

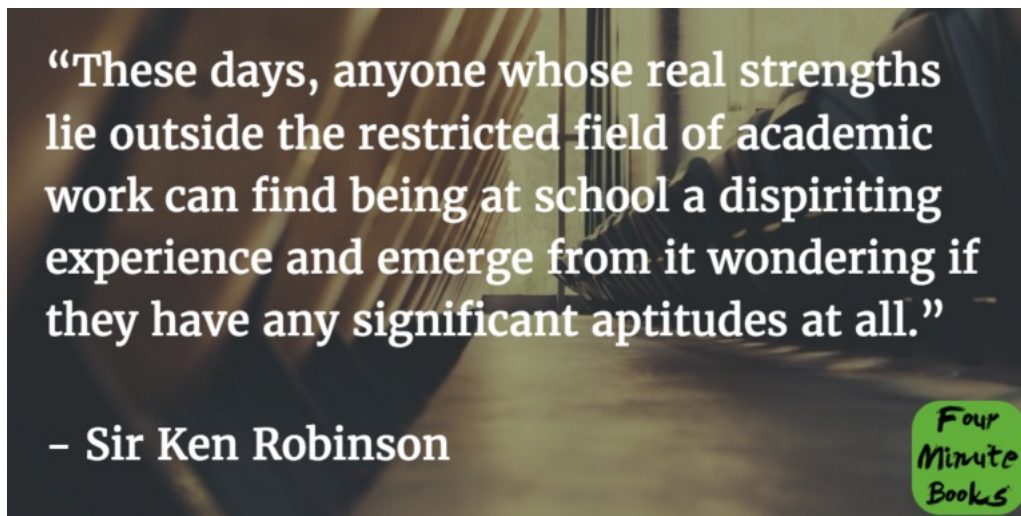
Finding Your Element Summary

 fourminutebooks.com/finding-your-element-summary

1-Sentence-Summary: *Finding Your Element* shows you how to find your talents and passions, embrace them, and come up with your own definition of happiness, so you can combine what you love with what you're good at to live a long, happy life.

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:



Sir Ken Robinson, the author of *Finding Your Element*, likes to talk about three things: creativity, uncertainty and the immense capabilities of children. Taken together, they make up much of what he stands for – that we're living through a revolution in education, and that it's time to change it.

He's the presenter of the most famous TED talk of all time and one of few strong critics of our school system, saying in its current form, it's meant to make us obedient, not educated. In this book, which acts as a sort of follow-up workbook to go with his bestseller *The Element*, Ken shows us what to do right now, since we can't change our education system from one day to the next.

It lines out how you can find out what you're good at and what you like, and how to combine these two things into something that makes you happy, regardless of what society tells you or what you've been trained to do in school and college.

These are my favorite 3 things to take away:

1. Take a second to appreciate your own, absolutely unique life.
2. Everything is unknown, so it makes no sense to be afraid of it.
3. Find your hidden talents by looking at what your teachers told you you were bad at.

Let's take a few minutes to forget the rest of the world and just think about ourselves and what we really want, okay?

Lesson 1: Stop for a second to appreciate your own, unique experience called life.

Has someone ever told you "you really are one-of-a-kind?" To express they think you're special? It's a really nice thing to happen, isn't it? But have you ever stopped to consider how profoundly right they were, when they paid you that compliment? Because they literally were.

I'd like you to stop for a second and really think about this. **No human person in the history of the world has had the same biology and psychology as you do.**

Throughout human evolution, genes have been combined, changed, tweaked and permuted countless billions, trillions of times even. Yet you are the first and only instance of your exact combination of genes. No one will ever have the same genetic code, ever again (even if you have an identical twin). Of course this includes your brain, which is responsible for the second, absolutely unique thing about you: your experience.

You were born at a certain place (which will never be the same it was that day) at a certain time (which will never come again) into a certain set of circumstances (which will never be the same again). Nobody can ever have the same experiences with the same people in the same moment as you. No do-overs.

Your life can and never will be recreated as you've lived it – so far and until you die. One time. Take a second to appreciate this. It really is one-of-a-kind. Just like you.

Lesson 2: Don't be afraid of the unknown, because everything is.

Logically following this uniqueness, you'd have to think that no human life plays out in the same way, which should hold true for our work too, right? How come then that millions of people end up doing the same thing and making the same career choices?

This is where one of the most basic, yet strongest human fears kicks in: the fear of the unknown. Our brains scream for certainty and reassurance, and society is happy to offer both of those to us.

"Follow the plan," it whispers "you know, the well-established path, the one where you know how it plays out." Usually that's finishing high school at 17 or 18, entering college, graduating, getting a professional job as a lawyer, doctor, teacher or manager, then settling down, getting married and starting a family.

But since we're living through the biggest shift in education and work since the Industrial Revolution, the pressure to follow this plan makes us even more uncomfortable. How can we expect humans who've *just* become adults to commit to a plan for the rest of their life in such an uncertain world? It's insane.

If you think about it, **you never have even the faintest idea of what's going to happen the next time you set foot outside your house – yet you somehow try to plan the next 40, 50, 60 years of your life.**

Ken suggests that, instead of fretting about the unknown, we should learn to see the potential upside in it. An infinite number of good things can happen, which might reveal opportunities you never could've dreamed of. Ken didn't start writing and speaking until he was well into his 40s.

Don't be afraid of the unknown. Everything is. And that's a good thing.

Lesson 3: Think about what school told you you were bad at again – are you really?

Did you ever get the feedback from your school teachers that you were bad at something? That you should stop trying? Or that something you were good at wasn't that valuable?

Institutional education is discouraging us in a lot more ways than it *encourages* us, because in school, only one kind of intelligence is valued: logical reasoning (IQ). Math and science are at the top of the subject food chain, followed by languages and humanities (like geography, history, politics, etc.), with the arts, like dance, music, poetry, at the very bottom.

But not only does school *not* drive us towards creative pursuits, it actually drives us *away* from them, because in the school system, mistakes are punished – whereas in reality, the only way to do something creative is to do something that might be a mistake.

Think back to school. First grade, third grade, fifth grade. **What did teachers make you believe you're bad at? Do you still believe that today?** Why? Was it something you liked? Ask more of these questions, and you just might find one of your hidden talents or passions.

Finding Your Element Review

If you ask me, you can't do enough critical thinking and questioning about the educational system these days. It's falling apart at the seams, with degrees becoming less and less valuable and thousands of new options of making a living emerging by the day. *Finding Your Element* is a highly important book about a highly important topic.

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What else can you learn from the blinks?

- Why you have to give yourself a chance to discover your talents in the first place
- What limits our learning abilities in school
- How your inner attitude might hold you back
- Why finding your passions makes you both physically and mentally healthy
- The two ways society sells us make us happy, and why they're wrong
- What difference a community can make in your life

Who would I recommend the Finding Your Element summary to?

The 18 year old dancer, who feels really pressured by her parents to get a business degree, the 48 year old teacher, who sees his students losing interest more and more and wonders what to do, and anyone who was told they sucked at school.