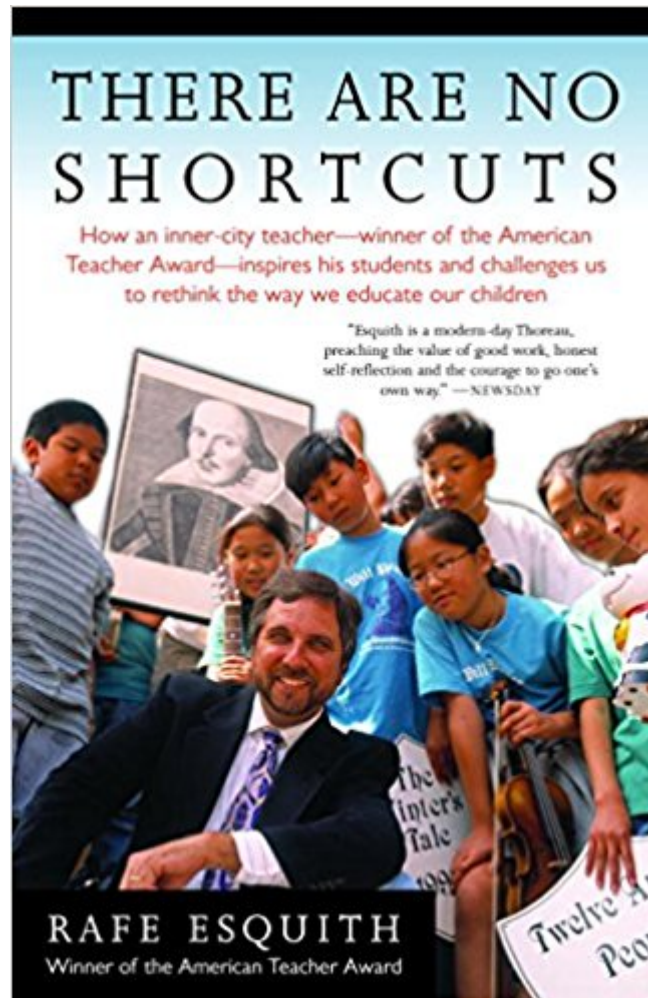




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# There Are No Shortcuts



## Synopsis

Year after year, Rafe Esquith's fifth-grade students excel. They read passionately, far above their grade level; tackle algebra; and stage Shakespeare so professionally that they often wow the great Shakespearean actor himself, Sir Ian McKellen. Yet Esquith teaches at an L.A. innercity school known as the Jungle, where few of his students speak English at home, and many are from poor or troubled families. What's his winning recipe? A diet of intensive learning mixed with a lot of kindness and fun. His kids attend class from 6:30 A.M. until well after 4:00 P.M., right through most of their vacations. They take field trips to Europe and Yosemite. They play rock and roll. Mediocrity has no place in their classroom. And the results follow them for life, as they go on to colleges such as Harvard, Princeton, and Stanford. Possessed by a fierce idealism, Esquith works even harder than his students. As an outspoken maverick of public education (his heroes include Huck Finn and Atticus Finch), he admits to significant mistakes and heated fights with administrators and colleagues. We all teachers, parents, citizens have much to learn from his candor and uncompromising vision.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

What's a Los Angeles middle-school teacher to do when charged with a bunch of fifth and sixth graders, none of whom speak English at home and most of whom are eligible for free lunches? If you're Esquith, you have them read Twain, perform Shakespeare, play classical guitar and study algebra. You take them camping and to concerts and the theater. How do you manage to do that? If

you're Esquith, your school day doesn't run from the usual 8 to 3, but from 6:30 to 5, and you're available on Saturdays and during recess, lunch and vacation time as well. You take on extra jobs and go into debt to pay for the supplements. "I have never claimed to be rational," says Esquith in this intimate, lively account of his 17-year career at an L.A. public school. Part memoir, part manual, but primarily a call for action, Esquith's book is explicitly directed to parents and "concerned citizens" as well as teachers. Esquith has known "anguish and disheartening failure," but hasn't given up. For him, education's "bad guys" often occupy the district, union or school offices and frequently the classrooms. Despite his struggles, Esquith's account is upbeat, witty and usually good-humored. There's rewarding professional success-college for his former students and honors bestowed on him-and refreshing personal achievement: his own development and transformation as he moves from saving the world to setting limits on himself, even though, of course, "there are no shortcuts."Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc.

The 1992 National Outstanding Teacher of the Year, Esquith explains how his inner-city students manage to score in the top ten percent on standardized tests. Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc.

If every teacher would aspire to be like the author of this book, Rafe Esquith, AND every parent read this book, we'd have no education problem in this country. Maybe that's an oversimplification but the message of the book is on point. Mr Esquith not only points out the issues that are facing many of the children in this country, but also shows how a dedicated teacher or group of educators can overcome those obstacles. The book is not a philosophical argument on what we need in education. Rather, it gives real-life stories and details to illustrate its message, which is invariably easier to read and digest. For everyone who thinks they know what is good for this country, they need to read this book.

A must read for every educator and parent. One of my daughters purchased this book, for a college course. It looked interesting, so I read it. One statement:If educators applied even a fraction of the author's teaching methods and ideology, our education system would be phenomenal!

Rafe Esquith puts his heart and soul into teaching and helps disadvantaged students to understand that they have to work hard in order to have the same opportunities as those more fortunate than them. In other words, there are no free lunches. The way Rafe goes about this is amazing and we

can only wonder at his total commitment to the students. America is lucky to have such a teacher in its school system, not only emancipating his students, but writing about his experiences. This book is a source of great inspiration to us all, all the more so because Rafe tells us about his problems as well as his successes. These are problems with his teaching as well as with administrators, so the reader gets to see him as more human and approachable. This is important, since his effort and achievements seem superhuman at times and the reader can easily feel overwhelmed. The book is very readable and enjoyable. It is an eye-opener and a must-read. Teaching really is a calling.

I am rookie teacher and first year was the hardest one. Thanks to this book I saw the perspective in my work and I gained optimism to work and become a good teacher. Rafe Esquith describes his experience as a teacher, his ups and downs. I like all his books! I read them over and over again and find there wisdom and power to overcome difficulties in my work. Thank you!

If you as a teacher ever wonder if you are doing enough, Rafe will inevitably make you feel like you are not but will give you the opportunity to renew the fire that got you into teaching in the first place. Reading this makes me realize how much more I can be doing, not for the pay or recognition, but for my students. Read it. You'll be glad you did!!

I read this for enjoyment and then I've given copies of this book to teacher education students as presents. It is definitely a good read for any educator's library...

As a mother of young children, I found this book to be extremely helpful in terms of understanding the condition of education today, and where I might best extend my efforts at supplementing at home. I think it is a bit of a stretch to expect the average teacher to employ all of his tactics, as they would have little time left for their own families, but certainly there are many good ideas to work with. I completely agree that the reading programs we find in public schools today are grossly inadequate, and that they take much of the joy out of reading. Unfortunately, for most teachers, if they want to keep their jobs they must follow the scripted lessons. I am not certain what the best answer would be for their situation, but I am happy to work at home to provide the books and instruction necessary to instill a love of reading and literature in my children.

The innovator of real education that is successful. Stop all professional training that for the most part never work and just add to the pocketbooks of the trainers, and start using Rafe's approach and you

will see the education of our children explode to height that we thought was impossible.

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