

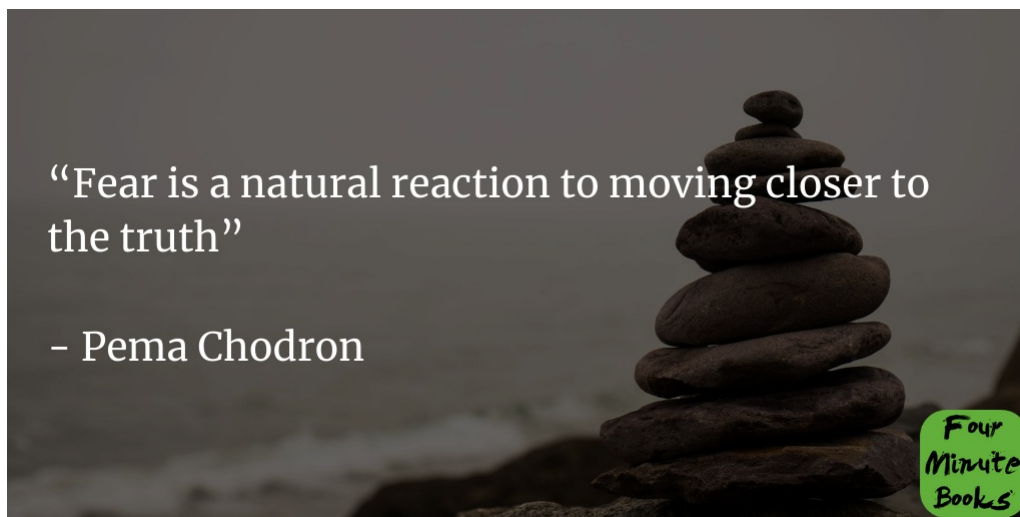
When Things Fall Apart Summary

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1-Sentence-Summary: *When Things Fall Apart* gives you the confidence to make it through life's inevitable setbacks by sharing ideas and strategies like mindfulness to grow your resilience and come out on top.

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:



In 2017, just as I began graduate school, my grandmother died unexpectedly. During the next summer, I experienced crippling depression.

Then in the fall, my daughter was born six weeks early and spent the first 17 days of her life in the hospital. And just last year I lost my job.

If this was all you knew about me you might say that I have it pretty rough, but I wouldn't say so. That's because I've learned how to use intentional thinking through mindfulness, along with many other techniques, to make it through tough times of all kinds.

As one who has been through the wringer, I can tell you that there is light at the end of the tunnel of whatever you're going through right now. Even though all seems lost and you want to give up, I promise there is a way forward.

You'll discover just a few of the many coping techniques in Pema Chodron's *When Things Fall Apart: Heart Advice for Difficult Times*. The simple tools he teaches will build up your ability to bounce back after almost anything life throws at you.

Here are 3 helpful lessons from this book that I think you'll enjoy:

1. It's okay to be afraid, learn to embrace it so you can understand and work through it.
2. When you question your hopes and fears you free yourself from constant dissatisfaction.
3. You will get more meaning in life by examining the truths of egolessness, suffering, and impermanence.

Are you ready to get some help through the challenges you're going through? Let's go!

Lesson 1: You can only understand and work through fear once you stop resisting it and instead learn how to embrace it.

What's your first reaction when you get scared? You want to run away, right? This is a natural response and justified in some circumstances. But depending on where you're at, welcoming and learning from your fear can help you.

Change your perspective so that you try to understand your fears the next time something scares you. It just might give you a new outlook on your past, relationships, or even who you are.

Usually, all fear means is that you're getting closer to discovering important truths about the difficulties you face and life as a whole. In other words, you shouldn't run from it because this emotion has got a lot to teach you!

Instead, begin reflecting on your fears. **Too often, you're so caught up in trying to fix your issues that you miss out on the important personal growth and learning experiences they can teach you.**

It helps to recognize that your life is constantly changing, for good or bad. When you understand and accept that this is normal, you open yourself to seeing solutions you might have otherwise missed.

There's a story of a family that was going through hard financial times and only had one son that could work to keep them afloat. One day, the boy fell and broke his leg, threatening the family's situation even further.

Their worry was unwarranted, however. Not long afterward the army came through the town, enlisting every able-bodied man. Because of the boy's injury, he didn't have to go and soon found work again!

Lesson 2: Question your hopes and fears if you want to be rid of constant dissatisfaction.

In *The Dark Knight Rises*, the villain Bane gives us a truth about life that we don't want to think about. "There can be no true despair without hope," he tells Batman after breaking

his back and putting him into prison.

While you think it's always good to cling onto hope when times get tough, the reality is that we have to be careful with this tool. Too much of it can leave us feeling disappointed when our hopes are dashed.

In Tibetan, the word “re-dok” is a combination of the words for fear and hope. It encompasses the feeling of both looking forward to a better life while at the same time being afraid of failure.

What you need to do instead is question both your expectations and worries.

Imagine someone says that you look old. You initially get offended, right? But consider how different you'd feel if you questioned why you think looking young mattered.

Once you examine it further it's easy to see that looking youthful is one of the least important things in life.

Speaking of getting old, death is one of the most universal fears that we all like to avoid thinking about. Have you ever stopped to consider, though, that death is just a natural part of life? Reflecting on your own mortality even has the ability to make your life better by helping you see what's truly important.

Lesson 3: Examine the truths of impermanence, suffering, and egolessness if you want to have more meaning in your life.

Trying to figure out the purpose of life is difficult. But there are some truths about living that are inevitable. And by learning and even celebrating them, you can prepare yourself to handle difficult situations better.

One of these is impermanence. It gives you a new appreciation for each beginning in your life when you realize they all will have some form of an ending someday. Consider how when a close friend dies you realize how much they meant to you, for example.

Suffering is another part of life that can be good to celebrate. Everything in the world has an opposite. Without the contrast of opposites, we wouldn't be able to experience joy or inspiration.

Recognizing the inevitability of suffering also helps us be grateful for what we have right now.

To do this, observe your feelings when in pain without any judgment. Start by reminding yourself that whatever your emotions are, that's okay. The more you do it, the more resilient you'll be when in pain.

The third unavoidable truth of life to embrace is egolessness. Let go of your need to constantly think about yourself and you'll see how things will immediately begin to improve. As one of my favorite quotes from *Doctor Strange* goes, "it's not about you!"

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When Things Fall Apart Review

I enjoyed *When Things Fall Apart* and I'm certain that you will too. Having already used some of these techniques myself, I know that they work. Life is not always going to be easy, but this book will make getting through the tough times you will have a little less difficult!

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Who would I recommend the When Things Fall Apart summary to?

The 54-year-old whose parents both recently died of COVID-19, the 31-year-old employee that feels burnt out and like there's no end to the stress, and anyone that's ever been through a setback in life.