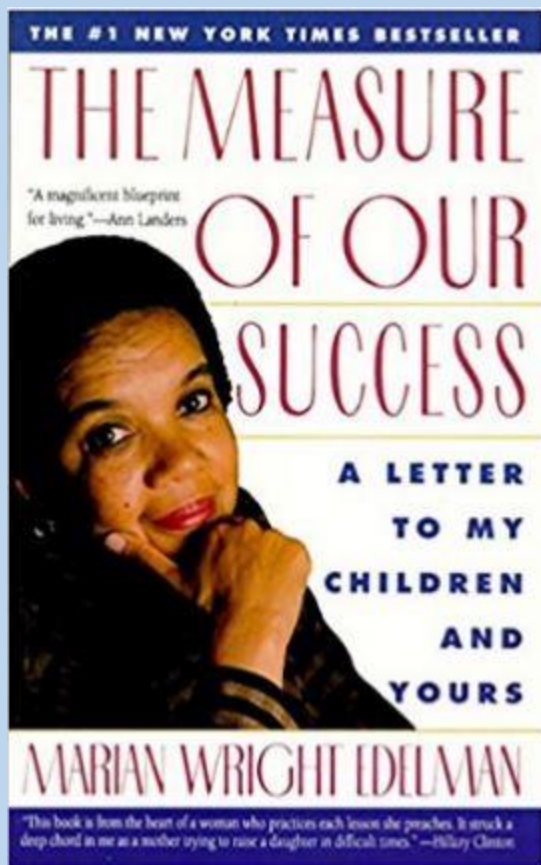


Marian Wright Edelman, the first Black woman admitted to the Mississippi bar, believes that every adult is responsible —



especially parents, educators, and religious leaders — to ensure that children “hear what we have learned from the lessons of life and . . . hear over and over that we love them and that they are not alone.” In *THE MEASURE OF OUR SUCCESS*, Edelman offers the fruits of her own learning. Character, self-discipline, determination, attitude, and service are the substance of life, she says, and race and gender are only “shadows.” She especially emphasizes service, calling it “the rent we pay for living.”

Edelman speaks personally in this volume, describing her upbringing in segregated South Carolina where the adults in the churches and community made children feel valued and important. She cites elders like Miz Lucy McQueen and Miz Tee Kelly with the same sense of respect as when she quotes from Albert Einstein or Vaclav Havel. Written originally as a letter to her three sons, this “spiritual and family dowry” will nudge its readers — irrespective of nationality, ethnic group, or gender — to sit up a little straighter and thus see more of their world. The book’s heart is Edelman’s “Twenty-five Lessons for Life.” These include Rule #4: Never work just for money or for power. They won’t save your soul or help you sleep at night; Rule #6: Take parenting and family life seriously and

insist that those you work for and who represent you do; and Rule #22: You are in charge of your own attitude.

Edelman's personal insights are informed by her professional expertise. Winner of numerous major honors, including a MacArthur fellowship and the Albert Schweitzer Humanitarian Award, she weaves her own memories with facts and figures about the state of America's children today. Advocating prevention, not just the mopping up of problems, this book is a reminder of the dignity of the human being. In order to succeed as a nation at the end of the twentieth century, Edelman concludes, "America cannot afford to waste a single child."