

# Finding My Virginity Summary

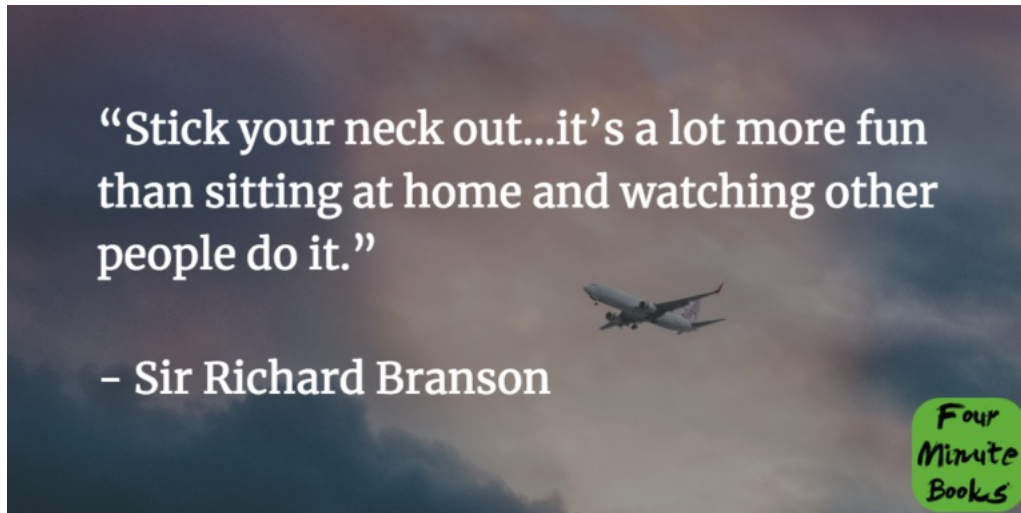
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 [fourminutebooks.com/finding-my-virginity-summary](https://fourminutebooks.com/finding-my-virginity-summary)

**1-Sentence-Summary:** *Finding My Virginity* is Richard Branson's follow-up biography, which shares the highlights of his entrepreneurial journey over the past two decades.

**Read in:** 4 minutes

**Favorite quote from the author:**



One of the biggest lessons we have to re-learn as adults is that play is important. As we grow up, we quickly forget to have fun over the seriousness of work, finding a life partner, taking care of the family and all the other “grown-up stuff” we have to do. Besides making our lives more enjoyable, a sense of play also helps us deal with our anxiety. Contrary to what you’d think, it can even help us be *better* at all the more serious stuff.

Take Richard Branson, for example. The billionaire entrepreneur and philanthropist hardly needs an introduction, but he’s the perfect representation of how approaching everything with a sense of play improves not just the journey, but also the outcome. He’s started all his business ventures from a position of: “How could I make this fun?” For him and everyone involved.

Now, as he reflects back on his past 20 years in business in *Finding My Virginity*, it becomes apparent that this approach has greatly shaped his business philosophy. In the follow-up biography to *Losing My Virginity* from 1998, he walks us through different companies of the Virgin Empire and how they came to be.

I’ve extracted 3 high-level lessons about business from going through all of them:

1. Start businesses where people have been treated poorly for a long time.
2. Put together a good group of people, then take it from there.
3. Try to partner with a big player in your industry as soon as you can.

Ready to learn how to approach business Branson-style? Here we go!

## Lesson 1: Go where people are getting screwed.

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What would you find if you broke down business to an atomic level? I think at the core, you'd see this: Each dollar earned is the result of a transaction. People pay money and receive an experience. Therefore, Richard Branson is dealing with fundamentals when he asks: "How can we improve peoples' experience here?"

It's the first thing he does whenever he considers competing in an industry. What follows from this is that **the shittier peoples' current experience is, the easier it is for you to improve it.** Virgin Atlantic, Virgin Mobile, Virgin Money, Virgin Trains, Virgin Active, no matter which venture you pick, you can always trace it back to this question.

Wherever people are getting screwed over by the current system is an opportunity for you to strike. The worse it is and the longer it's lasted, the bigger the opportunity. When Branson launched Virgin Atlantic in the 80s, for example, it was mainly because British Airways was giving people bad food, bad entertainment and bad service. Customers were enduring flights, not enjoying them and that was a chance for them to do better.

Look around. Where are you getting screwed? How can you improve this?

## Lesson 2: Assemble a team of great people and then figure out the rest.

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At one point, Branson became friends with Nelson Mandela. Later, as he thought about what charity he could start, he couldn't come up with a clear focus. Instead of waiting for one to spontaneously emerge, he called up Mandela and told him he wanted him on board. Mandela agreed.

From there, Branson made it their goal to just assemble a team of the greatest philanthropists and brightest minds in charity. He told Mandela to pick 12 more people, thus creating "the Elders," a kind of council like tribes had ages ago in their villages. Together, they recruited Kofi Annan, Muhammad Yunus, Jimmy Carter and others.

Even once the Elders were assembled, Virgin Unite still had no theme but to "make the world a better place." From there, they eventually went on to advise places where crises happened, traveling the world and spreading ideas in countries like Sudan, Somalia, North Korea and Palestine.

What's the lesson? **You don't always need a plan for everything.** Sometimes, it's just a matter of getting the right people together and the rest will figure out itself.

## Lesson 3: Always partner with someone early on.

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When Richard Branson entered the cable, internet and communications sector with Virgin

Media, one of their biggest competitors, NTL, wanted to partner with them. There was only one problem: NTL's customer service *sucked*, but customer service was the one thing Virgin cared about.

However, since NTL already had the infrastructure to bring cable, internet, cell phone service *and* landlines into peoples' homes, it would've been stupid to pass on the deal. Instead of tossing this valuable partnership out the window, Branson decided to take it and fix the problem instead. Indeed, after throwing out the scripts call center agents were using, service slowly improved and eventually, NTL was rolled into Virgin Media, restoring the brand image to the usual, trustworthy Virgin level.

The reason I chose this example is that it highlights **how crucial partnerships are, especially when you're new to the industry**. Even though the partner was less than ideal, Branson took the chance, because he knew this way he'd reach more people faster. He's continuously done this when entering new areas, partnering with governments, incumbents and even competitors.

If you can partner, do it. You'll get off the ground much quicker.

## Finding My Virginity Review

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I like biographies because by looking at the big picture you can see big, strategic lessons. In the case of *Finding My Virginity*, they've reaffirmed what I already saw as Richard Branson's defining traits: Focus on fun, love and help people, and always go for what improves more lives, even if it means losing some business in the short term. I recently listened to an interview Tim Ferriss did with him, which I can recommend.

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## What else can you learn from the blinks?

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- Why Virgin Mobile is the perfect example of Richard's principles in action
- Which two disasters almost killed two entire business branches of the Virgin empire
- How Richard has fought bad publicity over the years
- Why Virgin America was sold against Branson's will
- What allowed Virgin to enter the banking space, despite having no relations to finance before

## Who would I recommend the Finding My Virginity summary to?

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The 28 year old entrepreneur, who takes his startup way too seriously, the 43 year old working mom, who keeps spotting problems working moms face, and anyone who feels like they have to prove the world something by going it alone.