

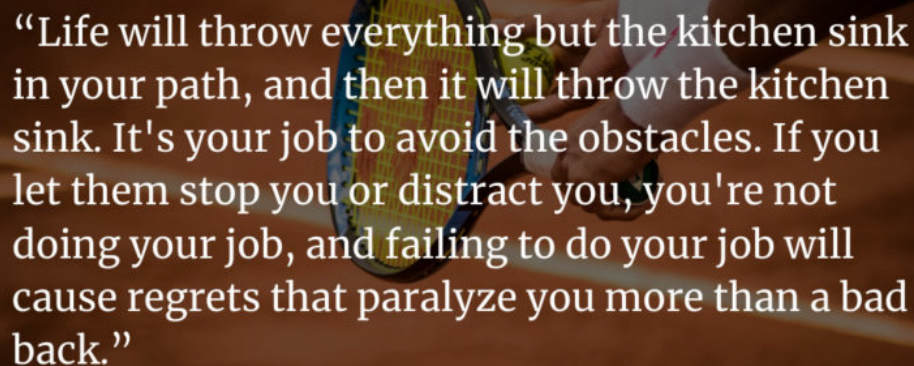
# Open Summary

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**1-Sentence-Summary:** *Open* is the autobiography of world-famous tennis player Andre Agassi in which he details his struggles and successes on the way to self-awareness and balance while he was also trying to handle the constant pressures and difficulties that came from being one of the best tennis players in the world.

**Read in:** 4 minutes

**Favorite quote from the author:**



“Life will throw everything but the kitchen sink in your path, and then it will throw the kitchen sink. It's your job to avoid the obstacles. If you let them stop you or distract you, you're not doing your job, and failing to do your job will cause regrets that paralyze you more than a bad back.”

- Andre Agassi

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Most people think that any person who reaches the highest level of success in their field probably has an inherent and exceptional passion for what they do. But when it comes to professional tennis champion Andre Agassi, this couldn't be further from the truth.

In *Open*, tennis legend Andre Agassi shares the highs and lows of his remarkable life. Agassi's destiny was planned for him from the time he was an infant, and though his true interests were elsewhere, he was groomed to become a tennis superstar.

He details his struggles of making a career out of a sport he came to resent and dealing with unwanted fame. He also details his search for finding meaning in his life and how he was able to make a remarkable comeback.

These are just 3 of the many inspirational lessons I got from this book:

1. Agassi's childhood was hard because of his controlling father, who forced him to be a tennis player.
2. Agassi had a difficult time dealing with the fame and demands of being a tennis star for much of his career.

3. Founding a school and finding a good partner helped Agassi finally find purpose and make a tennis comeback.

Serving up another great book summary! So let's get right to it!

## **Lesson 1: Agassi had a rough childhood because of his overbearing father, who was obsessed with grooming his son to become a tennis star.**

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When Agassi was only seven years old, he spent every day playing tennis against a tennis ball machine his dad had built in their Las Vegas backyard. Agassi hit up to 2,500 balls a day as his father yelled directions on how to improve his technique.

It's easy to understand why Agassi would begin to resent the sport. His father was an aggressive and violent man, and Agassi didn't dare resist. His dad was determined for his son to succeed, so he had to do what his father asked.

Agassi's dad himself dreamed of being a famous tennis player as a young child in Tehran, where he watched the kids of British and American soldiers play. Sadly, Agassi's father had no one to play with, so he took up boxing instead. He represented Iran in the Olympics. **But because he was never able to secure a medal himself, he was obsessed with making sure his son received one.**

It wasn't long before Agassi was competing with people much older than himself. He beat his father at nine. Soon he was winning youth tournaments. At 14, he was enrolled at a Florida tennis academy.

He felt it was more like an army barracks than a school for children. Kids here slept on bunks and didn't do much more than play tennis. They were also cut off from the outside world.

In this environment, he soon began to rebel. But smoking weed, wearing jeans for practice, and a pink mohawk wasn't enough to get him in trouble at the academy. The teachers all knew that Agassi was one of the most talented tennis players to grace the school.

## **Lesson 2: Agassi has struggled with his tennis fame for much of his life.**

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Agassi was just sixteen when he placed second in the final of the Florida Masters tournament. This marked the beginning of his professional career. But he struggled with his feelings about tennis. For one, he hated it, and he would have to face that for the rest of his career.

Soon came sponsorship and tours, and the fame. Though he was gathering some big wins, he felt hollow inside. Young Agassi stood out with his denim tennis shorts and spiked mullet, but he never really felt like he had his own identity.

Though he had many big wins, he had lost to some pretty big giants in his early years. One of these, Ivan Lendl, dismissed Agassi as “a haircut and forehand.” There were many accusations in his early career that he was all style and no substance.

But all of this changed when he landed a Wimbledon title in 1992. The press erupted with his first grand slam win, and finally, people recognized him for the talent he had. Even Agassi’s overly critical father was finally proud of him.

**Though he was becoming a tennis superstar, Agassi battled with feelings of pointlessness that he felt with every lost match.** These feelings even crossed into his marriage with actress Brooke Shields, who couldn’t understand why he felt depressed after losing. As a result, they increasingly spent time apart.

Rock bottom came soon after he got married. He ended up testing positive for illegal drug use, and his ranking plummeted to 141.

### **Lesson 3: Agassi found purpose when he founded a school, and finding a good partner helped him make a surprising comeback.**

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After hitting rock bottom, Agassi knew what he needed was a new challenge to motivate himself. So he set a goal to regain his number one ranking. But first, he needed to figure out who he really was. One of the things that helped him do this was establishing a new school for at-risk children in Las Vegas.

The cause was important to Agassi because he always felt like his poor education made him miss out on something. **Though his marriage was ending, building the school finally helped free him from all of the feelings of self-loathing he’d felt through the years.** This, combined with the end of a toxic marriage, helped give him a newfound purpose in life.

Soon he was back on the court and playing like himself again. At the 1999 French Open, his coach felt that he would hit it off with German tennis player Steffi Graf, so he made sure to book Agassi’s practice court close to hers.

Even though Graf had a boyfriend at the time, the two started to realize they had many things in common. She had also been pushed into the sport at a young age by her father and deeply understood Agassi’s inner turmoil. Soon they were inseparable.

She supported him and was there as he had big wins at the US and Australia opens. He climbed in the rankings once more. Agassi and Graf welcomed two children together, and his family kept him motivated in what was a remarkable end of a career comeback.

At the end of his career, people often commented on his transformation over the years. Agassi says it wasn’t a transformation because you can never be a finished product. Everyone is in a state of progress. He says even now, he’s still working toward finding what he really

wants from life.

## Open Review

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I had no idea how tough it could be to live in the spotlight like Agassi did! *Open* really *opened* my eyes to a whole new side of fame that I didn't know existed. Of course, I'd always heard Agassi's name here and there growing up, but it was interesting and inspiring to learn more about him from his book.

## Who would I recommend the Open summary to?

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The 35-year-old who loves to play tennis, the 62-year-old sports enthusiast, and anyone that wants to hear an inspirational life story.