

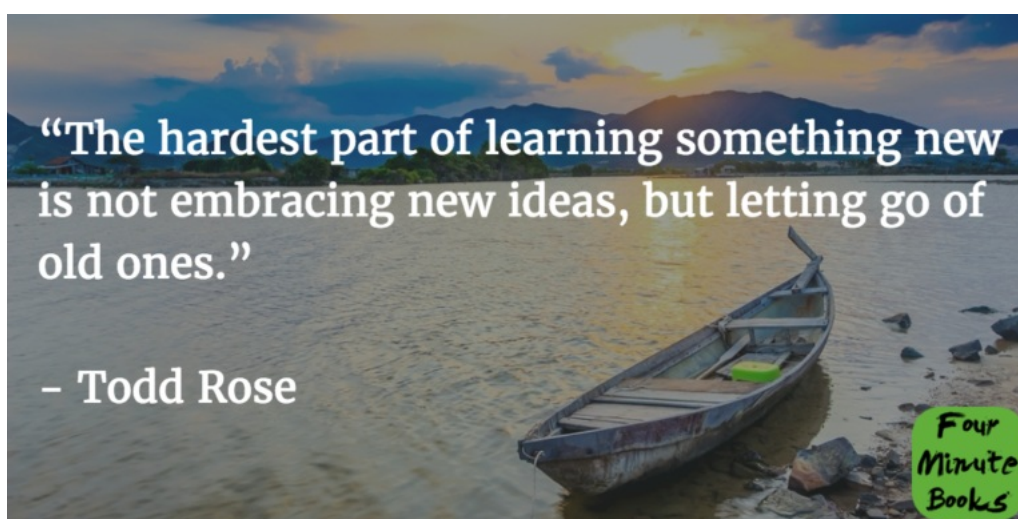
The End Of Average Summary

 fourminutebooks.com/the-end-of-average-summary

1-Sentence-Summary: *The End Of Average explains the fundamental flaws with our culture of averages, in which we design everything for the average person, when that person doesn't exist, and shows how we can embrace our individuality and use it to succeed in a world that wants everyone to be the same.*

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:



Do you know nacho jokes? We used to make them all the time when I was studying in the US. For example, when I suggested a place to eat to my friends and they were skeptical, I'd say: "Guys, this is nacho average restaurant we're talking about here!"

Nacho = not yo' = not your – get it? There's a super fun clip of two nacho chips talking on Youtube too. Over time, the phrase "nacho average" has even turned into a meme and according to *The End Of Average*, you should probably pay attention any time you spot it.

Todd Rose has dedicated himself to debunking the myth of average, something he's passionate about because he himself couldn't be further from an average life. After dropping out of high school, he eventually obtained his GED, an alternative form of high school diploma, started taking night classes and went on to get not just a PhD, but a PhD from Harvard.

As it turns out, averages are useless. So if you've been busy polishing your resumé to fit the average criteria of recruiters, it might be worth stopping for a few minutes and learning about where average has led us historically.

Here are 3 lessons about averages from someone who's nacho average author:

1. There's no way to build something for the "average human body" because it doesn't exist.

2. Your character traits are unrelated to how you learn, which means there aren't any average career paths.
3. Human behavior is fluid, not fixed, which means we must accommodate individuality.

On average, it takes 4 minutes to see that averages are stupid – but who cares? It only matters how long it takes you. Let's find out!

Lesson 1: Good luck with building something for the “average human body,” because such a thing doesn't exist.

If I asked you to describe Brad Pitt's appearance in one word, how would you respond? It's impossible, right? Not just for Brad Pitt, but for anyone. I mean, how many anatomic features can you possibly highlight with one word? Tall just describes height, big usually refers to weight, blonde to hair color, and handsome, well, that couldn't be more subjective, could it?

When we describe human looks, we always fall back on describing a whole set of individual features, because **there's no single word to squeeze the human anatomy into.**

That alone is a good indicator of how much we can learn from computing average human body features – not much. All of these characteristics are completely unrelated to one another, which is the reason knowing someone's height doesn't tell you anything about their weight and vice versa.

Yet, many companies have tried (and failed) to design products for “the average human,” for example the US Air Force. In 1950, they measured 140 different dimensions of the bodies of over 4,000 pilots and used the average values to re-design their jet cockpits.

The result? **Not a single pilot fit into the standard cockpit.** Even if you'd taken just the averages of 3 dimensions, only 3.5% of all pilots would've fit the average on all of them. Taking 140 made sure that absolutely no one would fit in.

So if you've ever thought “how can I get this to fit the average” about something, I suggest you toss that question out of your repertoire now.

Lesson 2: Who you are is totally unrelated to how you learn, which means there is absolutely no average career path you can follow.

There's a phenomenon called the Flynn effect, which describes that on average, IQ scores have risen by 3 points per decade. What does that tell you? Nothing, except that we've been getting better at filling out IQ tests. The upwards trend is the interesting part, not the average of the increase.

As it turns out, averages aren't just useless when comparing human anatomy, but also when looking at the human mind. For example, in the 1980s, education researcher Benjamin Bloom developed a learning taxonomy that separated the speed of learning and knowledge retention. Just because you can remember things well does not mean you learn faster (or vice versa).

How you learn and master new skills is completely unrelated to your character traits, which makes all stereotypes irrelevant, like “nerds suck at sports” or “footballers are meatheads.”

But if there is no one right or wrong way to learn something, then **there's also no perfect way to the work you aspire to**. As the saying goes “all roads lead to Rome,” meaning there are thousands, maybe millions of paths you can take to get to your goals in life.

Lesson 3: Companies and people must learn to embrace human individualism, because our behavior is fluid, not fixed.

One thing I've learned about online marketing is that your content must always fit the context of the platform. For example, many people use Twitter to just post links to their blog posts, but that's not what it's for. It's supposed to deliver a message in 140 characters or less – that could be a wise line of thought, a joke or even something newsworthy, but if it's just a link to an article, it's nothing more than an ad.

For the same reason I'm not a big fan of re-posting my articles on other sites, unless I can somehow tweak and edit them to fit the context – what works well on my blog might not be a good fit for Medium, for example.

With human behavior, it's the exact same. **It changes, depending on the context.** Of course you act differently at work than you do at home, who wouldn't?

This fluidity of human behavior is something we as people and the companies we work for must come to understand. By over-obsessing about standard measurements, like grades and degrees, when hiring, businesses miss out on the unique abilities we bring to the job that no one would hire us for.

That's why companies like Facebook, Google and Microsoft spend millions of dollars on research and creating flexible work environments – to accompany the entire spectrum of human behavior, not just the average. Let's hope this trend continues!

The End Of Average Review

I have written myself out of space to write a proper review. This rarely happens, but it already tells you everything you need to know. Go, get *The End Of Average*!

[Read full summary on Blinkist >>](#)

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Learn more about the author >>

What else can you learn from the blinks?

- Who came up with all this averaging in the first place
- Why casting the woman with “the perfect female body” backfired
- What the solution to the cockpit problem was
- How many children learn reading in a non-average way
- What alternative hiring options companies can use to encourage people to show their originality
- How education must change to avoid averagianism

Who would I recommend The End Of Average summary to?

The 21 year old college student, who thinks an internship at a big consulting company would really “round out” her resumé, the 28 year old bodybuilder, who wants to win his next fitness competition, and anyone who builds something that a human must physically fit into.