

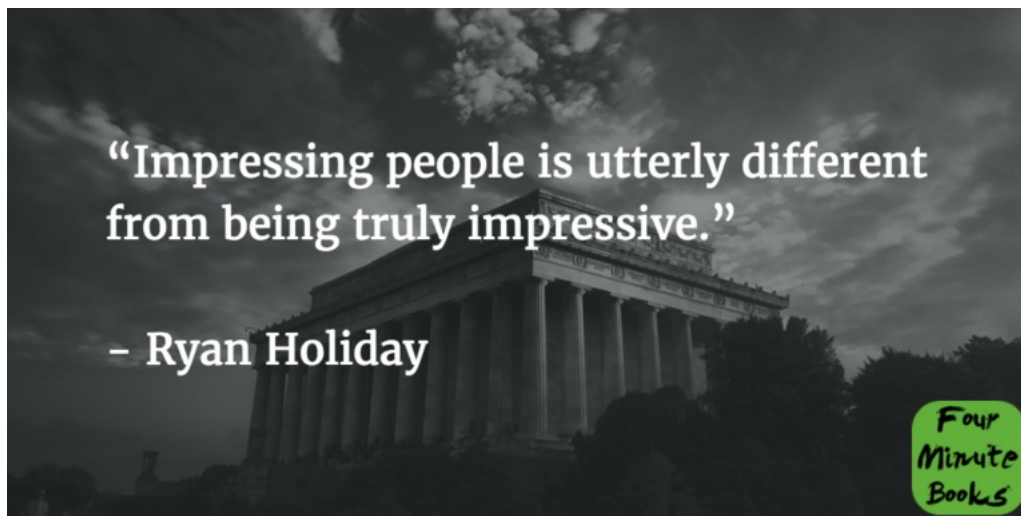
Ego Is The Enemy Summary

 fourminutebooks.com/ego-is-the-enemy-summary

1-Sentence-Summary: *Ego Is The Enemy* reveals how a tendency that's hardwired into our brains – the belief the world revolves around us and us alone – holds us back from living the life it makes us desire so much, what we can do to overcome it at every turn and how to achieve true greatness.

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:



Don't let Ryan Holiday's goat-y, remote farm life fool you, the man is a marketing mastermind. Having apprenticed under Robert Greene, who wrote *The 48 Laws of Power*, he went on to become director of marketing for American Apparel. He's pulled crazy PR stunts for big brands and authors, but 3-4 years ago, his focus shifted a lot.

Since then, he's published three books about Stoicism, lives a humble life in Texas and spends a lot of his time writing. Looks like he's learned how to keep his ego in check. *Ego Is The Enemy* will help you do the same.

Putting reigns on your ego helps you in both good and bad times, because you'll neither stress about failures, nor let success turn you into a diva. Here are my 3 favorite ways to make it happen:

1. Be a perpetual student. It'll keep you modest.
2. Don't hog tasks at work. Be a team player.
3. Reflect honestly on your performance when you get surprising results.

Ready to confront your biggest enemy within? Let's take your ego to church!

Lesson 1: Think of yourself as an eternal student to stay humble.

How could we not start the summary of a book about stoicism with a quote from one of the all-time greats?

| *“It is impossible for a man to learn that, which he thinks he already knows.” – Epictetus*

I’m proud of my attitudes and habits towards life. I’m disciplined, spend very little of the money I’m earning, live a frugal life – I just know I’m going to win in life thanks to these. However, that sometimes leaves me thinking: “There’s not much left I can learn here, I won’t change any of these for a long time.” Every time that thought crosses my mind, I call bullshit.

It might be true that these basic principles won’t change much, but there’s a huge load of things for me left to learn when it comes to making money, writing, selling, relationships, other people. It’s a never-ending process.

Ryan suggests you think of yourself like many of the ancient Stoics did: **an eternal student of life, dedicated to learning as long as you live**. This keeps you humble and encourages you to learn from the best in your field.

However, it pays to look both up and down the chain: take some time to mentor and teach others. Going back to beginners and helping them exposes you to the full spectrum of skill levels and is another way to restrain your ego.

Lesson 2: Delegate tasks to learn to trust in others.

Have you ever held on to an incredibly dull task, just because you thought no one else can do it better than you? I do this all the time, especially for repetitive to-dos. This not just inflates your own ego, it’s also a huge missed opportunity to build trust with the people you work with.

Trust increases the speed of everything in a business, the more employees trust one another, the faster things get done. Delegating some of your work to others forces you to do two things:

1. **Respect other people’s work.**
2. **Trust that they can get a job done.**

These aren’t just ways to win against your ego, but can also be the difference between a thriving company and one that goes bust.

For example, legendary American car manufacturer DeLorean may always be remembered for creating the car from Back To The Future, but due to its CEO’s stubborn attitude of having to check every single detail it went bankrupt after just seven years – with less than 10,000 cars sold.

Your turn: Can you come up with another example of a company that went bankrupt due to a lack of trust? For example: _____

Lesson 3: Use unexpected results as inflection points to keep improving.

Our ego has the tendency to blow everything out of proportion, both good and bad. Sometimes we get results, which are a lot better than we expected. Other times they're much worse. The ego ruins both of them.

When you do a bad job, your ego will tell you it's not your fault and blame anything and anyone but you. Do a great job, and it'll say you deserve every single ounce of credit, giving you a lot more than you probably deserve. Instead of letting these get to your head one way or the other, **you can use them as inflection points to keep improving.**

Have a high? Congratulate yourself, turn right back around and get back to work. Have a low? Take responsibility, learn something and start moving up again.

For example, this Quora answer recently took off for me. I could have commended myself for being "such a great writer" and rested on my laurels all week. Instead, I took one look at the rest of my answers, saw how many got zero traction at all, ordered a bunch of Ryan Holiday books, so I could learn to write better, and then wrote some more.

Take results only as what they truly are: a great opportunity to honestly reflect on your work. Nothing more, nothing less.

Ego Is The Enemy Review

Stoicism is one of the few things you can hardly be confronted with often enough in your life. Besides *Ego Is The Enemy*, *The Obstacle Is The Way* is another great read on the subject, also by Ryan Holiday. I can also recommend *The Daily Stoic*, a book that works like a daily inspirational calendar, with a Stoic quote and a short explanation for each. And if you want to get a rough overview of the high-level mission of the Stoics, check out this table.

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- How Kirk Hammett kept a learner's mindset when joining Metallica
- Why pride is different from ego but goes hand in hand with it
- What Shaquille O'Neal and Kobe Bryant should have done, but didn't
- The thing the New England Patriots did right after drafting Tom Brady as their quarterback

Who would I recommend the Ego Is The Enemy summary to?

The 22 year old student, who's about to graduate and can't wait to not be a student any longer, the 37 year old manager, who just got promoted to a role with team responsibility and finds it impossible to delegate, and anyone who still remembers the last time their ego bit them in the ass.