

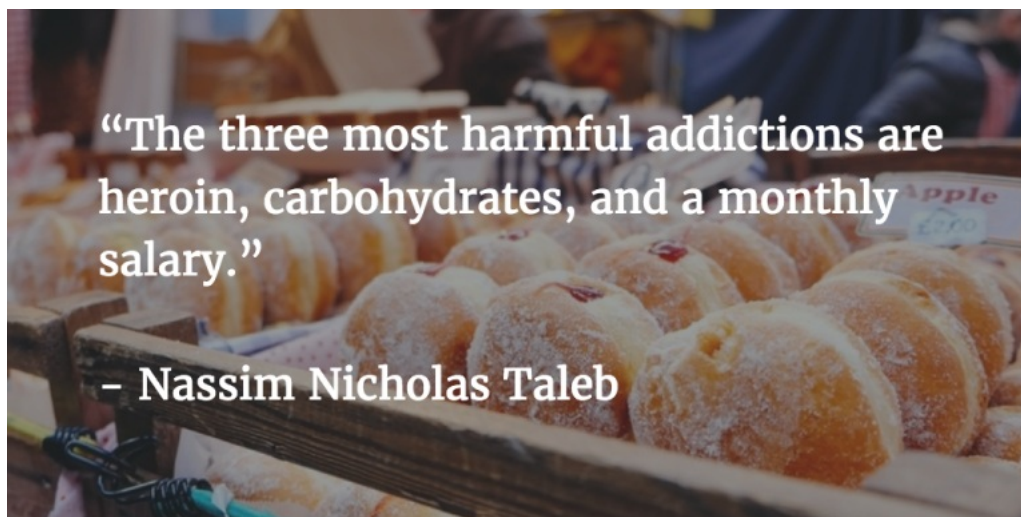
Antifragile Summary

 fourminutebooks.com/antifragile-summary

1-Sentence-Summary: *Antifragile* reveals how some systems thrive from shocks, volatility and uncertainty, instead of breaking from them, and how you can adapt more antifragile traits yourself to thrive in an uncertain and chaotic world.

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:



Most self-help books, when you break them down to their core message, speak to common sense. If you read a book like Start With Why, you'll at first be surprised, but once you get the core idea you'll say: "Of course. In retrospect, it makes perfect sense."

Antifragile isn't like that. It's unlike anything you've ever heard before. The idea alone is so hard to wrap your head around, that it really takes a while to sink in.

The author, Nassim Nicholas Taleb, is a statistician and investigates problems of randomness and uncertainty. He argues that some systems thrive when exposed to shocks and crises, instead of breaking under their pressure.

Here are 3 lessons that will show you what it means to be antifragile:

1. Fragile items break under stress, antifragile items get better from it.
2. In order for a system to be antifragile, most of its parts must be fragile.
3. Antifragile systems work, because they build extra capacity when put under stress.

Ready to stop cringing at uncertainty? Let's do this!

Lesson 1: Fragile items break under stress, antifragile items get better from it.

We all know the label on boxes with glass inside them that reads “Fragile – handle with care”, and we’ve all seen more than one scene in a movie where someone throws a package like that, resulting in a glass shattering noise.

You know that fragile things break when you shock them and toss them around – volatility does them no good.

But when you think about it, there isn’t really a word that describes things, which are the opposite, is there?

We might talk about something being robust or durable, but that really just means it can resist shocks and stress better than fragile items – but it doesn’t benefit from them.

You’d still label the boxes you ship robust things in with “Handle with care”, not with “Please handle roughly”.

Nassim Taleb took care of this dilemma by giving us a word for what we’re looking for: **antifragile**.

It describes things that benefit from shock and thrive in volatile environments, because **as they’re stressed and put under pressure, they get better, not worse**.

Can you think of an example?

Tough, right?

Here’s one: When Hercules fights the Hydra, every time he slices off one of her heads, two grow back.

So for every time the beast is hurt, it actually gets stronger. That’s an example of being antifragile.

Lesson 2: An antifragile system usually consists of many fragile parts.

There are quite a few more good examples of antifragile systems, one being the evolutionary process.

Evolution itself is incredibly antifragile – we’ve evolved from our ancestors based on the genetic features and traits which helped us survive the most and succeed.

However, that also meant many humans before us had to die.

Any individual specimen of a species is usually fragile – every human being or animal can die and quite easily so.

But, because the system can use life and death as indicators of success and failure, **the evolution of species in itself is antifragile**.

For example, our hands weren't always built to handle tools so well.

Through evolution it became apparent that the more advanced our hands got, the longer we could survive, so eventually our genetic code morphed to include the incredibly refined hands we all have today.

So for an antifragile system to work, its individual parts must be fragile, because the success and failure of these parts serves as important feedback for the system as a whole and allows it to get better in chaotic circumstances.

Lesson 3: Antifragile systems work, because they build extra capacity when put under stress.

But how exactly does that happen? Why does antifragility work?

Actually you do experience it quite often, if you exercise regularly, that is.

When you go to the gym and lift really heavy weights, and when you feel the burn, you push on and do just one more rep – that's when growth happens.

The fragile parts, the tissue in your muscles, is broken down – the failure is reported to the system.

In order to ensure future success, **your body now overcompensates for this shock, by building extra capacity to handle even bigger shocks better.**

Over night, as you sleep and recover, your muscles are rebuilt and they're now a bit stronger than before.

Usually, the human body is incredibly efficient, and doesn't want any excess capacity "lying around". But in the case of being antifragile, your body builds redundancy in order to prepare for future extreme situations and emergencies.

That's how stress can prepare your body for even bigger stress and it's building this extra capacity that lies at the core of why being antifragile is so helpful to thrive in critical situations.

Antifragile Review

Antifragile should be a mandatory read for all policy makers and investment bankers. Nassim Taleb is a trader himself and many of the lessons from this book he learned by trading in highly volatile currency markets.

I just merely scratched the surface with my three lessons here, but thought it'd be most helpful to get the idea of what antifragile even means for a start.

The man is an infinite well of wise quotes and profound insights, but they're not for the light-headed. What I liked about the summary on Blinkist is that it broke down the book's

most important ideas for the average Joe, like me, so I could first get a feel of what the book's actually about, before diving deeper.

The book has many more examples and insights, but is no light read, so if you haven't fully grasped the ideas behind antifragility yet, check out Blinkist's summary and use it to build the confidence to make Antifragile your bedtime read – you'll learn a lot!

[Read full summary on Blinkist](#)

[Get the book on Amazon](#)

[Learn more about the author](#)

What else can you learn from the blinks?

- Why tranquil environments result in fragile systems
- The reason why you should maximize your options and why you don't have to understand an antifragile system to thrive in it
- What you should do with risks instead of avoiding them
- How the size of a system influences its vulnerability
- Why antifragility often comes at the expense of others and how 2008 bankers managed to keep their jobs
- How our perspective on volatility is skewed
- What the "turkey problem" is and how it could lead you to making false assumptions
- Why the Industrial Revolution is not what we make it out to be in history books

Who would I recommend the Antifragile summary to?

The 17 year old who's unsure about going to college, but is told by his parents that it's "the safe way to go", the 35 year old politician, who's in charge of creating an economic spending program, and anyone who's ever broken a glass.