

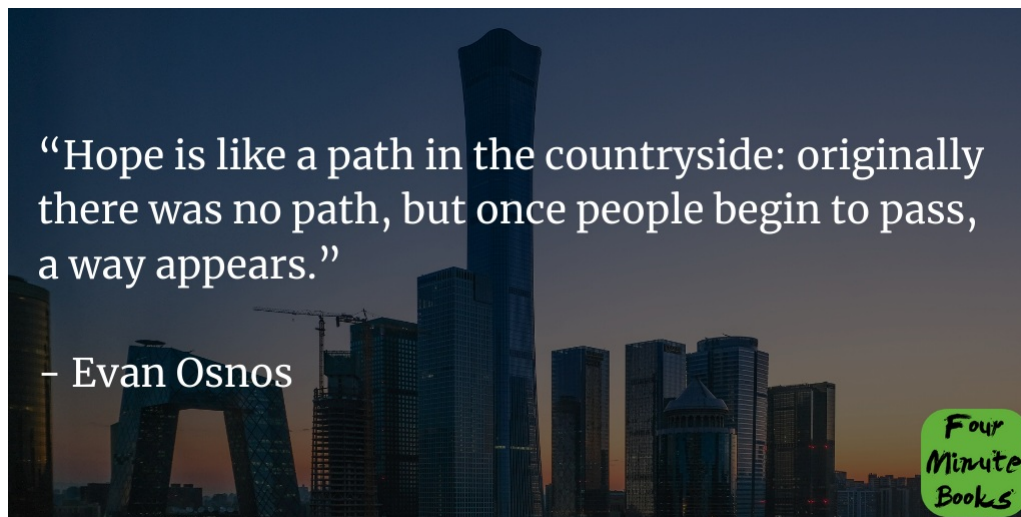
Age Of Ambition Summary

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1-Sentence-Summary: *Age Of Ambition* explains how China has gone from impoverished and only developing to a world superpower and economic powerhouse in only the last 30 years.

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:



You may know that China is now a superpower in the world. But do you know how the country got to where it is today? It wasn't long ago that this nation appeared poor, paranoid, and rural, but all that has changed.

China is now the largest exporter in the world. It's one of the largest industrial countries, and the population is becoming wealthier each year. What was it that allowed for such a rapid turnaround?

This is what you'll discover in Evan Osnos's *Age of Ambition: Chasing Fortune, Truth, and Faith in the New China*. The growth of this nation in just a short amount of time just might motivate you to change your own life or country too!

Here are 3 of the most inspiring lessons I've learned about the growth of this country:

1. Politics didn't cause China's rise to power, it was the average, everyday peasant class.
2. The Chinese people are ambitious for success.
3. Freedom of choice in China hasn't always been strong, but the country's increasing individuality is making it easier.

Are you ready to take a look inside the recent history of one of the world superpowers?
Here we go!

Lesson 1: The people of China had more influence on it's rise to power than the government did.

Let's go back to the 1950s. China is still pretty poor. The per capita income was only $\frac{1}{3}$ of sub-Saharan African countries even up until about 1979. Part of the problem was the well-meaning Mao Zedong's *Great Leap Forward* order, which made private farming illegal.

This was an attempt to bring China to a new level of industrialism and economic status, and at first, production grew. But it quickly began to slide backward when famine and recession killed 30-45 million people. This was greater than all of the casualties, military and civilian, in World War II!

Hope for the Chinese people still lay with the potential of the farmers whose determination to survive led to real progress. **The growth started with 18 poverty-stricken farmers in Xiaogang village banded together to share land evenly, cultivate it, and protect one another.**

The government still took a large portion of these peasant's harvests. But they did sell what was leftover to earn some profit. A year later, their earnings were 20 times greater! Other farmers caught on and quickly markets began thriving.

The government eventually found out what was going on, but didn't stop it because of the positive effect it was having on the economy. Over time these patterns made their way to 800 million other producers, which made for a huge advancement in China's GDP.

Never underestimate the power of the little things compounded many times over to make a big difference for the better!

Lesson 2: Drive for success is an abundant trait in the Chinese people.

Ambition began to shine in China once individuals were allowed to start their own businesses. They have an idea called the "barehanded" fortune which is similar to the American dream. Stories of people working hard to get rich quickly became popular in newspapers and other media. We all love those rags to riches stories, and the Chinese are no different!

Take the story of Gong Haiyan for example. She was raised in a tiny remote village by parents who couldn't even read. But that didn't stop her from climbing the ladder. Haiyan got a great education and eventually began a free online dating site that became the biggest

in China. **Her hard work made her \$80 million by 2011.**

Others don't receive as good of an education but still rise to success. One street food vendor's hard work helped them eventually become a wealthy Chinese fast-food business owner, for example.

Whatever their background, the people of this country strive for the best schooling they can get. An increasing number of newly wealthy Chinese come from just humble peasant families. And it's all through their hard work.

Some of these who can't afford a higher quality education will send their children to renowned American schools to get the best they can. In 2005, there were only 65 Chinese students who went to private high schools in America. But by 2010, that number had grown to over 7,000!

Lesson 3: Individuality is finally starting to grow in China after a long time of governmental oppression.

We could go on for days about the corrupt and over-controlling Chinese political system. Let's just say that I'm grateful I don't have helicopter parents, and I'm *really* grateful that I don't have a helicopter government!

But let's not go into that any further. One really good piece of news about the growth of China is that it's getting better at individualism. It used to be that their identity was connected with groups like family, work, or the nation. Even popular songs would almost always use "we" in place of "I."

That's all changing though, and the Chinese even call post-1980's generations the "Me" generation. **Opposite to their grandparents, many young people are getting better at choosing for themselves and focusing on their own experiences.**

If you think that's good news, the really great thing about this is that it's likely a result of increasing freedom of choice. This is possible because more Chinese students are getting a higher education. The advances of the internet also help by making it increasingly easier for them to connect with the rest of the world.

Changes in the country also make it easier for people to begin their own companies rather than associating with a group of people at one big employer. Even socially, the custom of arranged marriages is evolving.

Mao Zedong banned matchmaking, which just led to family elders and others setting couples up. But now even this is slowly going away with help from online dating sites like the one that Gong Haiyan began.

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Age Of Ambition Review

Whoa, I had no idea that China was improving this much! I haven't ever really kept tabs on what's going on there, but *Age Of Ambition* made it easy to get up to speed. What I liked though was that this book inspired me by showing the power that the average people have to make a big difference in a nation.

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Who would I recommend the Age Of Ambition summary to?

The 57-year-old who is curious about the current state of affairs in China, the 24-year-old who complains about the problems of free speech in their country but has no idea how bad it can really get, and anyone who wants to hear an inspiring story of how China is growing quickly.

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