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Final Book Review: Elevate and Dominate: 21 Ways to Win On and Off the Field

*Deion Sanders’ Elevate and Dominate: 21 Ways to Win On and Off the Field* is a book about perseverance, discipline, and faith. In this book, Sanders shares his life story, highlighting the hardships he faced and how he stayed motivated despite adversity. Sanders is widely regarded as one of the greatest cornerbacks in football history. He played professional football and baseball simultaneously and was inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 2011. He won two Super Bowls and even played in the 1992 World Series with the Atlanta Braves. Today, Sanders is the head football coach at the University of Colorado Boulder, where he coaches his two sons, Shilo and Shedeur Sanders. Before joining Colorado, he was the head coach at Jackson State University (JSU) for three years. Under his leadership, JSU made it to two bowl games but lost both times.

One of the most surprising aspects of this book was learning about the hardships Sanders endured. Despite his struggles, he never let adversity stop him from chasing his goals. The book revealed a different side of Sanders, shaped by strong faith, confidence, and determination. His message to readers is clear: have a purpose and stay driven. Without a sense of direction, people can feel lost and left behind.

The main themes of this book are confidence, resilience, and preparation. Sanders developed a champion’s mindset through trials and tribulations. His life was far from easy, but he used his struggles as motivation to pursue his dream of playing professional football and retiring his mother, Connie Knight. Walking with a champion’s mindset means believing in yourself, but some people misinterpret Sanders’ confidence as arrogance. Another key theme is work ethic. Sanders' mother was a hardworking woman who held multiple jobs to support him and his sister. He inherited her determination and relentless drive. She often missed his childhood football games because she had to work, but her sacrifices inspired him to push harder.

Faith and leadership also play a significant role in this book. Sanders openly discusses how his relationship with God helped him through his darkest times. At one point, he nearly took his own life, but his faith gave him the strength to keep going. This deep-rooted belief system not only shaped his confidence but also made him a leader who inspires others. Today, Sanders serves as a role model for both young athletes and adults, motivating them to stay focused, work hard, and never give up.

This book aligns with my personal views and aspirations. I am inspired by Sanders and strive to become the best cornerback in the NFL one day. His story motivates me to push through adversity, especially during tough times when it feels like I’m stuck in a deep hole with no way out. One of my favorite quotes from the book is, “You gotta believe in YOU before anyone else does” (Sanders, 2023). I relate to this because, during my football career, I lost confidence, and when I did, I noticed that others stopped believing in me too. Confidence plays a crucial role in success, and this quote reminds me to never let other people’s opinions shake my self-belief.

Another powerful lesson from the book is that success is not accidental. Sanders states, “Success isn’t an accident; it’s a result of being ready before the moment comes” (Sanders, 2023). This reinforces my belief in preparation and patience. I also see similarities between Sanders’ mother and my older sister, who took guardianship of me and my siblings while raising three kids of her own. Her determination and work ethic are qualities I admire, and my ultimate goal is to retire her one day, just as Sanders did for his mother. The principles in this book extend beyond athletics; they apply to school, work, and everyday life. I’m teaching my younger brothers the same mindset because I know it will take them far in both sports and life.

In conclusion, Elevate and Dominate is a well-written and inspiring book. Sanders’ storytelling and authenticity make his message compelling, and in today’s world, it’s rare to find someone so genuine and willing to uplift others. I would recommend this book to anyone looking to build confidence, improve leadership skills, or gain a structured approach to personal growth. These principles are not just for athletes—they apply to the classroom, the workplace, and all aspects of life. My older sister recommended this book to me, and I’m grateful that I read it. I’ve learned valuable lessons that I will carry forward, and I plan to read more of Sanders’ books to continue applying his principles to my life and those around me.

**References**

Sanders, D. (2024). *Elevate and dominate: 21 ways to win on and off the field*. MACMILLAN REFERENCE USA.