although like Warren Buffet, the man is shrewd and understands how to assess risks. After reading the book what really comes through as setting Zell apart is how he does not follow the herd mentality. The man is a true clear thinker. This is not a guy who makes his decisions from listening to the often ill-informed talking heads in the media. He does his homework and then makes his own decisions. He does a good job of explaining his philosophy, including giving examples. To his credit, Zell discusses not just his successes, but he also talks about his mistakes, namely his investment in the Tribune Company and in parenting, for examples, because you often learn more from your failures. Ultimately you should judge a book that dispenses advice on how practical the advice is and whether there is anything actionable to take away. He offers a lot of insights that are good, but also that any experienced business person already knows: work hard, have good ethics, do your homework, go against the crowd. What sets the book apart (and I'm gathering Zell as well) is how he tells the story and thinks just a little bit differently. The nuances and details are often important, and the little things Zell points out as lessons I found the most meaningful. Surprising, for a captain of industry, Zell preaches being nice to everyone; and he explains why you don't have to be a jerk and get in people's faces to be successful. That doesn't mean shirking from the truth and being direct, as the book's title says, but getting the right balance as Zell outlines has clearly worked for him. Having read dozens of books by entrepreneurs and business people over thirty years, I found this to be one of the best. The advice is there for the taking, the question is do most of us have the fortitude to stick with something you believe in when everyone is telling you that you are wrong? 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Fantastic book authored by a terrific investor By Kirk Taylor In this text Sam Zell provides us not only his memoir but also his investment successes (and one major failure in newspaper publishing). The latter part of the book details his philosophies on business, investments, people and life. I have always enjoyed watching Mr. Zell's CNBC appearances and I was so pleased to learn he recently published this book. I was not disappointed. If anything the stories and lessons gleaned from the book made me have more admiration for him, the Maverick Investor. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A very interesting look into the whys, and, ... By Customer A very interesting look into the whys, and, the wherefores, of the rise and guiding principals of a 'quiet titan of the American economic system. Mr. Zell is direct in his presentation, but not in an offensive manner. He tells the reader what he did in different situations or opportunities as he refers to them, and why he made the decisions he did; not all to his benefit. The reader is presented with man who is pragmatic in his approach, and, involvement in, the American economy. This work is a worthwhile read.

The traits that make Sam Zell one of the world's most successful entrepreneurs also make him one of the most surprising, enigmatic, and entertaining mavericks in American business. Self-made billionaire Sam Zell consistently sees what others don't. From finding a market for overpriced Playboy magazines among his junior high classmates, to buying real estate on the cheap after a market crash, to investing in often unglamorous industries with long-term value, Zell acts boldly on supply and demand trends to grab the first-mover advantage. And he can find opportunity virtually anywhere—from an arcane piece of legislation to a desert meeting in Abu Dhabi. "If everyone is going left, look right," Zell often says. To him, conventional wisdom is nothing but a reference point. Year after year, deal after deal, he shuts out the noise of the crowd, gathers as much information as possible, then trusts his own instincts. He credits much of his independent thinking to his parents, who were Jewish refugees from World War II. Talk to any two people and you might get wild swings in their descriptions of Zell. A media firestorm ensued when the Tribune Company went into bankruptcy a year after he agreed to steward the enterprise. At the same time, his razor-sharp instincts are legendary on Wall Street, and he has sponsored over a dozen IPOs. He's known as the Grave Dancer for his strategy of targeting troubled assets, yet he's created thousands of jobs. Within his own organization, he has an inordinate number of employees at every level who are fiercely loyal and have worked for him for decades. Zell's got a big personality; he is often contrarian, blunt, and irreverent, and always curious and hardworking. This is the guy who started wearing jeans to work in the 1960s, when offices were a sea of gray suits. He's the guy who told The Wall Street Journal in 1985, "If it ain't fun, we don't do it." He rides motorcycles with his friends, the Zell's Angels, around the world and he keeps ducks on the deck outside his office. As he writes: "I simply don't buy into many of the made-up rules of social convention. The bottom line is: If you're really good at what you do, you have the freedom to be who you really are." Am I Being Too Subtle?—a reference to Zell's favorite way to underscore a point—takes readers on a ride across his business terrain, sharing with honesty and humor stories of the times he got it right, when he didn't, and most important, what he learned in the process. This is an indispensable guide for the next generation of disrupters, entrepreneurs, and investors.

"The notoriously blunt businessman shares the ups and downs of his career and the lessons he's learned in business—with just a little profanity—in a new book, Am I Being Too Subtle?" —The Wall Street Journal "Here we have the real Sam Zell: one of our nation's most interesting, provocative, and successful practitioners of business and life. He's a wise man who hates fuzzy thinking. He is a biker, wearer of

leathers and jeans and boots and his signature quirky beard. He points his skis straight downhill. You know, all the usual things that the few really smart (but not too smart for their own good) business people do." --Steve Roth, chairman and CEO of Vornado Realty Trust

"A highly readable and revealingly personal book filled with unique insights and unvarnished straight talk about business, people--their quirks and potentials--and about life itself." --The Huffington Post

About the Author Sam Zell is the chairman of Equity Group Investments, the private investment firm he founded in 1968, and the chairman of five NYSE companies. He is an entrepreneur and investor who is active in a diverse range of industries, such as energy, manufacturing, logistics, healthcare, and communications, and of course real estate. He lives in Chicago with his wife, Helen.