

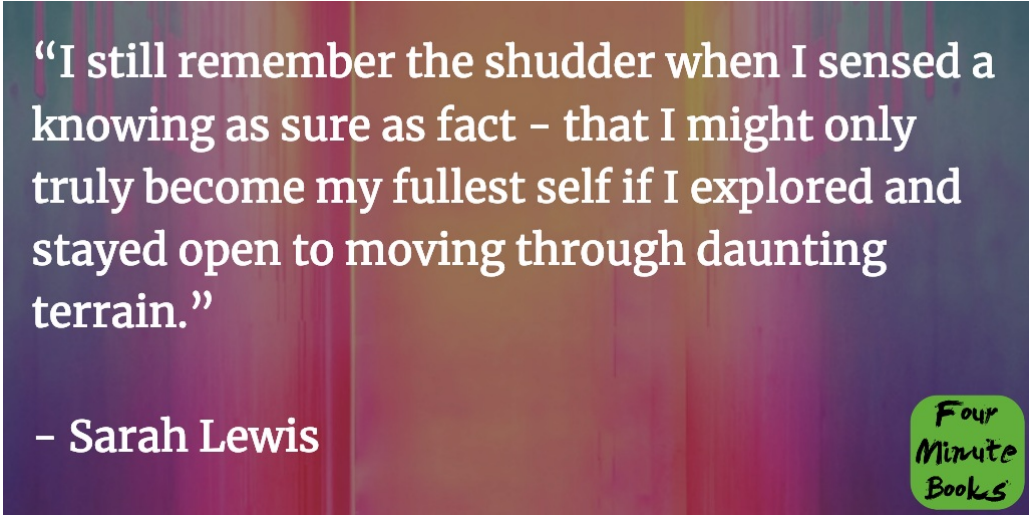
# The Rise Summary - Four Minute Books

 [fourminutebooks.com/the-rise-summary/](https://fourminutebooks.com/the-rise-summary/)

**1-Sentence-Summary:** *The Rise* explains the integral role of failure in all creative endeavors and provides examples of great thinkers who thrived because they viewed failure as a necessary part of their journey towards mastery.

**Read in:** 4 minutes

**Favorite quote from the author:**



“I still remember the shudder when I sensed a knowing as sure as fact – that I might only truly become my fullest self if I explored and stayed open to moving through daunting terrain.”

– Sarah Lewis



Entrepreneur Sara Blakely was conditioned from an early age to see failure as part of any learning process. Every night at the dinner table, Blakely's father would ask his children: “*What have you failed at today?*” This way, he taught them to see failure not as an outcome, but simply the result of one attempt.

Just before the age of 29, after selling office equipment for seven years, Sara Blakely created Spanx. The girdle-redefining line of women's hosiery propelled Blakely to becoming one of the few women billionaires who created wealth without aid from a husband or inheritance.

In *The Rise*, Sarah Lewis explains that part of Blakely's success rests on what psychologists call the Dunning-Kruger effect. Amateurs more willingly take risks because their ignorance protects them from fear of failure. In contrast, once proficient, we often see possible pitfalls and steer towards safety over innovation.

Trial and error, however, lead us to places we never imagined going. Then, once nature's most skilled teacher, adversity, comes in, the wheat separates from the chaff. For example, did you know the great orator, Martin Luther King Jr. overcame a childhood speech impediment? Or that Samuel Morse toiled as a painter before inventing the telegraph?

Of course, it takes more than *just* going against the grain. Here are 3 lessons from the book to help you embrace failure as part of the journey:

1. Innovation is non-linear, so keep pushing and learning until you break through.
2. Take literal and figurative breaks from criticism to make room to take risks.
3. Grit – thick skin in the face of defeat – will eventually lead us to mastery.

We all have the potential to create and innovate – parents, spouses, employees, athletes, entrepreneurs, and CEOs. Let's discover ideas that will help us keep going when others give up!

## Lesson 1: Innovative work rarely translates directly to output, so you must relentlessly focus on what you control.

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One person whose advice you'll definitely won't want to take while failing your way to success is Homer Simpson: "You've tried your best and failed miserably. The lesson is: never try." Endurance, consistency, and persistence are requisites for mastery. At the same time, it's important that innovators and artists not get tied up in perfectionism while pursuing a goal.

When the author spent a day with the women's archery team from Columbia University, she learned such focus requires sustained mindfulness and intensity. **The Archer's Paradox refers to the fact that although the archer cannot control the weather, she has to factor in those elements before releasing the arrow.** She must be willing to try again and again, whatever the environment dictates.

Mastery comes to those who are willing to shoot countless times while remembering all they can do is observe and give their best.

Author Lewis Hyde said:

*"Work is what we do by the hour, but labor sets its own pace. We may get paid for it, but it's harder to quantify...Writing a poem, raising a child, developing a new calculus, resolving a neurosis, invention in all forms – these are labors."*

## Lesson 2: Mental and physical space away from criticism makes room for creatives to take risks.

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*The Gap* refers to the space between what you've achieved and your potential to achieve more. **While in the Gap, it makes sense to separate yourself from your critics so that you feel safe taking risks.**

The playwright August Wilson wrote on napkins in restaurants. When a waitress asked him why he wrote on those instead of paper, he replied: "*Because it doesn't count.*" Writing on something easily discardable gave Wilson the freedom to explore and crumple the napkin without judging himself.

However, isolation must eventually come to an end. Otherwise, you'll lose touch with reality. Florentine painter Pontormo spent eleven years working on a portrait in the sixteenth century. Neither the painter nor portrait survived such solitary focus.

Criticism and pressure eventually play a crucial role in the growth of a creator and their projects. Leonard Bernstein advised, “To achieve great things, two things are needed: a plan, and not quite enough time.” In the beginning stages, however, too much heat will burn out the artist.

Whatever creative work you do, managing the Gap between your actual work and your vision of what could be is hard enough. So first make sure *you* are satisfied with your work, and then let the chips fall where they may.

## Lesson 3: Using your critics to become better requires grit, but it's worth it.

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The director of Iowa University's world-famous writing program has noted that the writers most likely to achieve success are not those with the most natural talent. It is the individual who sits down at the keyboard day in and day out. When one article, short story, or novel is complete, the pro writer begins the next project. They might glance back, but they'll always keep moving forward.

Any artistic or innovative endeavor leaves the creator open to criticism. It is impossible to please everyone, especially when you're asking people to step away from a long-held belief or way of doing things. **In this context, grit means being able to listen to criticism, assess its validity, and incorporate any relevant changes into future works.**

As a painter, Samuel Morse spent years stretching canvases, readying them for paint. He may never have become wildly successful in this field, but his experience eventually led him to transform stretcher bars into a telegraph machine. Over twenty years, he used every criticism to reframe the objects he was working with. Until he created something the world had never seen before, but that changed everything.

Grit requires a mix of internal strength and environmental factors but, at the end of the day, it's what truly encourages creators to keep going. The gritty artist, entrepreneur, or athlete is the one who'll succeed.

## The Rise Review

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The Rise will instill you with a can-do mindset without glazing over the fact that that bumps in the road are a part of the journey. Sarah Lewis curates personal, historical and current-day stories of individuals whose paths may not have been straight, but certainly inspire and encourage us to strive alongside them.

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## Who would I recommend The Rise summary to?

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The 45-year-old would-be entrepreneur looking to diversify income streams while wanting to leave their 9-5, the 24-year-old filmmaker wanting to create the next great cinema series, and every creative who wants to leave average behind.