

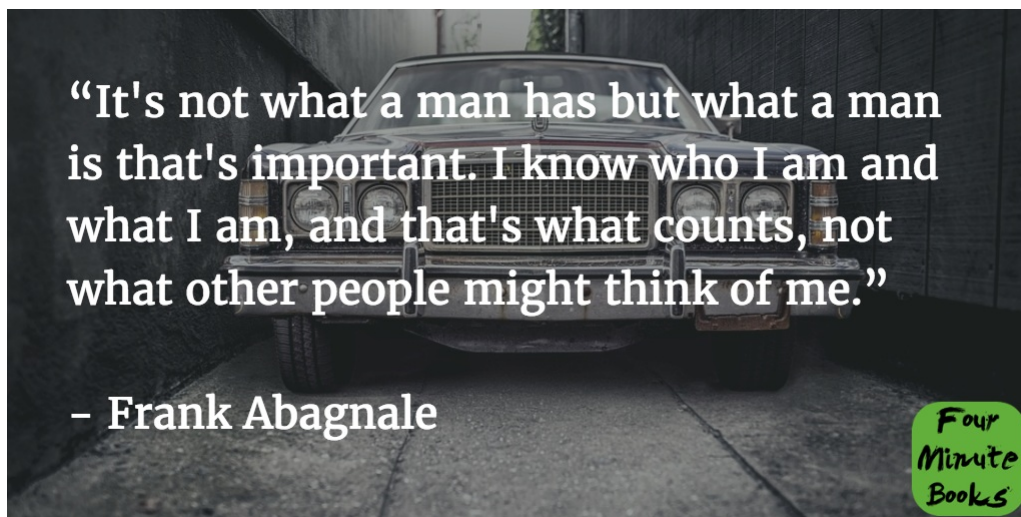
Catch Me If You Can Summary

 fourminutebooks.com/catch-me-if-you-can-summary

1-Sentence-Summary: *Catch Me If You Can* is the story of how Frank Abagnale, one of the most famous con-artists in history, faked over eight identities, several professions, and cashed over \$2.5 million of forged checks in the 1960s, until the police finally caught him at age 21.

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:



Catch Me If You Can is one of my favorite stories of all time. Sure, Leo DiCaprio and Tom Hanks can take major credit for it, as they played their characters brilliantly in the oscar-nominated 2002 movie adaptation of this book, which depicted the life of Frank William Abagnale Jr. with wit, accuracy and excitement.

When his parents' marriage, family life and father's successful business broke apart at age 16, Frank ran away from home, deciding to venture out on his own. For the next five years, he lived a life most people wouldn't even dare dreaming of, pretending to be an airline pilot, flying all around the world, claiming to be a doctor, a lawyer and a professor.

There's a great deal of lessons to be learned from his life, but here are the 3 that most stood out to me:

1. Don't turn a means into an end.
2. Lying is actually a lot more difficult than being honest, because you have to maintain every single lie.
3. Don't discredit any single one of your skills, you never know what it might be good for.

Catch these lessons...if you can!

Lesson 1: Don't let a means become an end.

Why would anyone become a con-artist as early as age 16? Sure, Frank Abagnale was an extreme case, but how did he end up with this “career choice?” I believe it comes down to this: Being a spoiled child, Frank Abagnale never had a chance to learn the value of hard, honest work.

Growing up, his dad had a successful business, and would always secretly give Frank extra money. He even got him a credit card and a cool car. However, not having earned any of this for himself, Frank didn't know how hard his father had to work for all these things. He only saw the gap between his part-time warehouse clerk salary and the things he wanted: money for gas and taking beautiful girls out to dinner.

Naturally, he did the only thing he knew: take a shortcut.

But eventually, that shortcut became his way of life. Initially pulling off most his credit card, check and pilot scams to impress women, at some point he turned this means into an end. But no means works forever, so when you define yourself entirely by the one way you're used to doing things, it's only a matter of time until you'll take a serious fall.

And that's exactly what happened to Frank...

Lesson 2: Lying is exhausting, because you have to keep track of everything you've said.

...but not for a while. It took national and international police five long years to catch Frank, because he was really good at one thing: lying. However, the longer you lie, the bigger your construct of false statements gets and the harder it becomes to maintain.

For example, Frank had a notebook with very detailed notes about airline insider phrases, technical data, names, profiles and even phone numbers of people he'd met, just to make sure no other pilots or aircraft personnel could see through his ruse. Every time he took a deadhead flight – an empty seat in the cockpit for a fellow pilot, traveling to another airport for business – to get around, he'd had something to talk about with his “colleagues,” such as optimal altitude levels, fuel consumption or even a joke about a fellow pilot.

While that made others believe he was a real pilot, this kind of lying gets exhausting quickly, **because you have to keep track of exactly which lie you've told who forever and always.**

When you speak the truth, it's still the truth five years later, so if someone else asks you about the same thing, you don't have to think back to what you said originally. A web of lies grows quickly, which makes it almost inevitable to get entangled in it yourself one day.

Lesson 3: Sometimes the wrong skill can lead you to the right path, so don't discredit anything you've learned.

After being captured in France in 1969, Frank first served six months of jail time in an almost medieval prison, then another six months in Sweden, before being extradited to the United States and sentenced to another 12 years. However, he spent a mere five of those in jail, and was then granted parole in exchange for working with the FBI to help identify crimes involving fraud, forgery and scams.

When he was released, he tried several "real" jobs, but was fired from all of them as soon as people found out who he really was. Eventually, he made use of what he was best at and started helping banks identify fraudulent checks. His company, Abagnale & Associates has done so now for over 40 years, and he continues to teach at the FBI until this day.

I'm not saying you should learn how to forge checks, but this just goes to show that **you never know what a skill might be useful for**. Sometimes, even learning what's the completely wrong skill at the time will one day lead you to the path you were meant to take.

So don't discredit anything you've done, learned or experienced in your life. Embrace all of it and just let life unfold.

Catch Me If You Can Review

Catch Me If You Can is a great story. Funny, memorable and so much to learn from. In case you haven't seen the movie, definitely go and do that, but I can also highly recommend a talk Frank gave in 2013. Very refreshing read!

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What else can you learn from the blinks?

- How Frank scammed his way to his first \$3,400
- The clever trick Frank used to get all the information about being a real pilot he needed
- Why it wouldn't be possible for Frank to pull off his scams again today
- How Frank managed to fake three other very prestigious professions
- Why Frank almost died in his French prison cell

Who would I recommend the Catch Me If You Can summary to?

The 18 year old soon-to-be college freshman, who has no idea what she wants to do in life, and is about to choose a major that'll "make a lot of money", the 35 year old bachelor, who's forgotten half of the broken promises he's made to the women in his life, and anyone who thinks they have a skill that's completely and utterly useless.