

Elon Musk Summary

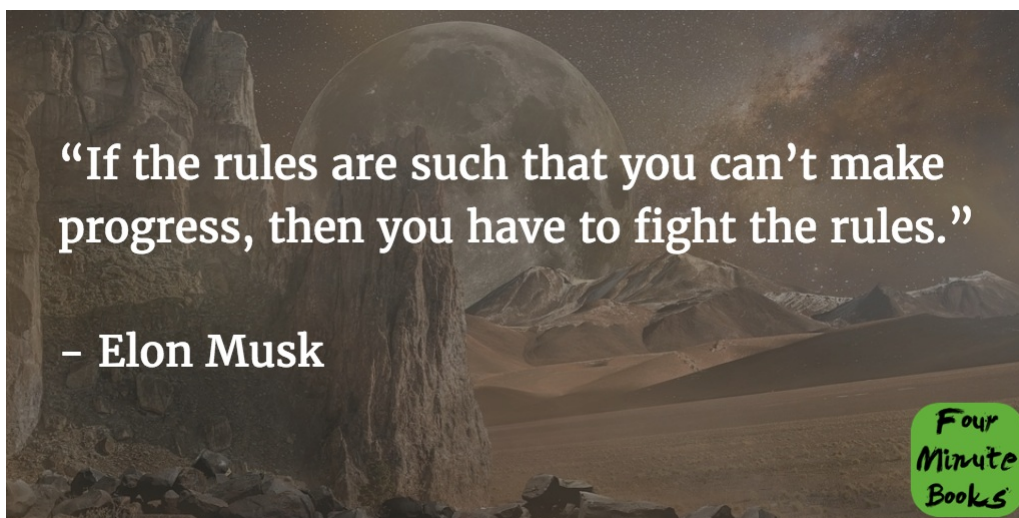


fourminutebooks.com/elon-musk-summary/

1-Sentence-Summary: *Elon Musk is the first official biography of the creator of SolarCity, SpaceX and Tesla, based on over 30 hours of conversation time between author Ashlee Vance and Musk himself, highlighting his complicated childhood, the way he makes decisions and navigates the world, and how he managed to disrupt multiple industries, all with the goal of saving humanity.*

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:



Elon Musk is a truly fascinating character. I remember first learning about him when reading a bit about PayPal's history (which turned both him and Peter Thiel into millionaires when sold to Ebay for 1.5 billion) and then following his initial work at Tesla during the development of the roadster. It took me a long time to figure out what he's really about, and it's quite a mouthful.

When thinking about how he should live his life, he concluded early on that the best goal he could pursue was to ensure the future of humanity – something we all know is surely not guaranteed, looking at some of our behavior over the last 100 years.

How he then decided to tackle this goal is the biggest lesson in reverse engineering I've ever seen, and I've tried to think in a more Musk-like way ever since.

Here are 3 lessons from Elon Musk's life you can use to improve yours:

1. Answering questions is easy, asking the right questions is what's hard.
2. Use a success-through-determination approach to accomplish your goals.
3. Unify all of your work under the roof of one giant goal to have a bigger impact on the world.

I hope your brain software is switched to learning, because it's about to get an upgrade!

Lesson 1: Spend most of your time figuring out what questions to ask, rather than just answering them.

Elon Musk didn't have a particularly easy childhood. His relationship with his parents wasn't easy to begin with and when they separated, this didn't get any better. Musk decided to live with his dad, but to add pain to injury, he was also bullied in school.

Both of these circumstances led Musk to retreat and turn inward, spending most of his time reading and studying. At one point, Musk read 60 books a month. Thanks to his photographic memory, he managed to remember two entire encyclopedias. One of his biggest inflection points was reading The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy, which would not only greatly influence his humor, but also his way of approaching problems.

This book showed him that **answering questions is easy – the hard part is asking the right questions**.

Most of the time when we're stuck, we're simply answering and executing answers to the wrong questions, a problem we wouldn't have if we'd asked the right question in the first place.

A simple example is this: if you're trying to find out how to sustain your energy to keep working a high-stress, high-income job, instead first ask why you think you need the income or the job? What is it for? Is there a better way to live, that maybe doesn't even require increasing your energy?

This kind of thinking led Musk to ponder topics like solar power, space exploration and rockets and paperless banking even before entering high school.

Lesson 2: Accomplish your goals with a success-through-determination approach.

I like the phrase "success-through-determination" because it's ambiguous. Determination means to stick with things long enough until they work out. But it also means to determine what your next step should be and spend a good deal of time thinking about what you'll do.

An example of how Elon did this is how he won over his first wife, Justine Wilson. Her interest in him was zero when she met him, so he had to hustle to get her attention. She stood him up on their first date at an ice cream parlor. Not a big whiner, he determined that if she wouldn't come to eat ice cream with him, but still liked ice cream, he'd just bring it to her instead. He asked a friend of hers what Justine's favorite flavor was and where she studied, and then showed up with two chocolate cheap ice cream cones.

This approach comes back to asking the right questions. Elon answered these: "Does she like me enough to show up to eat ice cream with me? – No. Does she like ice cream in general? Most likely. Will she like me more if I bring her ice cream? Probably."

It was worth the shot. The two had 6 children together. **If what you're trying to do is important to you, stick with it and take a scientist's approach in how you determine the next step.**

Lesson 3: If you can unite all of your work and projects under the roof of one giant goal, you'll leave a lasting impact on the world.

Having a lot of goals in various fields of life is important. It's the spice of life and it makes living fun. But if you think of the variety of your goals in levels of a pyramid, you can see how they influence your focus.

Imagine you're living at the bottom of a pyramid, where everything is wide. You'll spend some of your time chasing a career in sales, working on a book on the side, and maybe become a real estate investor a few years later. Now go to the top of the pyramid, where everything is narrow: there's only space for one goal!

If you can unite all the goals on the lower levels to somehow serve that one mega goal at the top, your life as a whole will become a lot more focused.

For example, if your book catches the attention of a manager at Walmart, you might be able to become the person in charge of selling a large real estate complex of theirs back to the government to transform it into an urban gardening space. This way you'd unite all of your sub-goals into the larger goal of changing the urban real estate industry for a better future.

In Elon Musk's case, Tesla produces batteries, which SolarCity can sell, and SolarCity makes solar panels for Tesla charging stations. All of his companies work together to serve his grand mission: saving the future of humanity.

My personal take-aways

Totally ran out of space here (pun intended). Elon Musk is one of the most interesting characters of our time, so go learn something from him! I think besides the book, this is the best place to start.

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What else can you learn from the blinks?

- What Elon Musk's crazy work schedule looks like
- How he first became an entrepreneur
- Why you can never rely on his time estimates
- How Elon was kicked out of his own company – twice
- Which original idea is behind Tesla
- What Musks' next, crazy idea is, that could get you from LA to SF in 30 minutes

Who would I recommend the Elon Musk summary to?

The 12 year old who struggles with being bullied in school, the 29 year old, who feels like she's drifting around in life, and anyone who's busier answering questions than answering them.