

# Start Something That Matters Summary

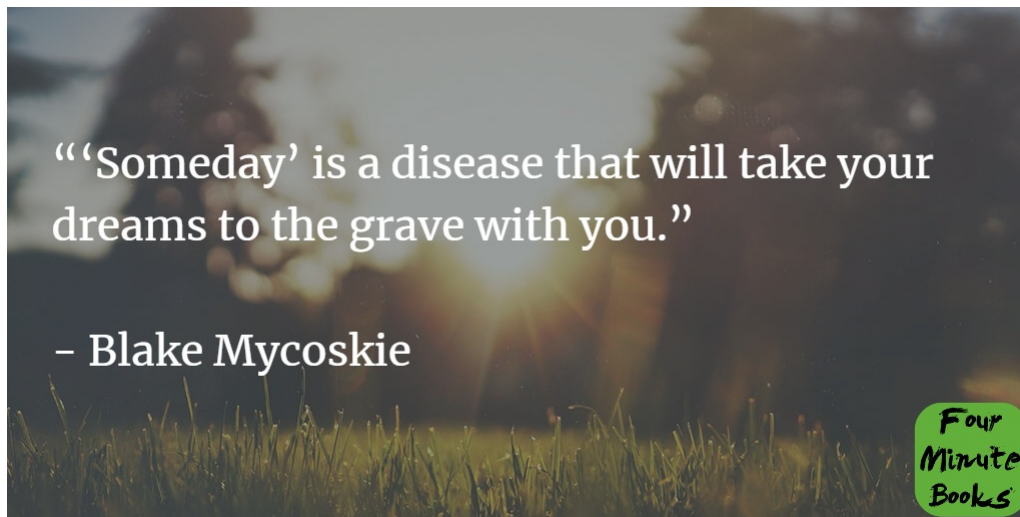
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**1-Sentence-Summary:** *Start Something That Matters* encourages you to overcome the fear of the unknown and create a business that not only makes money but also helps people, even if you have few resources to start with.

**Read in:** 4 minutes

**Favorite quote from the author:**



Blake Mycoskie is the founder of TOMS, the famous shoe company that gives a pair to a child in need for every one sold – “one for one.”

During a vacation in Argentina, he started to wear alpargata, espadrilles very popular in the country. Then, traveling from village to village, he discovered that many kids were so poor that they had to go barefoot, thus being exposed to a wide range of diseases.

He wanted to help but wondered how he could.

First, he thought about starting a shoe-based charity. But then he decided to do what he was most experienced at – using creativity in business – having already launched various companies in his life.

It may seem counterintuitive to most of us, yet he reckoned a for-profit business would assure a more constant flow of shoes to the children in need than a charity, which would always depend on the income of people’s donations.

In *Start Something That Matters*, Blake Mycoskie shows any of us can create a company that helps to make the world a better place.

These are 3 suggestions you may need to start your own project:

1. Fears are natural but they mustn't go unchecked. Identify them to move on and do what you want to do.
2. Keep your business simple and low budget by being resourceful with limited resources.
3. Create a good product with a good story. Giving is good business!

Ready to learn more about launching a social business? Let's see how you can win anxiety and start your own project efficiently and with little money!

## Lesson 1: Face the fears that prevent you from experimenting with involvement in big projects.

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Many people would like to start their own business but most of them give up without even trying because it seems too risky.

**Fear can prevent us from doing what we love in any area of life. Yet there are tricks to beat it and keep going.**

Often, we get anxious when we encounter a situation for the first time and we don't know how to handle it. Planning to create his new company, Blake Mycoskie was terrified: he knew very little about shoes and didn't have many resources to invest.

How did he overcome his fears? He wrote them down. On one side the things he was scared of, on the other what could happen if they came true. And they turned out to be not so scary.

The worst thing that could happen to him was not to sell any pair of shoes thus losing all his savings. But this possibility didn't feel like a disaster because he knew in the meantime he would have achieved a lot of new skills and relationships.

You can defeat fear only by facing it. Analyze the risks you're going to take and you're likely to discover it's not worth being so frightened.

As Franklin D. Roosevelt said:

| *"The only thing we have to fear is fear itself."*

## Lesson 2: Do one thing the best you can and be creative and flexible to accomplish much with little money.

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**When you start a business, simplicity is crucial and should be applied to every aspect of your work.**

First, choose the one thing you want to do and do it the best you can. This will allow you to work efficiently and save money, but it might also help you to find investors. In fact, they are more likely to understand and appreciate a simple business model than a complicated one.

Then simplify your work by concentrating on things that matter and almost ignoring the rest. You can't prevent small bad things to happen, but you can stay focused on the next step of your project.

For example, the author preferred to pay a little fee for returning a DVD late than missing an important meeting. Since being perfect is not humanly possible, it's all about priorities.

Simplicity is also avoiding all unnecessary costs. When starting your own company, keep it low budget. Use free tools and do all you can by yourself. Be creative. The author even recycled other people's business cards!

What about the office?

In the beginning, the TOMS team worked from Mycoskie's living room in Venice. Moreover, his landlady didn't know and unfortunately, she used to show up unannounced once in a while. So the team had to clean up the apartment super quickly and hide in the bedroom every time someone heard the noise of her car.

The fewer resources you have, the more resourceful you need to be!

## Lesson 3: Marketing a product means telling a story that will turn your customers into fans.

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When the company still had a few retailers, celebrities like Scarlett Johnson began wearing TOMS, helping them spread. Once, the author ran into an unknown woman wearing a pair of them who told him enthusiastically about the whole project.

When giving is part of your business model, your customers may become your best supporters. They will market the product themselves by telling the story behind it.

**People like products with stories that involve them emotionally. Thus companies with giving in their business models are more likely to succeed.**

They are also well regarded as partners by big companies, which want to attach their names to something deeper than buying and selling. In fact, TOMS has collaborated with huge ones like Microsoft, Facebook, and Youtube.

The first retailer of Blake's espadrilles was American Rag. The shoe buyer liked the product and the story and she knew she can sell both.

Not much later Booth Moore, the fashion writer for the Los Angeles Times, wrote an article on TOMS and its mission. Suddenly thousands of orders began to come in and Blake had to recruit interns to help him keep up with the work.

As the author says:

“Giving is good business – it's good because it helps people, it's good because it makes money.”

## Start Something That Matters Review

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Start Something That Matters proposes social business as an alternative to charity – sometimes even more efficient – for fighting the world's problems. Also, most of the author's suggestions can be read as universal principles and can enhance your results – and well being – in any area of life.

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## Who would I recommend the Start Something That Matters summary to?

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The 25-year-old who has never considered starting a business on his own, the 35-year-old employee tired of his job but afraid of changing, and anyone who has a dream but doesn't even try to realize it.