

Things A Little Bird Told Me Summary

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1-Sentence-Summary: *Things A Little Bird Told Me* is Twitter co-founder Biz Stone's look back at the years of his life during and before Twitter, from which he draws many lessons about business, life and society.

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:



"I have this theory that timing, perseverance and ten years of trying will eventually make you look like an overnight success." When you listen to Biz Stone, one thing quickly becomes clear: the guy's not afraid of hard work. But he's always talking about something he's passionate about, he loves to come up with ideas and he genuinely loves what he does.

In his account of , you'll see that these things are exactly what allows you to do the hard work necessary in the first place. In the ten years prior to founding Twitter, Biz went through a cycle of failures. From his own company to working at Google, back to another failed company, which eventually spun off Twitter, the road to his success sure wasn't a straight highway.

Here are 3 lessons from *Things A Little Bird Told Me* to help you keep driving until you reach your destination:

1. Limit yourself to get more creative.
2. Never stop forming your ideas.
3. Be the most passionate user of your own product.

Need a revised definition of success? Here comes one that's based on fun and loving your work!

Lesson 1: Impose limits on yourself to activate your creativity.

Have you ever had a test in school where the teacher would just sit you down in front of a blank piece of paper, give you a pencil, and tell you to start? Probably not. That'd be weird, right?

I mean, what would you even put on the paper? The pure number of options is overwhelming. Should you draw? Write? Calculate something? Teachers know that limits inspire creativity, and that's why they give you a specific task, like "write a short story", "draw an elephant" or "solve these binomial formula problems."

A limit automatically forces you to be creative, because now you have to come up with a way to get around it.

Limits can be financial, biological, social, or even made up. For example, when Steven Spielberg shot Jaws, he wanted to get an animatronic shark, but it was too expensive at the time. To get around this limit, he decided to film from the shark's point of view, making the movie scarier than it could ever have been with some mechanic model. Ultimately, this is what made the movie a big hit and sparked a whole new point-of-view genre in horror movies.

This is also why tweets on Twitter allow only 140 characters – it forces you to be creative and concise!

Lesson 2: Never stop forming your ideas, even after they're released.

When Biz Stone designed the Twitter logo, he just sketched a bird based on an image he found online. But it didn't quite feel right, so someone else made a few changes he hadn't thought of. Eventually, the design was finalized by a professional designer. Over the years, the logo has changed a couple times.

Imagine Biz had insisted on using his first design – we'd probably be looking at an arguably less beautiful Twitter logo today. But Biz knows that **ideas rarely enter the world fully formed and ready to go**. That's why he always remains open to changes, even after the idea has been released.

For example, most of Twitter's main features were user suggestions. People initially copied tweets they liked to share them, so Twitter introduced the "retweet." When one user wanted to bundle together all tweets about the South by Southwest Festival, he added #sxsw to his tweets, and voilà, the hashtag was born.

Even tweets itself got their name from the users, initially people would just say they're "twittering."

So never stop forming your ideas with the feedback of others, there's always something to be improved!

Lesson 3: You have to be your own product's most passionate user for it to work out.

Frustration is a great source of motivation. For example, right now I'm really mad at how landlords treat potential tenants in Munich. I've been left standing in front of doors, not given notice that they picked someone else and thrown out again after sealing the deal and handing in all my paperwork. It got my gears spinning about how I can make this process more human, less frustrating and smoother for everyone.

But you can't stop at building a solution. You have to use it too. **If you're not the most ecstatic advocate and power user of your own product, you'll never be able to build it to a point where enough people use it so it's profitable.**

For example, the company Ev Williams and Biz were working at before Twitter, Odeo, was a podcasting app. But neither Ev nor Biz knew anything about audio, nor were they passionate podcast listeners. No wonder this couldn't pan out.

But both of them loved using Twitter. **They experienced their own product from a user's perspective**, which helped them see mistakes quickly, fix them, and let employees do the same. In fact, Twitter was born from a "hackathon" held at Odeo, in which participants should just focus on building something they cared about.

So don't just solve a frustrating problem, be sure to actually use the solution yourself once it's ready!

Things A Little Bird Told Me Review

I think Biz has a great mindset. It's positive, but not shying away from hard work, which, in my eyes, makes it sustainable in the long run. And you're gonna have to work for the long run for anything worth creating. Reading *Things A Little Bird Told Me* can make it rub off on you, so go get yourself a dose of Biz

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What else can you learn from the blinks?

- Why Biz wrote "Genius" on his business cards
- How much Mark Zuckerberg offered to buy Twitter in 2008
- What makes creativity a renewable resource that never dries up
- How the "Fail Whale" helped Twitter deal with angry users
- Why Google's motto "Don't be evil" isn't enough

- The most powerful thing Twitter does to people

Who would I recommend the Things A Little Bird Told Me summary to?

The 25 year old who's mad at himself for not starting his own business ten years earlier, the 43 year old sales manager, who's selling something she doesn't really believe in (nor use), and anyone is an avid Twitter user.