

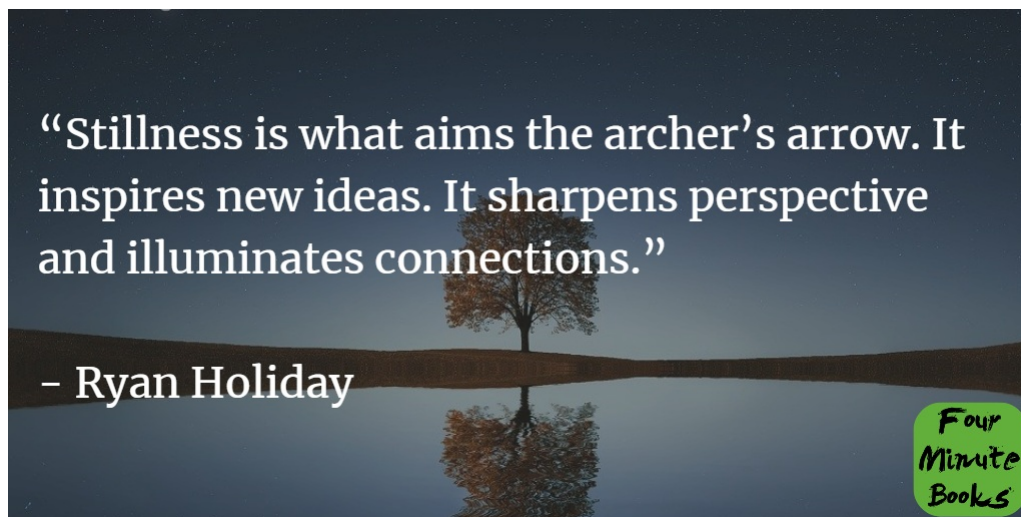
Stillness Is The Key Summary

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1-Sentence-Summary: *Stillness Is The Key* gives you the tools to harness the power of slowing down your body and mind for less distractions, better self-control, and above all, a happier and more peaceful life.

Read in: 5 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:



Last night I watched *Star Trek: Into Darkness*. It's a great film, but I couldn't help feeling anxious about halfway through as the events just kept getting worse for the main characters. I couldn't help but wonder why, after almost being killed, losing his father figure, and half of his closest friends second-guessing him, Kirk just keeps punching forward with action.

Well, if you haven't seen the movie I won't spoil it for you, but things just keep going south and it's quite the ride. I wonder, though, what might have happened if instead of fighting, the characters decided to take a little break to think. It wouldn't have made for a very exciting movie, but things would have been a lot easier for them!

That's the power of stillness that you'll learn all about in Ryan Holiday's new book *Stillness is the Key*. Just thinking of letting yourself cut the frantic pace of life sounds relieving, right? That's only the tip of the iceberg of this powerful tool for a better life.

Here are the 3 most helpful lessons on the power of taking things easier:

1. No matter what kind of crises you might be in, slowing down is always going to help you get through it better.

2. Allow more silence into your life if you want better peace and clarity of mind.
3. Work in moderation and embrace your need to sleep if you want to be at your best every day.

Are you ready to see the power of letting more peace and quiet into your life? Let's begin!

Lesson 1: Slow down to get through difficult times.

Imagine waking up to learn that your enemy is building missiles just miles away from your country's border. This was the reality for John F. Kennedy in 1962 when the Soviet Union began constructing missile sites in Cuba. The threat of a nuclear attack on America was suddenly very real.

This was especially stressful for Kennedy, who knew that at least 70 million lives were at stake. His advisors cautioned him to destroy the missile stations. But he knew that failure in this would be catastrophic. So what did he do to handle the situation successfully? Kennedy took time to pause and think.

Rather than immediately deciding, he began to reflect on the matter. He would write notes repeating the words "Missile" and "Leaders" over and over. **Swimming in the White House pool and spending time in the Rose Garden gave him space to think.**

After a while, Kennedy decided to go with a blockade of Cuba. This gave his opponent, Nikita Krushchev, time to think as well. Nearly two weeks later Krushchev sent Kennedy a letter in which he recognized the destruction a conflict would cause. This was the beginning of the end of the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Rather than displaying strength, actions of peaceful solitude helped Kennedy resolve this potential catastrophe. Similarly, when you take time to slow down after any sort of issue, you'll find the clarity and calm helps you make better decisions.

Lesson 2: For peace and clarity of mind, let yourself have more silence.

Pay attention to your surroundings right now. How much noise is present? Perhaps you've got your headphones in and you're listening to your Spotify playlist. Or maybe you're hearing the bustle of the coffee shop you're in.

Whatever your situation, chances are your life is noisier than you might think. While all of the commotion might not be bad for you, the lack of silence is a missed opportunity for greater calm and simplicity.

This was a major focus of the life of experimental composer John Cage. Silence was an obsession of his. At one high school speaking event he declared his belief that the US should have a national day of quiet. His best known work is 4'33, which is a musical piece with nothing but four-minutes and 33 seconds of uninterrupted silence.

It might sound crazy, but it's rather profound. Take the experience one pianist had while performing it for the first time. The audience got to notice the wind and rain outside because of the silence. After it was over Cage mentioned that silence doesn't really exist because it's full of unexpected sounds.

That's the power of quietness at work, it lets us notice things we wouldn't otherwise pick up on. It might be the solution to your business problems on your bike ride. Or the next step forward in your relationship that comes to you in the shower.

If you think the 4'33 piece is crazy though, know that business leaders take advantage of silence, too. Randall Stutman's research indicates that they go to places with limited noise in their time off.

Lesson 3: Your peak state is only possible when you limit your work hours and embrace sleep.

A few months ago I tried a nifty experiment. Afternoons are hard for me, I'm usually tired and don't get much work done. I wondered why I spend that time trying to work, so I stopped and tried to nap every afternoon. I began feeling happier about my work because every time I sat down to do it was when I had energy!

Although it's not easy for everyone to do this, I would like to see some societal changes here. Don't just take my word for it though. Winston Churchill, the great leader of Great Britain during World War II, learned the powers of napping while in Cuba. Even he set aside time for rest.

These days we hear too many people giving garbage advice like "you can sleep when you're dead!" or "dreams are made while everyone else is sleeping." How wrong they are. When you get adequate sleep, you put yourself at a huge advantage.

Have you ever heard of the famous 10,000 hour rule? This came from violinists that psychologist Anders Ericsson studied. They practiced a lot, but you know what else they also did often? That's right, sleep. **And the best of the group slept more and took more naps than the rest!** It's pretty clear that if you want to be at your best, the stillness of rest is necessary.

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Stillness Is The Key Review

Wow, what a powerful message. *Stillness Is The Key* already has me living a more happy and peaceful life just by the idea of becoming more still. It's difficult to break the shackles of business, but doing so, even just a little at a time, has great rewards.

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Who would I recommend the Stillness Is The Key summary to?

The 48-year-old business woman who is constantly rushing from one project or meeting to the next, the 28-year-old parents that want to make the most of the time they have with their kids, and anyone who feels overwhelmed with the fast-paced nature of life these days.