

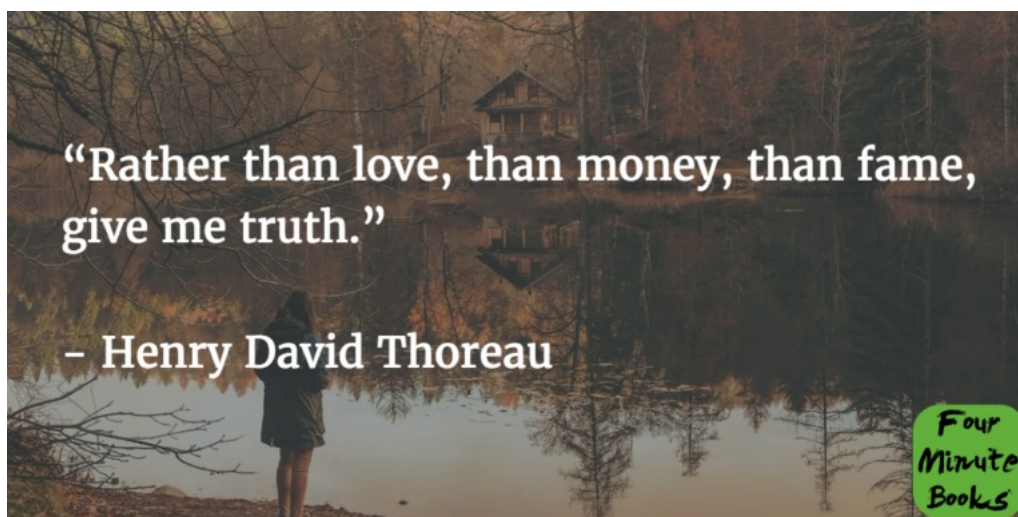
Walden Summary

 fourminutebooks.com/walden-summary

1-Sentence-Summary: *Walden details Henry David Thoreau's two-year stay in a self-built cabin by a lake in the woods, sharing what he learned about solitude, nature, work, thinking and fulfillment during his break from modern city life.*

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:



I'm really glad I found *Walden* on Blinkist. I know it's a sacrilege I haven't read this classic yet, but after seeing it was over 200 pages of dense, old English style writing, I knew I wouldn't be able to get through it entirely this busy week. Through the summary I could at least get a glimpse of it through a modern lens.

H. D. Thoreau took a two-year retreat starting in September 1845, which he spent in a little cabin he built himself by Walden Pond in Massachusetts. Ralph Waldo Emerson allowed his mentee and friend to live on the woodland he owned so Thoreau could write his first book.

Besides being really productive, the experience turned out to hold so many lessons for Thoreau that he decided to publish the full story as a separate book about nine years later. It's filled with rich details and a few lessons about a good life.

Here are the 3 I found most important to remember:

1. A life in solitude doesn't need to be lonely.
2. Even a simple life can be challenging and rewarding.
3. Fulfillment doesn't cost a thing.

If you're getting tired of the busy city life and hustling all day, this 150 year old classic holds some timeless advice. Let's take a look!

Lesson 1: If you mostly keep to yourself you won't automatically end up lonely.

Every year some weird escapist ends up on television, telling everyone how he survives off chewing bark in the woods and why that's the path to enlightenment. Even back in 1845, Thoreau faced similar reactions, even though he never took his "sabbatical" to such extremes. He simply wanted to reconnect with life in a deeper, meaningful way. His goal was to spend as much time on reading, thinking and writing as he could.

To achieve this, he focused on covering four basics of life: food, shelter, clothing and keeping his fireplace alit with wood. After building his cabin and acquiring functional clothing, he spent most of his non-recreational time garnering water, wood and food. You'd think all that must get lonely, but Thoreau never felt that way.

First, he found he could just immerse himself in nature for hours, for example by sitting outside on his char and listening to the birds and natural sounds all around him. Second, many of the animals eventually approached him and he even had mice sitting on his table having dinner beside him, keeping him company. Lastly, many friends and passers-by stopped to join him for a meal and a few hours of conversation.

Today we're more bombarded with activities than ever. **If you crave a break from that and just want to be alone for a while, or even most of the time, remember: it does not mean you'll end up lonely.**

Lesson 2: Life doesn't need to be complicated to be challenging and rewarding.

As you'd expect, winter became the most challenging time for Thoreau. He had to build a chimney for proper ventilation and keeping fires burning, insulate the walls of his cabin and break the ice of the frozen lake to gather water. **His simple tasks remained the same, but they became a lot more challenging in this season of his life.** We don't need to artificially complicate our life when it feels easy. It'll throw us obstacles soon enough.

Interestingly, this increase in difficulty only made his work more rewarding. The soaked timber from the lake burned longer and created more steam, which kept his cabin well-tempered and his home-cooked bread and meat seemed to taste sweeter. When your work has a purpose, its merits increase with every challenge.

There's no need to artificially try and construct that.

Lesson 3: True fulfillment doesn't cost a dime, because seeking truth and thinking deeply are available to all of us.

Just like winter made Thoreau's life harder, spring brought about a transformative experience of natural wonders. Sitting on his chair, he got to watch the ice melt, the lake refill, the grass turn green and the animals awake from their slumber. It was the ultimate revitalization before he returned to the city and started his next chapter.

But his biggest lesson remains in the quote I chose for this summary:

“*Rather than love, than money, than fame, give me truth.*” – H. D. Thoreau

All the thinking, writing and questioning to find the truth lead him to true fulfillment, yet none of these cost a single cent. The materialism, hustle and bustle that have taken center stage around the globe lead us nowhere if all they bring is more money into our pockets.

After all, we're all free to think deeply, practice simplicity, learn to be more honest and try to find truth wherever we can. The only thing we need for a good life, then, is time – and there's plenty of that during a retreat to nature.

Walden Review

I always imagined *Walden* to be a person. Going by ear I would've thought this book is a dark novel about the demise of a man. Instead, it turns out to be quite the opposite: the memoir of a man who found happiness. Now I can't wait to get my hands on it, even if it'll take me forever to finish. More so, I already feel relieved looking at the tree right outside my window. Ah, the simple life.

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What else can you learn from the blinks?

- How Thoreau came up with the idea for his retreat
- What his favorite book is
- Which two activities ended up being most informative and practical
- How big his cabin was and how much it cost
- Which animals he encountered and what happened
- What you can learn about accomplishing your goals from Thoreau's journey

Who would I recommend the Walden summary to?

The 16 year old camping fan, who'll learn to cultivate and treasure her hobby even more, the 29 year old busy city professional, who often crashes tired on his couch on Friday night, and anyone who wasn't forced to read this classic in school.

