

Breakfast With Socrates Summary

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1-Sentence-Summary: *Breakfast With Socrates takes you through an ordinary day in the company of extraordinary minds, by linking each part of it to the core message of one of several great philosophers throughout history, such as Descartes, Nietzsche, Marx and even Buddha.*

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:



What a cool idea! No wonder this book has been translated into 20 languages. Imagine you wake up in the morning and Sigmund Freud is sitting beside your bed to explain to you why you're struggling so much to get ready to leave for work on time. On the subway, Karl Marx tells you what's wrong with commuting and after work, Buddha gets you to be at peace with the world by telling you a story while you take a bath.

Breakfast With Socrates makes that fantasy come true. You'll be taken through an ordinary day, but be kept company by the world's most renowned philosophers throughout history.

Even if you're not big into philosophy, these 3 lessons will sure show you the practicality of this discipline:

1. Philosophy isn't about spinning your head all day, it's about making wise decisions.
2. Your morning routine is a battle of the egos.
3. A good way of assessing your happiness is to ask yourself if you'd live the same life again.

Ready for the most interesting breakfast you've ever had? Let's sit down with Socrates and his friends!

Lesson 1: Philosophy gives you the tools to make wise decisions every day.

Like most people I used to think philosophy is just for dreamers and primarily concerned with giving yourself a headache from thinking too much. Man, was I wrong.

In the past two months I've learned a lot about it from books and I've realized that it's probably the most practical discipline of all. Philosophy isn't just asking "What's the meaning of life?" or "Is God real?" – it's just as much about answering "Should I buy these Cheerios because they're on sale?" and "Would it be better to walk to work?"

Philosophia in its original, Greek meaning translates to "love of wisdom" and that's all philosophy is. Wise people can look at the world and see it as it truly is – objective, rational, undistorted – and can therefore accurately reflect on what's going on. **This allows them to make better decisions by asking the right questions.**

Yes, asking big questions is also part of the deal, but just some of the time, not all of the time. Philosophy is the practice of thinking critically in your everyday life so you can navigate the world in the best way possible.

Lesson 2: Every morning you fight a battle of the egos in your head.

I'd ask you if you have a morning routine or not, but in fact, we all do. Lack of a morning routine is a routine in its own way – you either have a process, or you don't, but chances are if you don't it's still the same cycle every morning (like waking up too late, brushing your teeth in a rush, throwing on the first outfit you find and running out the door).

Note: One of the best-feeling and most useful morning routines I found last year is The Miracle Morning. I explain it step-by-step here.

Which end of the spectrum you fall on depends on the outcome of a battle that takes place in your mind every morning. The battle of the egos. Sigmund Freud defined two opposing forces in our minds in the early 20th century and labeled them **the ego and the superego.**

The ego is your lizard brain, it just wants to live comfortably, without stress or surprises. The superego then comes in and tells you to do what society expects of you. Naturally, these two tendencies clash, and whoever wins defines the progression of your morning.

When you stop hitting snooze and climb out of bed, that's a superego win. When you're at the breakfast table with plenty of time to spare, that's a superego win. And when you arrive at work 10 minutes early because of it, exceeding your boss's expectations, that's also a superego win.

Most of the time when you get your ego to surrender to the superego and thus delay gratification, good stuff happens.

Lesson 3: You can find out how happy you are by asking yourself: Would you re-live every moment of your life in exactly the same way?

But maybe the thought of pleasing your boss is depressing to you, because you think working a 9 to 5 makes you miserable altogether. In that case, you would've gotten along great with Friedrich Nietzsche. For a number of years, he concerned himself with answering the question: "If I had to live this life over again, would I be able to stand it?"

He coined the doctrine of two worlds, which says that next to the real world, we all conjure a fantasy world in our minds, in order to escape from the boredom and depression of our real lives. These mass hallucinations of better partners, better work, more money and fancier lives, however, are signs of weakness, he claims.

To abandon the herd and live on our own terms, we must ditch the fantasies . It's the only way to see the world as it is, master our destinies and start making them a reality. Nietzsche called people who do this "supermen" – those who embrace their non-conformity, aren't afraid to be different and start living in a way that'd make them happy to live every moment again in exactly the same way.

Would you re-live every moment of your life in exactly the same way? The answer will tell you if you're a superman (or woman).

Breakfast With Socrates Review

Breakfast With Socrates is easily the most practical and approachable introduction to philosophy I've ever seen. If your gut reaction to all things philosophy is "Yuck!" then this book is for you. And if you're a fan already, you can discover new philosophic angles. What a hidden gem!

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What else can you learn from the blinks?

- How Descartes established our existence by thinking about waking up
- Which important questions Karl Marx asked about work
- What the protestant work ethic is and how it can make you rich
- Why forgetting about genders will improve your relationship
- How to attain heightened consciousness
- Why you might not be alone when you're dreaming

Who would I recommend the Breakfast With Socrates summary to?

The 15 year old who doesn't have a philosophy class in high school, the 47 year old hardcore capitalist, who claims his sole religion is money, and anyone who struggles to leave on time in the morning.