

Plato At The Googleplex Summary

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1-Sentence-Summary: *Plato At The Googleplex shows you how the ancient wisdom of Greek philosopher Plato from 2,000 years ago still shapes our thinking today and can help us find answers to the big questions in life by relying on his timeless habits of striving for knowledge and reason in everything we do.*

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:



Rebecca Goldstein has written ten books. Some of them are fiction, some are short stories, and some are non-fiction, like this one, which also happens to be her latest piece of writing. As you can guess from the title, it poses the question: “What would Plato do and say if he were alive today?”

Would we think he’s a lunatic? Or still learn from him? Does that mean philosophy has become useless?

Questions upon questions, which the book, not quite coincidentally, answers with more questions. I’m a huge fan of Plato and Stoic philosophy here at Four Minute Books, so I’m happy to share three lessons from Plato with you today.

Here are my 3 big takeaways from *Plato At The Googleplex*:

1. Google can answer most questions, but not all of them.
2. No two people are the same, so neither should education be.
3. Plato came up with a definition of love that encompasses all human relationships.

What would Plato teach you if he just rang your doorbell today? Here’s an educated guess!

Lesson 1: You can google your way to answers to a lot of questions, but not all of them.

What's your gut reaction to not knowing something? Sure, google it. In a 2016 world, we have the entire knowledge of history in our pockets, and while is great for fact-checking, recipe-reading and news-updating, it has a tougher time answering some questions for us than others.

For example, what about big questions, which concern morality, ethics, or highly debatable topics, like the death penalty, abortion, genetic crops? There's no way one person can answer those in single a blog post.

What's more, **Google's biggest advantage is also one of its greatest weaknesses: the fact that it crowdsources information.**

For example, if you want answers about how to feed and take care of your horse, who would you rather go to: one, trained, certified, experienced horse trainer, or a crowd of 200,000 people, all of which know a little bit about horses?

The truth is that the highest ranking answers to questions on Google might be solutions to problems that have worked for *a lot of people* – but it doesn't mean they'll work for *all people*.

As great as Google's answers are, there's one thing you should never forget – to question them, like you'd do with all answers you'd get elsewhere too.

Lesson 2: Education should lay a solid foundation for each of us, but then must adapt to us as individuals.

When do you think school stopped being useful for you? For me, I think it happened somewhere around 7th or 8th grade. After learning the rule of three to calculate percentages and being set up with basic English and Latin grammar, I would've been a lot better off if someone had given me a pen, told me to write, learn about whatever topic I like and hand me a business book.

In Germany, if you finish high school, you'll have 12-13 years of conventional education, which for most people means that at some point, they stop actually learning (except for memorizing stuff).

That's because after laying the groundwork of learning, education needs to adapt to our individual talents, skills and needs.

As Plato put it, by laying words into his character Socrates's mouth: **“Every child is not the same, hence education cannot be the same for every child.”**

Sadly, even today few school systems do this, so for now, it means educating yourself – which is what you're doing right now, right here!

Lesson 3: Love is a pre-requisite for all human relationships – if you define it like Plato does.

Have you ever heard the term platonic love? It's used to describe a loving relationship between friends that doesn't involve sex or romance. Given the fact that he's given credit by name, Plato obviously had a thing or two to say about love. However, what he didn't want is to split it into two camps, like romantic vs. platonic love.

Instead, when Plato thought of love, he thought of love as all-encompassing. To him, it marked the base of all human relationships, just with varying degrees of intimacy! Love is present among friends, family members, spouses and communities all the same – it's just the romantic, sensual part that's different.

Plato explains this by thinking of love in stages. Yes, some of our relationships start based on our senses, desire and attraction to one another. But over time, he argues, **love always advances from our senses to our rational faculties**. You know how science often says lovers have to be best friends to last a lifetime? That's what this is about.

Love can even extend beyond people, for example you can be driven and motivated by a love for learning. I don't know if this will make you think of love in a new light, but I do know this: if we all made love the pre-requisite for all our interactions with other people, the world would sure be a better place.

Plato At The Googleplex Review

Nothing like some good old-fashioned philosophy to get your mental gears spinning! Is philosophy dead? Ha! It's more relevant than ever. I'm sure Rebecca Goldstein would agree

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What else can you learn from the blinks?

- How come Plato's work is still so applicable today
- What really made Plato great (it's not that he was right about things)
- How Plato transformed the values of the ancient Greeks into ones we still use today to run the world
- The number one value that should guide all lives, according to Plato
- Which questions Plato would ask to pick some of modern science apart in minutes

Who would I recommend the Plato At The Googleplex summary to?

The 17 year old, who's currently sitting through what she thinks to be the most boring history or philosophy class of all time, the 49 year old teacher, who hasn't tried a new way of teaching in a long time, and anyone who recently got out of a relationship that didn't work.