

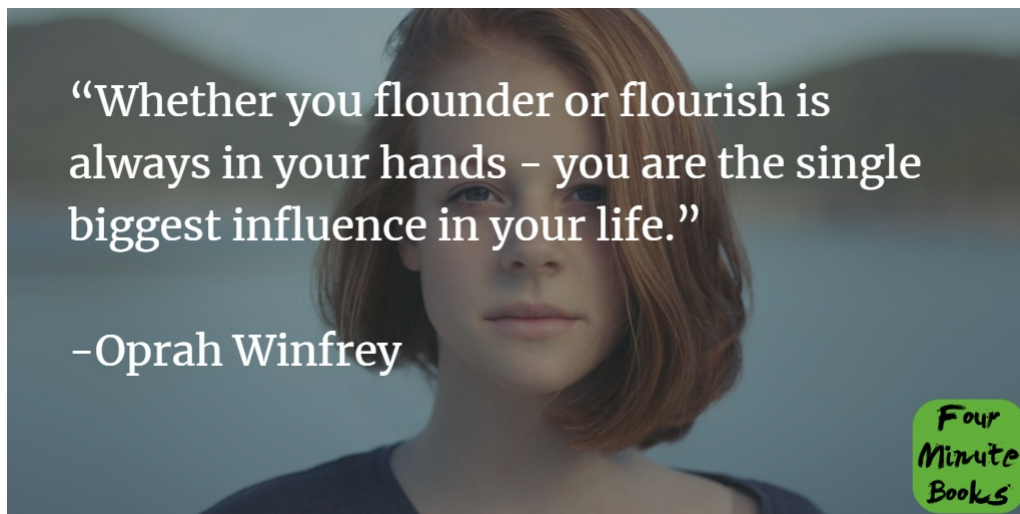
What I Know for Sure Summary

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1-Sentence-Summary: *What I Know for Sure* encourages you to create the life you want by pursuing excellence, practicing gratitude, and leveraging bad experiences to become stronger.

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:



Everybody knows Oprah Winfrey. She produced and hosted one of the most influential TV shows in American history. Her ingenuity brought a brand-new format to television with book clubs, self-improvement segments, and calls to philanthropic efforts.

But most of all, Oprah has been a champion in shaping her own existence.

She experienced hardship in her early life, but as an adult, she turned it into the stepping stone to her strength and self-sufficiency. And in *What I Know for Sure* she invites you to take responsibility for your own life, too.

In the author's view, this means working hard to reach your goals. But you must also learn to enjoy the small and big pleasures you may experience on your journey, and create more of them.

"What do you know for sure?" the film critic Gene Siskel asked Oprah once during an interview. Inspired by the question, she started a famous monthly column in her *O* magazine, whose combined insights and revelations are in this book.

Here are 3 lessons you can learn from Oprah's extraordinary life:

1. Not only can you overcome hardship, but you can leverage it to become stronger, self-sufficient, and happiness-oriented.
2. The path of progression is easier to walk if you let great stories and great people inspire you.
3. Being grateful for what you have will change your outlook but also enable you to manifest better things in your life.

Let's see how Oprah built her success and find inspiration in her view of life!

Lesson 1: From bad experiences, you can learn to take responsibility for your own happiness.

The biggest problems you may face are a chance to build your courage, discipline, and determination. Hard things can motivate you to become "fearless enough to give yourself the love you didn't receive."

Life was hard for young Oprah Winfrey. All began in 1953 in Mississippi when Oprah's mother got pregnant. Vernita Lee was unmarried and so ashamed that she hid her pregnancy until Oprah's birth. It was a time of regret and loneliness.

Some years later, Vernita moved to Milwaukee to find a better job, leaving little Oprah with her grandparents on their small farm. There weren't other children, so she spent most of her time acting out plays with her animal friends as an audience. She felt lonely.

Things got worse after she moved to her mother's house in Milwaukee. When she was 10, Oprah began to be sexually abused by a person her family trusted. She started behaving strangely, but Vernita didn't realize what was happening. At 14, Oprah got pregnant and did the same as her mother: she hid it.

She gave an early birth to a son who survived only a few weeks. Not long afterward, she moved in with her dad and started recovering from her hardships.

Her father gave her rules and pushed her to learn as much as she could. She was still a teenager but committed to working hard for success and happiness.

Lesson 2: Use inspiration from books and people to strengthen your motivation for achieving greatness.

When 16-year-old Oprah read Maya Angelou's autobiography, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, she felt validated and less lonely. She recognized herself in the young Maya, abandoned by her parents as a child, and a victim of sexual abuse. Eventually, Oprah met Maya, who became her friend and mentor.

Books and people inspired Oprah, and they can do the same for you too!

Oprah was also impressed by the story that Reverend Otis Moss Jr told her about his father. As a poor black man, he had a moment of hope when Congress ratified Afro-American people's right to vote. He put on his best suit and went to the poll.

Sadly, he ended up walking a total of 15 miles from one polling station to another because everywhere he went prevented him from casting a ballot. This is the source of a quote that Oprah often recalls: "I vote for him. I come as one, but I stand as ten thousand."

When Oprah was a child, segregation and racism were ordinary in Mississippi. In 1969, the civil rights activist Jesse Jackson visited Oprah's school and encouraged black students to pursue excellence to defeat racism. Oprah wrote his words down and stuck them on her mirror as a daily reminder to do the best she could, always.

Lesson 3: Practicing gratitude makes you feel better but also brings you more things for which to be grateful.

For more than ten years, Oprah kept a gratitude journal in which she wrote daily five good things that had happened to her. Finding her journal some years later, she realized that whenever she went through her day looking for things to be thankful for, more things to be grateful for showed up.

And the more you struggle to find something to be thankful for, the more you need to practice gratitude. **Gratitude works because it raises your energy, allowing you to attract more goodness in your life.**

One thing Oprah found very difficult to be content with was something she really couldn't get rid of: her body. In fact, since young, she was obsessed with her weight and tried the most ridiculous diets.

Until the day she started waking up in the middle of the night with palpitations the doctors couldn't explain. She was scared.

That was the moment she realized she had always taken health for granted. She finally embraced her imperfections and managed to be thankful to her body for being strong.

What I Know for Sure Review

Oprah's life has been remarkable for both trouble and success. So you would expect What I Know for Sure to be a motivational book on working hard and leaving your problems behind, and it is indeed that. But it is also a way for Oprah to pass on her contagious joy of living that comes from the ability to appreciate small things as much as big ones.

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Who would I recommend the What I Know for Sure summary to?

The 15-year-old who is bored and discouraged and thinks there's nothing worth committing to, the 20-year-old college student who doesn't know what to do after they graduate, and anyone who complains about their unfulfilling life.