

The Alchemist Summary

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1-Sentence-Summary: *The Alchemist* is a classic novel in which a boy named Santiago embarks on a journey seeking treasure in the Egyptian pyramids after having a recurring dream about it and on the way meets mentors, falls in love, and most importantly, learns the true importance of who he is and how to improve himself and focus on what really matters in life.

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:



It only took Paulo Coelho two weeks to write the original Portuguese version of *The Alchemist* in 1987. He could write that fast because, as he put it, the book was “already written in my soul.” And although it didn’t sell well at first, the universe conspired to make Coelho’s dream happen and the book became a hit.

Today, it’s sold over 65 million copies. It’s spent more than 315 weeks on the New York Times bestseller list. And the book also holds the Guinness World Record for the most translated book by a living author.

It’s also setting a record here on Four Minute Books as our first ever summary of a fictional book.

So why did we choose to summarize it? We know that Gregory Cowles was right when he wrote in the New York Times that the book “is more self-help than literature. But that hasn’t hurt it with readers.”

And honestly, we've read it, and regardless of what Cowles or anybody says, the book really is full of lessons that will improve your life beyond what you could have ever imagined. We know because that's what it's done for us.

Here are just 3 of the many inspiring and eye-opening lessons from *The Alchemist*:

1. You have a Personal Legend that you must follow if you want to be happy and fulfilled.
2. Your fear is holding you back more than anything else.
3. "The secret of life, though, is to fall seven times and to get up eight times."

Let's jump right into this wonderful book and see how much we can learn!

Lesson 1: If you want to reach your biggest goals and feel fulfilled, you must follow your Personal Legend.

The story begins with a young Spanish shepherd having a recurring dream. It happens each time he sleeps under a Sycamore tree outside of an old church building. In the dream, the boy hears from a child that he must go to the Egyptian pyramids to seek a treasure.

After meeting with a gypsy woman to find out what the dream means, the boy is surprised when she says he needs to go to Egypt.

To make matters even stranger, an old man named Melchizedek tells the boy the same thing. This time, however, the man uses the word "Personal Legend" to explain what the young man must do.

After some deliberation, the boy decides to follow his Personal Legend and head for the pyramids. He sells his sheep and begins his journey by going to Tangier.

Throughout the remainder of the book, he is constantly running into obstacles to his Personal Legend. But at each step overcomes them to find success and fulfillment.

You have a Personal Legend too. It's as unique as you are. You may already know what it is and simply need the courage to pursue it. Whether it's a career, family, health, or other aspiration, you must overcome everything holding you back so that you can pursue your biggest dreams.

Once you begin, the whole universe will conspire to make it happen. But that doesn't mean you'll be without difficulties.

Lesson 2: Stop being afraid if you want to remove the barriers that keep you from progressing.

The boy soon arrives in Tangier. The culture and the language, which he cannot speak, amaze him. This leads to someone stealing all his money. Even worse, he fears he's made the wrong decision and almost heads back for Spain.

But remembering what Melchizedek taught him, the young man pays attention to the omens all around him. He recommits to his Personal Legend and begins working for a local crystal merchant.

The merchant recognizes the boy's presence as a good omen and listens to his counsel that the man should take more risks with the business. This pays off and the two eventually become rich.

The merchant knows what his Personal Legend is and recognizes that the boy's presence is an omen that he should go after it. But he's too afraid to follow it and stays where he is.

In contrast, the young man uses his money to courageously continue on his journey to Egypt.

You also must your dreams, even when you're afraid of the unknown path ahead. Fear is the biggest thing in the way of you living the life you want and only by beating it can you live life to the fullest.

Lesson 3: Rise more times than you fall and you will never fail.

As the young man's journey continues, he meets an Englishman who tells him of an alchemist that can turn lead into gold. Eventually, the two stop in Al-Fayoum as part of the caravan they travel with.

While there, the boy uses his newfound ability to read omens to foresee an attack on the oasis. This catches the attention of the alchemist. The two eventually meet and he becomes a mentor to the young man. The alchemist also declares the importance of Personal Legends.

With what he learns from the alchemist, the boy turns himself into the wind when a tribe of Arab soldiers captures them and threatens to kill them. The alchemist continues to teach the boy, but eventually they must part ways before the young man reaches Egypt.

When he gets to Egypt he begins digging for his treasure only to be immediately beaten and robbed again. **One of the men tells him of his own dream in which he would find treasure under a tree in an abandoned church in Spain.**

The boy recognizes this omen and now knows where his treasure really is. He returns to Spain to find it in the exact spot he had his first dream and uses it to continue to fulfill his Personal Legend.

Just like this young man, you will fall while on your journey. But if you commit to get up every time and keep going, the universe will once again conspire to lead you to just where you need to be.

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The Alchemist Review

The Alchemist is a classic and one of my favorite books. It's deep, thought-provoking, a great story, and shares some of the best principles I know for living a happier and more successful life. I enjoy learning from symbolism and fictional tales, and this one is one of the best in my opinion!

Who would I recommend The Alchemist summary to?

The 37-year-old that's always wanted to become a writer and work for themselves but feels stuck in their office job, the 17-year-old who wants to live a life of fulfillment and intelligence, and anyone that's tired of living small and wants to beat their fears and fulfill their personal legend.