

# Uncertainty Summary

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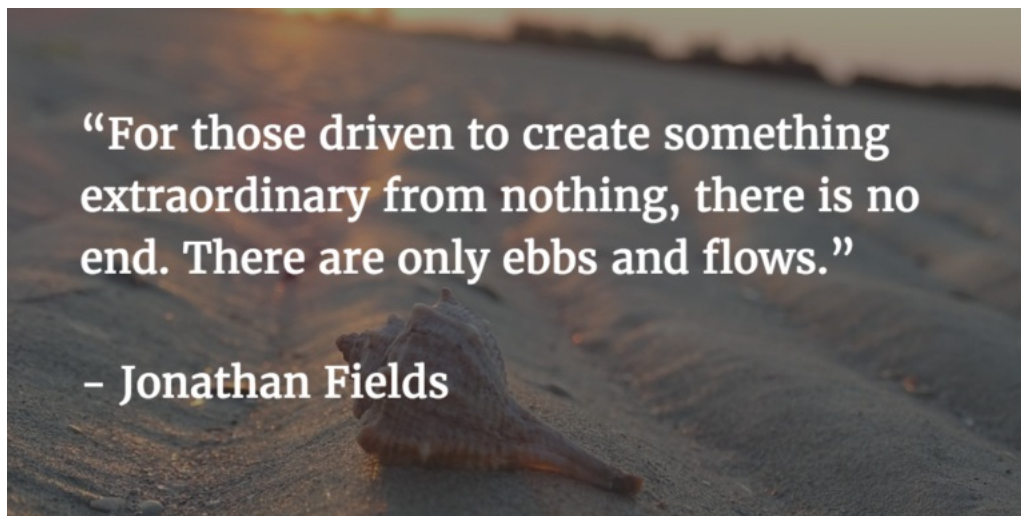


[fourminutebooks.com/uncertainty-summary](https://fourminutebooks.com/uncertainty-summary)

**1-Sentence-Summary:** *Uncertainty shows you that the condition of not knowing is nothing to fear, but the birthplace of innovation, which, if you embrace it while anchoring yourself, has an unlimited potential for growth, wealth and happiness.*

**Read in:** 4 minutes

**Favorite quote from the author:**



Jonathan Fields could surely be considered a risk-taker. Going from a six-figure income as a lawyer to \$12/hr as a personal trainer doesn't seem like a move the average joe would make. But neither is opening a yoga studio in the heart of New York City, especially the day before 9/11. Needless to say, the man's been tossed around quite a bit in his life.

Yet, instead of throwing his hands up in despair, he decided to greet fear and uncertainty with open arms, eventually finding a process that allows him to harness chaos and turn it into unlimited creativity. *Uncertainty* shows you how to do the same.

Here are 3 lessons to help you turn fear into fuel:

1. Uncertainty is at the root of innovation, so you must embrace it.
2. Use rituals and routine to anchor yourself in uncertain times.
3. Ask yourself three questions to handle even your most paralyzing fears.

Ready for the uncertain coming your way? We'll find out!

**Lesson 1: Embrace uncertainty, for it's the root of innovation.**

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Why aren't most people millionaires? Really, the internet killed our last excuses not to be, didn't it? The reason most people will remain average, with an average job, average house and average life, is not because of a lack of options.

It's because they're extremely risk-averse. It's our default setting. Whenever we see anything that involves a gamble, we focus on the downside. The money and time we could lose. But the truth is, every risk comes with a more-than-average upside as well – that's why it's a risk!

In fact, the only way to become above average is to do risky things. **Only risky things are innovative enough to stand out.**

Had Mozart only tried to copy what Bach did, then you wouldn't know his name today. If Jackson Pollock would've copied his mentor, Thomas Hart Benton, nobody would stand in line at the Museum of Modern Art in NYC to see his paintings.

Risk and uncertainty are the roads you must travel to reach the destinations of creativity and innovation.

