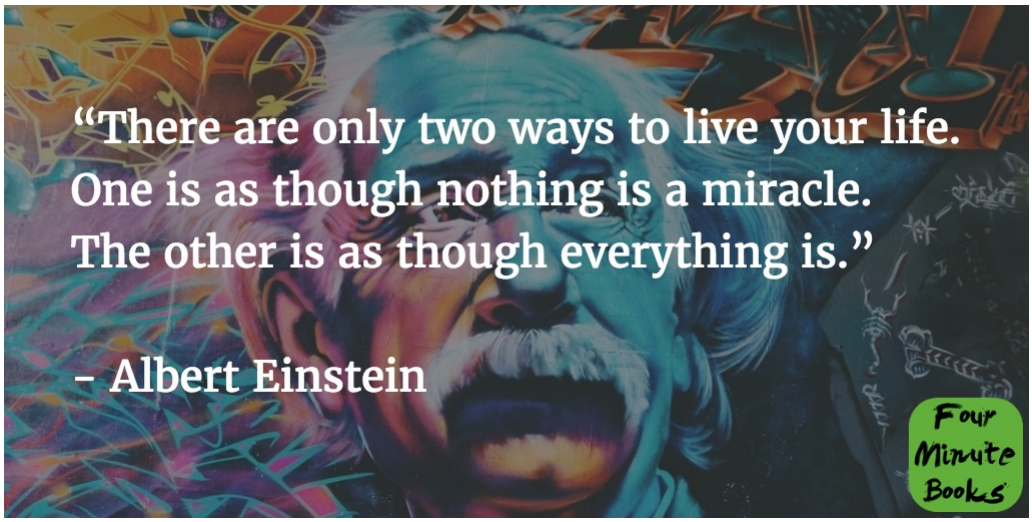
Einstein: His Life And Universe Summary

1-Sentence-Summary: *Einstein: His Life And Universe takes a close look at the life of Albert Einstein, beginning in how his childhood shaped him, what his biggest discoveries and personal struggles were and how his focus changed in later years, without his genius ever fading until his very last moment.*

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:



If you've read the biography of Steve Jobs by Walter Isaacson, you'll sure get a kick out of this one as well. He also wrote this biography of Albert Einstein, basing his research on previously uncovered material and taking a look not just at the facts of Albert Einstein's life, but also his character and personality.

Reading biographies is one of the best ways to spend your time, because you can consume an entire person's life in just a few hours. As Warren Buffett says: "People only learn from mistakes, but nobody says they have to be your own." If you look at lives like Einstein's and try to see what they did right and wrong, that's a whole lot of time you can shave off your own learning curve.

Plus, you might not even know what Einstein is actually famous for, other than quotes like "imagination is more important than knowledge." In that case, today's the day that changes.

Here are 3 lessons from *Einstein: His Life And Universe*:

1. Einstein always preserved his sense of childhood curiosity, which is a key part of his success.
2. He did not get his Nobel prize for his theory of relativity.
3. Your journey through life never stops, until you die.

Ready to peek into one of the greatest minds that ever existed? Let's do it!

Lesson 1: Never lose your sense of childhood curiosity.

Albert Einstein had an unusual childhood. A few crucial events he would remember for the rest of his life, which ended up ensuring his never-ending sense of curiosity.

When he was sick in bed at just four years old, his Dad gave him a compass, which Albert held in amazement. He felt very excited, a rush of wonder and wanting to know more about science. This memory and feeling he kept with him.

The violin lessons his Mom arranged for him were another key component, as the music was a way for his subconscious to creatively process whatever he was thinking about – he would later often play the violin while mulling over complex physics problems.

Einstein learned about scientific concepts and important people very early as well, for example when medical student Max Talmey mentored him through his weekly visits and gave him books from Immanuel Kant and Aaron Bernstein.

Because he was Jewish, he faced social exclusion in school, and was known as a prankster, both of which in turn made him willing to venture off on his own path (which was important later, when developing his theories) and not particularly fond of authority.

One of his famous quotes is the one on top of this summary:

> "There are only two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle. The other is as though everything is a miracle." – Albert Einstein

Einstein kept his childhood sense of wonder, which is what allowed him to do the latter and never stop questioning. Seems like his life turned out well, so you'd probably do good in keeping yours as well!

Lesson 2: Einstein got his Nobel prize for something called the photoelectric effect.

Do you know Einstein's most famous equation? You have seen it, I'm 100% sure! It's $e=mc^2$ and it's part of his theory of special relativity. Part of this theory is that the speed of light is constant, which makes it the only thing that's not relative, and therefore, time itself must be relative (A Brief History Of Time explains it well here).

But Albert Einstein's Nobel prize has nothing to do with his theory of relativity.**He received it for explaining something called the photoelectric effect**.

He was building on the findings of Max Planck and Phillip Lenard, and his theory came down to this: The level of energy of electrons, which were ejected when, for example, light shines on a metal plate, couldn't be explained by the intensity of the light, only by its frequency. So a stronger light just meant more emitted electrons, not higher-energy ones. Yet, based on their previous conclusions that light consisted only of waves, energy levels based on light intensity should've made perfect sense.

Einstein concluded that light therefore didn't travel just in wave-form, but also in the form of discrete particles (later called light quants – the basic elements of what would become quantum theory) and therefore both waves and particles existed alongside one another.

Bear in mind that all of this was theory when he postulated it in 1905, yet all of his predictions were confirmed as correct ten years later – for which he received the physics Nobel prize in 1921.

Lesson 3: Until the day you die, your journey through life doesn't stop, so neither should you.

Albert Einstein died in 1955 from internal bleeding when an aneurysm in his stomach burst. The 76 year old refused surgery, saying it was his time to go. In his last week he had signed a manifesto, prepared a radio speech and **by his deathbed, his family members found 12 pages full of equations**.

His curiosity and desire to make the world a better place through his research never stopped. Until the last second, he was dedicated to living life to the fullest. That's probably his biggest lesson.

As Casey Neistat illustrated this week when hitting four million subscribers on Youtube, the momentum that propels you toward death never stops from the second you're born.

So the best you can do is to never stop living the best life you can and continuing on your path, until you take your last breath and can die with no regrets.

My personal take-aways

A fascinating individual and as I said above, so much to learn, both from what Einstein did right and what he did wrong. I highly recommend you check out *Einstein: His Life And Universe*.

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What else can you learn from the blinks?

- How Einstein dealt with his lack of social skills (especially in his marriages)
- Which four papers he wrote changed the course of physics history and how
- The two postulates of Einstein's theory of relativity
- How Einstein built his later theories on previous ones
- What he thought of quantum mechanics (in spite of helping establish the field)
- Why he was never part of a politic party or movement, but spoke his mind
- What scandalous event happened during Einstein's autopsy

Who would I recommend the Einstein summary to?

The 16 year old nerd in school, who wonders why he won’t fit in, the 31 year old physics research fellow or PhD candidate, and anyone who thinks they might’ve lost a bit of their childhood curiosity.