

Minimalism Summary

 fourminutebooks.com/minimalism-summary/

1-Sentence-Summary: *Minimalism* is an instructive introduction to the philosophy of less and how it helped two guys who had achieved the American dream let go of their possessions and the depressions that came with them.

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:



A little over five years ago, a friend sent me [a link](#) that read “Our 21-Day Journey into Minimalism.” Intrigued by the story of two young guys, who seemed to have it all – the well-paying job, the nice house, the fast car – but confessed to being unhappy, I read on. Since I was on college exchange in the US, living in a tiny, 70 sqft room, I didn’t have much stuff to begin with, but I still did a modified version of their 21-day program.

It confirmed the gut feeling I’d had since arriving and showed me we truly don’t need much to feel happy. As a result, I tossed out 70% of my wardrobe and sold all of my DVDs and video games upon returning home. I’ve been a minimalist ever since. I draw my energy and contentment from meaningful work, kind relationships, and beautiful experiences, not from things. It gives me room to think about what matters and deal with important issues head on.

Minimalism: Live a Meaningful Life is the debut book those ‘two young guys,’ Ryan and Joshua, published in 2011 about this philosophy. After publishing three more and making [a documentary](#), they continue to travel around the world, spreading their message. Here are 3 lessons from the book:

1. Debt goes first. Get rid of your financial crutches to finally feel free.
2. Use the TARA method to become more accepting of other people in your life.
3. You are not your job. Don’t let your work define you.

Do you feel life's promises about work and money have disappointed you so far? Then maybe, minimalism will work for you. Let's take a look!

Lesson 1: Paying off all your debt will give you a tremendous sense of freedom and relief.

Germans tend to have a healthy dose of respect for debt, but in other countries, especially the USA, it's become so socially normalized that it's almost weird to *not* have debt. If you look at any collection of graphs about the state of debt, however, it's easy to get scared fast. It keeps climbing up while wages average down, student debt has eclipsed credit cards, and 50% of all money owed to the US government comes from student debt one way or another.

Like many American students, Josh and Ryan were plagued with debt as well. Before Joshua could even *begin* his journey into minimalism, he spent two years with no vacations, no eating out, and no luxuries to pay off all his debt. **It was a painful process, but worth every minute and penny, Josh says.**

Whether you start cleaning out your possessions at the same time or not is up to you. It can help you make some extra cash and will provide more room, not just to breathe and live, but to think. But being debt-free will definitely provide a feeling of relief unlike any other.

Lesson 2: You can use the TARA method to accept other people as they are, even if they disagree with minimalism.

One of the hardest things for self-improvement nerds is that other people often simply don't care. They enjoy their lives because they're *not* constantly busy testing a new diet, experimenting with morning routines, or, well, minimalism. That doesn't make them worse, just different. And instead of trying to change others, it's much healthier to try and how we deal with them.

So, in order to better accept your friends despite their humongous baseball card collections, Josh and Ryan suggest the TARA method:

1. **Tolerate** their quirks.
2. **Accept** they will always exist.
3. **Respect** the time they dedicate to them.
4. **Appreciate** that aspect of their lives, as it's a little part of your life too.

You can use this model not just to better deal with the little things that annoy you, but also to be a kinder person in general. Life is much better if we don't just get a long, but genuinely appreciate who we are and that each one of us is unique.

Lesson 3: Social interactions are centered around our work, but you're much more than your job. Make sure it shows.

Ever since I started working for myself, I've had huge problems answering the most common question when meeting new people: "What do you do?" Until now, I've usually

gone for the cop out “I’m a student” answer, mostly because it’s the easiest. Going forward, I’ll probably go with “writer,” but the truth is I’m doing many things. Chances are, you are too.

You might only have *one* main job, but that doesn’t make your job title a one-word description of your identity. Often, the question is just a covert attempt at gauging how much money you make anyways. Josh and Ryan put it well when they say **you’re a complex human being with a great width of passions and talents, some of which make money, others of which cost some**.

No matter how long you’ve been doing it, a job is just a job. You can change it any time. So the next time you’re faced with the question, don’t just steer the conversation to more meaningful topics, also try to seed those conversations from the start. Ask people what they’re into or passionate about and you’ll hear much more interesting stories!

My personal take-aways

This is a good book for people first hearing about minimalism and skeptics. It’s about how Ryan and Josh got their start, what they let go of, and what they filled their lives with instead: health, relationships, passion, growth, contribution, and confluence. *Minimalism: Live a Meaningful Life* offers some new perspective on an age-old problem: dealing with excess.

[Read full summary on Blinkist >>](#)

[Free Preview >>](#)

[Learn more about the authors >>](#)

What else can you learn from the blinks?

- Why money buys unhappiness more often than not
- What Josh’s mom kept in four boxes she never opened
- How to declutter your body
- Why changing yourself won’t make you less authentic
- What budgeting can contribute to your personal freedom
- Why volunteer work feels so rewarding

Who would I recommend the Minimalism summary to?

The 25 year old college student, who spends \$500 on Amazon Prime Day, the 37 year old young father, who’s working hard, but can never seem to find time for his kids, and anyone who feels unfulfilled, despite having everything they want and need.