But there are of course ways to help you steer the course as the waves get unpredictable. Like this one.

## Lesson 2: Use rituals and routine to anchor yourself in uncertain times.

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Usually, we react to pressure by throwing our habits out the window. Jonathan Fields says that's exactly the wrong move, because as uncertainty gets bigger, **routines anchor us and give us something reliable to hold on to.**

For example, if you're a freelancer and have something to deliver on a tight deadline, chances are you'll skip the gym and pull an all nighter or two, if you have to. But sticking to your exercise routine when things get tough is exactly what will keep you calm and stable.

We often give up the thing that we need the most to keep our creativity high right then when we could really use it.

Knowing what you'll do for the first hour of your morning and not waste time gives your brain a chance to take a break and work out bigger problems in your unconscious.

What's more, you can use rituals to compliment your creative orientation. Most of us either lean towards the creative, innovative side of an inventor, who comes up with big ideas, or the process-oriented, hands-on side of a craftsman, who builds things. But sometimes you have to be both (solopreneur, anyone?), and you can use routines to balance your strengths.

If you have plenty of writing ideas, for example, but find it tough to sit down and start, schedule an hour every morning to just write what comes to mind, so you'll actually see your many ideas come to life!

## Lesson 3: Handle your worst fears with three simple questions.

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No matter what, fear will always be a part of your life. You will have to deal with it again and again. And sometimes, it's going to get really paralyzing. For example when you have to decide if you should really spend your last \$10,000 in savings on a container full of scrap metal, which might be your only chance to turn a profit and get the money to open that orange farm you dream of, your fear of failure could make it impossible to decide.

Your risk-averse brain goes into overdrive, conjuring up all kinds of worst-case scenarios. You, broke on the street. Your children, hungry for a meal.

Jonathan says these three questions are all you need to calm down (and he's right). Ask yourself these when you feel anxiety is taking over:

1. **What if I fail, then recover?** Thinking about hitting rock bottom is depressing. Thinking about what comes next is often not so bad. After all, you can only go up from there. How would you get back on your feet? Take a dishwashing job? Clean the streets?
2. **What if I do nothing?** Is not taking any action really an alternative? Sure, things'll stay the same, but so will your unhappiness. You might even get depressed. Maybe that risk is not so bad after all.
3. **What if I succeed?** Dig deep into the potential upside. Imagine how reaching your ideal outcome would feel. Really dwell on it. Come up with details. Before you'll know it, you'll be halfway through making an action plan.

These will teach you to be realistic, yet stay optimistic at the same time and not lose faith.

## Uncertainty Review

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*Uncertainty* is a solid mix of philosophy, paired with practical, real-world, scientifically proven methods, and therefore strikes a good balance. For example, Jonathan Fields addresses the topic of fixed vs. growth mindset, popularized by Carol Dweck and quotes several studies to back up the exercises he suggests.

Reminded me a bit of Antifragile, which makes both of these books address a niche, but crucial topic, because uncertainty is only going to get bigger over the next decades. Everything grows and evolves faster. Startups rack up billion dollar evaluations in less than a decade, the stock market cycles become shorter and volatility goes through the roof and no one can predict what next climatic catastrophe mother nature will throw at us and when.

If you're looking for a book to make you future-proof, this is it.

Read full summary on Blinkist

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## What else can you learn from the blinks?

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- Why painters are less creative when paid on a commission basis
- What puts risk and the right mindset at the root of the creation of things that matter
- Two useful ways to collect critical feedback, without letting judgment hurt you (and one caveat)
- What attentional training is and how it helps you stay focused
- How cognitive reappraisal works (and why it helps you stay realistic)

## Who would I recommend the Uncertainty summary to?

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The 17 year old with a cool idea, but no money to start it with, the 31 year old freelance developer, who often pulls all nighters to deliver on time, and anyone who feels they take too long to make important decisions.