

Educated Summary

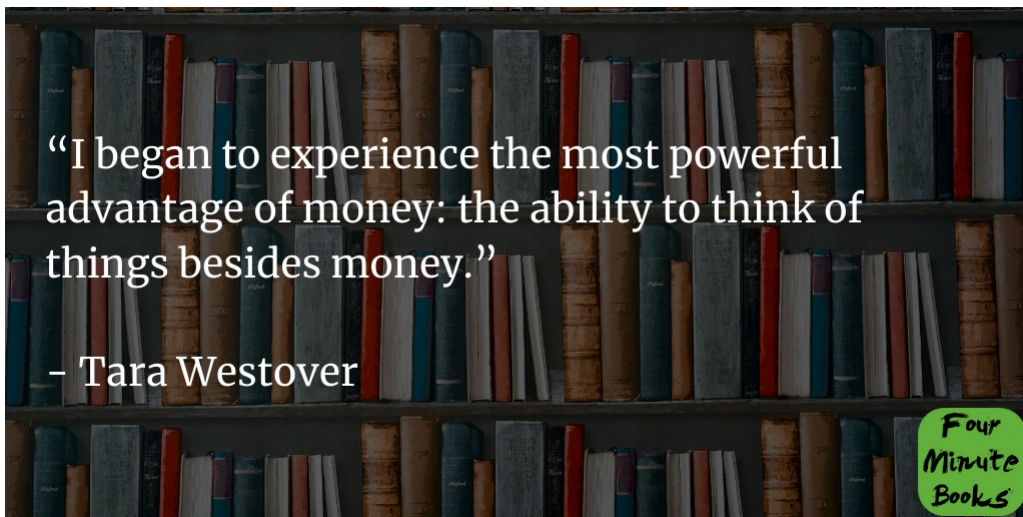


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1-Sentence-Summary: *Educated* will help you become more grateful for your schooling, freedom, and normal relationships by explaining the family difficulties that Tara Westover had to break free of so that she could get her own education.

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:



Most kids in America go to preschool, elementary school, high school, and then college. But for Tara Westover, things looked drastically different.

She was born into a survivalist family in the mountains of Idaho. Her father was a religious fanatic who had extreme ideas about avoiding the healthcare system and mainstream education. He also was a doomsday prepper. Because of this, the Westover's kept Tara and her siblings at home to help around the farm and stockpile for the impending apocalypse instead of going to school.

Tara eventually went to college and even earned a doctorate from Cambridge University. In *Educated: A Memoir*, she recounts her long, arduous, and inspiring journey to get an education against all odds.

Here are the 3 most interesting lessons I've learned from this book:

1. Tara Westover grew up as part of a survivalist family in Idaho and had little to no education.
2. Little by little, she was able to overcome her childhood setbacks and got into college where she had amazing opportunities.

3. Eventually, she had to make the difficult decision to distance herself from her family and finish her education.

Are you ready for an interesting story that will inspire you to be more grateful for what you have? Let's go!

Lesson 1: Tara grew up on a farm in a fundamentalist family and she had little homeschooling or real-world experience.

Tara was born at home to an off-the-grid family in the mountains of Idaho. Her mother raised the children and practiced herbal medicine, and her father ran the farm and was the religious head of the household. Her father's ideas were extremist and often dangerous.

He believed public schools just brainwashed children and as such she and her siblings were "homeschooled." **It was a stretch to call it that because while her mother did teach her bits of history and math here and there, most of her learning came from reading books to try to figure things out herself.**

That wasn't the only part of her family life that was strange, though. Her father was extreme in many of his beliefs. Because he didn't believe in hospitals or modern medicine, Tara had never been to the doctor and was born at home. Members of the family suffered everything from concussions and even burns from explosions and only herbal medicine for treatment.

She had close relationships with some of her siblings, though one of her brothers, Shawn, would sometimes attack her verbally and physically and her parents didn't intervene. Another older brother, Tyler, took the time to study and was able to get into college. It was her brother's example that planted the seeds for Tara to buckle down and study on her own.

Lesson 2: As she entered the real world, she finally left behind her abusive family and had wonderful educational opportunities.

As she got older, Tara set her sights on college despite her father's strong expectations that she get married. She worked relentlessly to teach herself grammar and math to get a good enough ACT score to get into Brigham Young University. When she was accepted, her father tried to stop her, but Tara's mind was made up.

College was a shock for her. Unlike rural Idaho, Provo was a fairly big city, and she was amazed to see her roommates doing things like showing their shoulders or shopping on Sunday.

It was here she went to the doctor for the first time in her life and was surprised it wasn't a horrible place like she had been taught. **These experiences made her realize how big the gap between her former reality and the rest of the world truly was.**

But the other big surprise for Tara was how difficult college was. She struggled and even remembers how her professor stared in disbelief as she asked what the Holocaust was. But she didn't give up. Tara kept studying hard, began to get good grades, and even started to impress her professors.

This hard work paid off, as she was offered a research opportunity at Cambridge University. There, she impressed the professor she was studying under so much that he even guaranteed her a spot in the doctoral program there.

Lesson 3: She was forced to make the difficult decision to cut off her relationship with her parents in order to finish her education.

Tara flourished at Cambridge.

She enjoyed learning, particularly about feminism and many of the radical beliefs she had grown up with. Tara had been brought up to believe women should be submissive and she was always uneasy about womanhood. But she made friends and started to relax because she finally felt a sense of belonging.

At home, however, things were deteriorating. Her sister wrote her telling Tara that their brother Shawn violently attacked her, and his threats were growing worse. But their parents did nothing.

When Tara won a visiting fellowship at Harvard, her parents took this opportunity to make an aggressive last attempt to control her. They came to stay with her at her dorm and her father gave her a choice: come home or be seen as a threat to the family.

Her dad said it was Satan that was controlling Tara and he needed to cast him out with a blessing. If she accepted the blessing she would be cleansed of her worldliness. **If she accepted, she knew it would show she accepted his twisted sense of reality, and she couldn't do it anymore.** So she refused.

The decision took so much out of her that she had a mental breakdown and almost didn't finish her thesis. But she found her strength and focus and finished. Dr. Westover hasn't spoken to her parents in years. But she finally feels she has found herself and remains close to some of her family.

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Educated Review

I wasn't sure how to go about this one because *Educated* really hits close to home for me. I went to the same university that Tara did, and am a member of the same church that she was. Although her family situation and story is not at all typical of people of my faith or in the area I grew up in, it's important that people know about it. These lessons can help anybody with any background see how to have a better life even when things may have been hard from the beginning. It's no wonder this eye-opening memoir was on the New York Times bestseller list for so long.

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Who would I recommend the Educated summary to?

The 37-year-old who enjoys reading inspiring biographies, the 19-year-old who doesn't know whether or not they want to go to college, and anyone that doesn't understand how great the ability to get an education is.