

Greenlights Summary

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1-Sentence-Summary: *Greenlights* is the fascinating autobiography of Matthew McConaughey in which he takes us on a wild ride of his journey through a childhood of tough love, rising to fame and success in Hollywood, shifting his career, and more, guided by the green lights he saw that led him forward at each step.

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:



Matthew McConaughey is a strong believer in what he calls greenlights. In the movie business, a greenlight is when a studio allows you to go ahead with a project you've been working on. It is a sign that you can move forward and keep going. They are all around us.

It can be a surprise gift, or maybe a chance to start over. If you don't get your greenlight, you can even make your own. He knows that not every plan will work out how you want, it's about how you deal with the setbacks.

In *Greenlights* we get a sneak peek into the mind of Academy Award-winning actor Matthew McConaughey. He brings endless wisdom and unconventional advice on how to live life with greater satisfaction. If anything, it's a fun memoir from one of Hollywood's most witty, thoughtful, and unusual A-listers.

Let's see how much we can discover from his life in just 3 lessons:

1. McConaughey's early life was full of tough love, popularity, loneliness, and career changes.
2. Success and fame began for Matthew at film school at UT Austin.

3. His life and career took him all sorts of places, but eventually, he settled down to start a family and even found his stride in the film industry.

Are you ready to be inspired by the life of Matthew McConaughey? Let's get learning!

Lesson 1: In his early years, McConaughey experienced tough love, popularity, loneliness, and career changes.

Matthew grew up in Texas in a family with some pretty unorthodox ideas. His parents had a very combative relationship, but in the end, they did always love each other. They had two divorces and got married three times.

Matthew also had a few beatings of his own. One of these times was for just saying, "I can't." On another occasion he got in trouble for telling his brother he hated him. **He did learn two important lessons from these incidents though— that you shouldn't hate and you should never say you can't.**

Perhaps not too surprisingly, he was popular and did well with the ladies in high school. But after high school ended, things quickly changed. As a member of the Rotary Club, Matthew spent a year in Australia as an exchange student.

Upon arriving, he was in for a shock. He thought he would be spending his time in Sydney, but instead, he ended up in a tiny town Warnervale. He experienced a kind of isolation and loneliness that he never had before in his life.

But he is grateful for this experience for what it taught him. He learned that he needed structure and challenge in his life. He became a vegetarian and practiced abstinence. This time, as hard as it was, forced him to look inside and figure out who he really was and what he wanted out of life.

Once he was home, he started pursuing law. But he soon felt it wasn't for him. Luckily, he had a friend that read some of his short stories and suggested maybe he try film school instead. He was so nervous to tell his dad, but when he did, he simply said, " Well... Don't half-ass it." This was exactly the green light he needed.

Lesson 2: Film school at UT Austin was the place where Matthew's success and fame began taking off.

In film school, he worked hard but knew he needed his big break. It was a chance encounter at the Hyatt hotel bar that gave him just this. One night, while visiting a friend who was the bartender, his friend pointed out a guy who was in town to produce a movie that would be shot in Austin.

His name was Don Phillips and he was a fan of both vodka and golf, two things Matthew enjoyed also. They drank together for a few hours until they had to be escorted to a cab when Don asked Matthew if he wanted a part in the movie.

The movie was *Dazed and Confused*, and he had the part of Wooderson, a college-aged partier. **Originally, Wooderson would only have three scenes, but they liked Matthew's look and interpretation of the character so much he worked for three weeks on the movie.**

Dazed and Confused opened the door, but another film, *A Time to Kill*, made him famous. The director, Joel Schumacher, wanted Matthew for a smaller part, but he was eager for the lead part of the lawyer Jake Brigance. Schumacher liked the idea, but he knew the studio had someone else.

But by chance, the part opened up. So Matthew set out to prove he was the one for the role. He went in front of the studio heads and performed the climactic courtroom scene from the movie.

Schumacher told him he would need to go off-script to impress the executives. It was a greenlight for Matthew, and he gave the performance everything he had. Two weeks later, they told him he landed the part. He was instantly launched into stardom.

Lesson 3: McConaughey's career and life have taken him all over, but he's settled down with a family and found his place in the film industry.

Soon Matthew was the king of the romantic comedy and was living the high life with money, women, and motorcycles. But once again he wondered: What is all of this about? He says it was his existential challenge, and he believed he was up to the task of figuring it out.

This is when he landed a role that helped him center himself again. The movie was *Reign of Fire*, and he would be playing an apocalyptic dragon slayer. Matthew dove into the character. He lived on a ranch in West Texas for two months to strengthen his body and mind. Some of the things he did include running barefoot in the desert and tackling cows to train. **After the isolation and intense training, he was feeling pretty battered, but inside he felt strong.**

Every time he felt he needed more out of life, he looked for a greenlight to follow. One of these came in the form of a dream where he was on his porch with all of his children. It reminded him of how he had always longed to be a father, one of the only things he was certain about in life. He knew it was time. Soon after, he met the one, Camila.

At this time he made the decision to alter the course of his career drastically. He told his agent that he wouldn't be doing any more romantic comedies. This was a big career risk, he knew it was what he needed to do. He was out of work for two years, but in this time he became a father.

Soon enough, Hollywood came calling again, and he landed new, non-romantic roles like Mud and Magic Mike. The so-called McConaissance arrived.

Greenlights Review

How can anybody not like Matthew McConaughey, especially after reading *Greenlights*? He seems like a really great and down-to-earth guy and I think it would be really cool to meet him. This is a great book and I highly recommend it!

Who would I recommend the Greenlights Summary to?

The 20-year-old who wants to get inspired to do what it takes to see their career take off, the 47-year-old that's curious to know what goes on in the mind of a creative, and anyone who is a fan of Matthew McConaughey.