

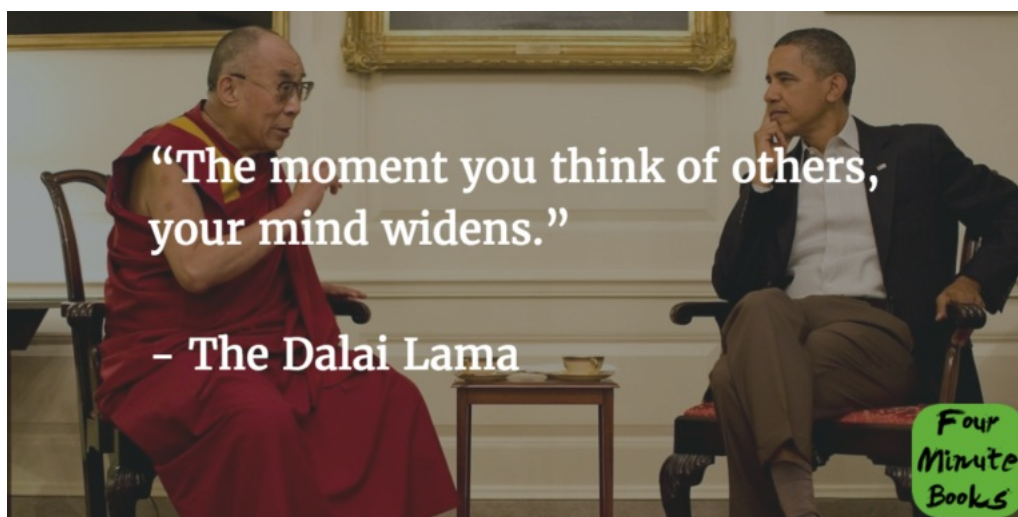
A Force For Good Summary

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1-Sentence-Summary: *A Force For Good is a universal call to turn our compassion outward and use it to improve ourselves and the world around us in science, religion, social issues, business and education.*

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:



When the Dalai Lama speaks, the world listens. And rightfully so. He's been a source of positive energy for over 50 years, which he's shared in speeches, talks, conventions, books like *The Art of Happiness* and most importantly, his actions. It might surprise you that a spiritual leader would team up with a scientist like Daniel Goleman, who wrote books like *Focus* and *Emotional Intelligence*, but to him it makes perfect sense as one complements the other.

To the Dalai Lama, the fundamentally human trait that's missing most in the world, the limiting factor of our ability to thrive as a species, is compassion. Only when we all live compassion on a daily basis can we take care of our biggest issues. Just think of environmental damage, the future of education or the moral problems of business – these are all issues of compassion.

After reading this, you'll have a better idea of how you can use *A Force For Good* to make yourself a force for good in this world. Here are my 3 favorite lessons:

1. Control your emotions by asking yourself how proportionate they are.
2. Compassion has nothing to do with religion.
3. Living compassion means being fair, transparent and accountable.

Want to recalibrate your compassion compass? Let's make ourselves a force for good!

Lesson 1: You can control your emotions by asking yourself how well-proportioned they are for the situation.

One of the most important aspects when it comes to being mindful or having lots of willpower is being able to pause when emotions rise inside you. Feelings are the strongest motivators of human behavior, so whenever we feel strongly about something, we're tempted to act on this feeling. However, this is often a short-circuit in our internal wiring, leading us to not consider the consequences of our actions well enough.

The Dalai Lama has mastered the art of taking a step back and thinking first. For example, during the 2008 Tibetan unrest, he imagined the Chinese officials who caused Tibetans pain and grief, but decided not to be absorbed by their negative energy, instead choosing not to act out of anger, being compassionate and controlling his feelings.

However, **controlling your feelings is not the same as suppressing them**. The former helps you make better decisions, the latter leads to uncontrolled outbursts.

A very simple thing you can do to improve in this regard is ask yourself this question when you recognize negative emotions inside you: **"Are my feelings in proportion to the situation I am in?"**

For example, if you're angry that Donald Trump won the US presidency today and you ask yourself this question, you'll quickly find that not much in your life will change for quite some time and that this is probably not worth being frustrated about. Then you can get back to work as usual much faster, and not spend the day in angry frustration.

Lesson 2: Compassion wasn't born out of religion, it's an innate human trait.

There are countless fables, metaphors and religious stories that make a case for compassion, such as Jesus's famous "turn the other cheek," the zen story of the farmer who wouldn't divide his days into lucky and unlucky ones, or the story of kindness being paid forward in Islam.

In fact, compassion is such a central part of most of the major religions, that we tend to think the idea of it could have originated from religion itself – but that's not true, the Dalai Lama thinks.

He says **compassion is separate and actually superior to religion, as it's grounded in biology** for several reasons.

First, even animals can be compassionate. Think of a dog keeping another dog company when he feels miserable, or wolves mourning the loss of another wolf through howling. Second, humans can hardly survive without positive emotions like love and joy and compassion is a way

to deliver those to others. Lastly, one of the biggest sources of human motivation is having a mission that's larger than oneself, and compassion is exactly what gets us to focus on others, forget our own, petty problems and energize us in return.

Lesson 3: Putting compassion into action every day means being fair, transparent and accountable.

All this talk about compassion is important, but it means nothing if you don't put it into action. Living a compassionate life is a choice each and every single one of us can make, every single day, no matter what our background is, how much money we have (or don't have) or where we live.

To the Dalai Lama, this means keeping three principles at the top of his mind at all times:

1. **Fairness.**
2. **Transparency.**
3. **Accountability.**

Just yesterday, my roommate said something interesting: "I think everyone knows what's fair. Every human being has a sense of when they're being put at an advantage or disadvantage." He might be right. What exactly means fair of course depends on the situation and individual, but we always have a rough sense of whether what's going on is fair – and if it isn't we must work to change it.

Being transparent is easy. Being *consistently* transparent is hard. It's no problem to share when you're winning, but when you screw up, it's much tougher to fess up and say: "Shit, that didn't go as planned, I made a mistake." Find the balance.

Accountability is just a logical consequence of transparency. Once you've admitted to a mistake (which feels great afterwards), you'll struggle a lot less to take responsibility for it, roll up your sleeves and say: "Alright, what does it take to fix this?"

F-T-A. Three letters that, if you memorize them, can help you take action on compassion, day in and day out.

A Force For Good Review

I don't see how anyone could come up with drawbacks or disadvantages of learning from a book like this. *A Force For Good* is a great encouragement to be a better, more positive human being, so however little you pick up, it will have a positive net impact. Highly recommended!

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What else can you learn from the blinks?

- Why you don't need to meditate for five hours a day to be compassionate
- The reason science and religion are not mutually exclusive
- How we can combine capitalism and socialism to get the perfect economic mix
- Why it doesn't matter whether you're privileged or not
- What a "handprint" is and how it can help you make less greedy decisions
- How you can resolve any conflict between two people
- A powerful mind training exercise for kids
- Why the world is better than you think

Who would I recommend the A Force For Good summary to?

The 18 year old business student, who's frustrated with her country's politics, the 36 year old stock broker, who thinks you have to beat your competitors in business to win, and anyone who's recently felt that they were being treated unfairly.