

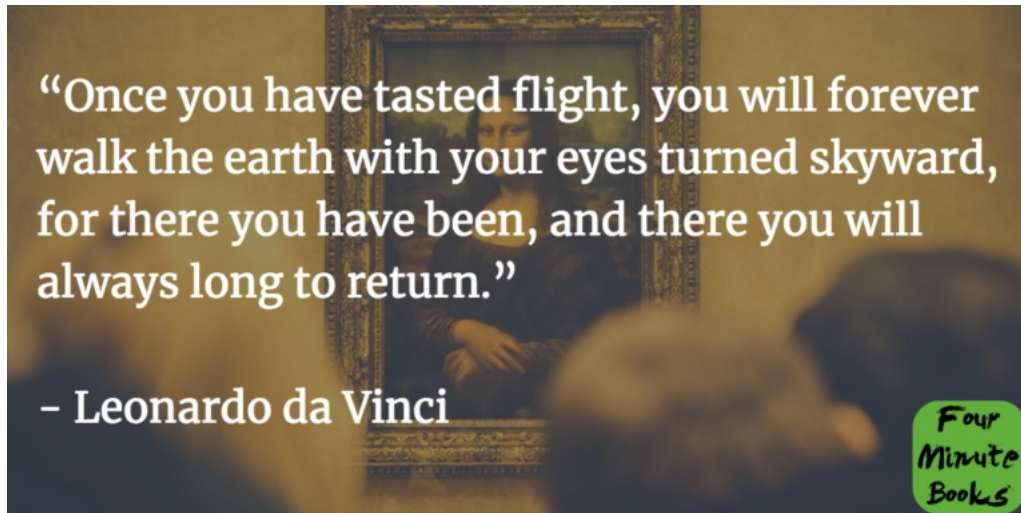
Leonardo Da Vinci Summary

 fourminutebooks.com/leonardo-da-vinci-summary

1-Sentence-Summary: *Leonardo Da Vinci is Walter Isaacson's account of the life of one of the most brilliant artists, thinkers, and innovators who ever lived.*

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:



If you only read a handful of biographies in your life, make it those written by Walter Isaacson. Not only does he manage to capture an entire human life in such a form that not a single page feels boring, but he also continues to pick the people most worth studying. In 2017, *Leonardo Da Vinci* joined the ranks of Albert Einstein, Benjamin Franklin and Steve Jobs.

Modern performance psychology has discredited a lot of what we would have called 'genius' 20, 30, or 50 years ago as mere dedication and commitment to one's work. That's a good thing, as it puts us in control of our destinies, rather than leaving us as victims of the 'I'm not gifted' myth. However, a few icons are worth holding on to.

Leonardo Da Vinci is one such icon, clearly surpassing the peers of his time in not just his work ethic, but many aspects all at once. While I can't wait to devour the book, which I got as a Christmas gift, I wanted to draw some high-level lessons about the man's life from reading its summary on Blinkist.

Here are 3 surprising takeaways:

1. Da Vinci elevated the status of artists as thinkers and innovators.
2. Try to transfer your interests to your projects, even if they seem completely unrelated.
3. Prepare your biggest ideas in a way that allows them to be published once you're gone.

Ready to learn from the man who ushered in the Renaissance? Let's go Leonardo!

Lesson 1: Leonardo Da Vinci is the reason we see artists as artists.

Saying Leonardo Da Vinci is one of the few people who still deserves the label 'genius' in today's world is obviously a mouthful. However, in no way does it indicate he *didn't* work hard to sharpen his talents. At age 14, he started an apprenticeship under a man named Andrea del Verrocchio, who was an artist and an engineer. This alone has several interesting implications.

First, back in the 15th century, art and engineering went hand in hand. Science was meant to be approached creatively and in turn, the principles of science, like the study of human vision and geometric forms, found its way into paintings and sculptures.

Second, just like you might hire a gardener or carpenter today, people used to order hand-crafted art on commission. Someone could walk into del Verrocchio's workshop any day of the week and pay him to make a custom statue of Hercules, for example.

Third, because of the commission payment model, it was easier for artists to make a living. Today, how much you earn as an artist is mostly based on fame. Companies like Medium and Patreon are trying to change that. That said, it also meant that art was treated like a commodity.

It was only when Leonardo reached fame and fortune, and was hired by kings to do his work, that the reputation of artists all around was elevated. Finally, painters and sculptors were respected for their creativity, more thought was given to their work, and innovative breakthroughs from individuals could reach the masses.

Lesson 2: Infuse even the most random of your interests into everything you do.

What's most remarkable about Da Vinci is that he fundamentally changed our thinking in not just one, specific area, but across a range of disciplines: painting, sculpturing, frescoes, biology, anatomy, medicine, engineering, architecture, and a lot more. To use a modern term, he was an expert generalist.

He illustrated math problems with artistic sketches, made sculptures of wax from human body parts, to understand how they work, and studied the human eye to improve how we perceive his paintings.

However, in today's world, where all these different fields have advanced so far already, we're discouraged from being good at a lot of things and instead told to specialize and become great at *one thing*. For some, this is easy, but for people with many interests, like me, it feels like a curse.

But our obsession with experts is not just frustrating, it may also be wrong. Imagine what happened if all of the brightest people were stuck in one, narrow topic, or channel of thinking. We'd constantly fail to see the big picture and generate insights based on making connections.

So, unless intense focus on one thing comes naturally to you, don't be afraid to do what Leonardo did. Take even the most random of your interests and infuse them into your work. Approach math like a painter would, writing like a gamer would, or business like a doctor might. We're bound to learn a lot from you if you do.

Lesson 3: Make sure your thoughts have a way to reach the world after you die.

Speaking of learning from you, so that we can, you first have to share. Most people don't want to be a writer, Youtuber, or person of public interest. That's fine, but it probably robs us of some of the greatest ideas of mankind. For example, thanks to a donation of corpses from a university, Leonardo was able to study human anatomy in detail.

He dissected and analyzed everything, even poured wax into a bull's heart, to use the mold for a glass model, so he could study how liquids move through it. Along with hundreds of drawings, he wrote thousands of words, documenting his insights into our biology, even describing the basics of modern illnesses like arteriosclerosis.

Sadly, these notes only caught dust for hundreds of years after his death, practically hindering the field of medicine from advancing. The exact mechanics of fluids in the heart were only understood over 450 years later. What can we learn from that?

You don't have to write a blog or create content regularly, but it'd be a good idea to take some time and **write down your biggest ideas in a journal or document for posterity**. If you include instructions on how to find them in your last will, maybe you can change the world even after you're no longer here.

Leonardo Da Vinci Review

Make no mistake, a Walter Isaacson book is a behemoth. *Leonardo Da Vinci* even has a version with lots of illustrations, which I can't wait to dive into. But until you have time for that, spending 20 minutes to read the summary on Blinkist and looking up some of Da Vinci's artwork on Wikipedia is a great way to get to know the man.

[Read full summary on Blinkist >>](#)

[Free Preview >>](#)

[Learn more about the author >>](#)

What else can you learn from the blinks?

- Why being an illegitimate child helped Leonardo, instead of setting him back
- What astonishing idea he had about how a city should function

- Where modern success gurus would agree with Leonardo
- How his painting skill progressed throughout the years
- What 'The Last Supper' reveals about storytelling
- Which competition he had with Michelangelo

Who would I recommend the Leonardo Da Vinci summary to?

The 17 year old, who gets a lot of flack from his parents for trying to become a pro gamer, the 48 year old neurosurgeon, who feels somewhat stuck in her technique, and anyone who's never written down their big ideas.