

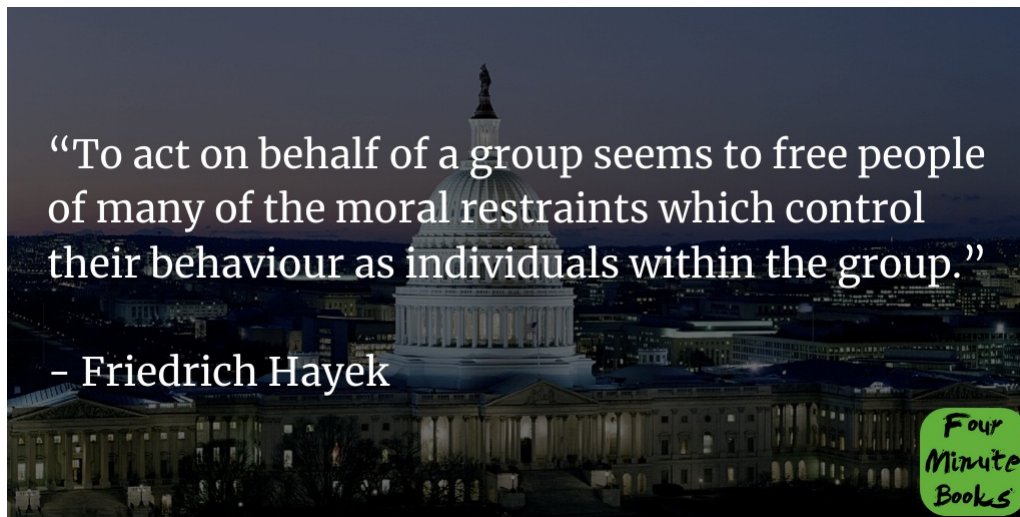
The Road To Serfdom Summary

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1-Sentence-Summary: *The Road To Serfdom* helps you keep your freedoms and individuality by taking a stand against socialism, identifying its risks to turn into totalitarianism, and why this was especially important after WWII.

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:



As World War II was coming to an end, Nazi Germany began to fall from both sides. The UK and the US coming from the west and Russia from the east would spell the end of the war.

At the time, people began to be optimistic for such a wonderful event. But there was a hidden danger lurking in the aftermath of the war-the threat of socialist ideologies began to emerge. It happened in Nazi Germany, and it was possible that these precarious ideas could creep into governments around the world.

This is the problem that Nobel Prize winner Friedrich Hayek was considering while everyone was looking forward to the war being over. He felt that he needed to alert the world of these issues and that's why he wrote *The Road to Serfdom*. It'll give you a newfound gratitude for the freedoms you enjoy today.

Here are the 3 most eye-opening lessons I've discovered from this one:

1. Socialism doesn't enable personal freedom, it smothers it.
2. Corrupt people end up in power in totalitarian socialist systems.
3. The socialist parts of the world struggled after World War II but the freer countries thrived because of their freedom.

Let's dive right into the risks of giving up freedom!

Lesson 1: Personal freedoms are put at risk by socialism, not enabled by it.

The idea behind socialism is that if everybody pools their money and resources and lets a government distribute it then everyone will be better off. It's proponents taut that it enables freedom and equality. Unfortunately, history proves that these utopian ideas are just too idealistic.

One component of this worldview is that the government should have total control over the economy. This is especially dangerous to personal freedom.

Liberalism, in contrast, allows the economy and scientific advancements to move forward uninhibited by the hand of an aloof bureaucracy.

Although socialism attempts to uphold equality, security, and social justice, it cripples nations by eliminating private enterprises, like production.

Compare this to liberalism, which lets companies compete and become better because of it. The market governs the prices to be what is best for people and businesses alike, and not some uninformed government agency.

In a more collectivist situation, competition is smothered and leads to a loss of choice. That's because monopolies arise and take over the market when industries become centralized. To curb this problem, socialist nations would have to control them, eliminating their ability to choose the best way they see forward.

In other words, socialism means the less-intelligent government takes over sectors of life and the economy that would be much better run by those who know about it, like actual business owners.

Lesson 2: In totalitarian socialist systems, corrupt people always end up in control.

When the author wrote this book in 1944, he argued that awful people would end up in power in a socialist government. Today, we see that even in more democratic systems, awful people still end up in power.

While we love the utopian ideal that people leading us will always be benevolent, this just isn't realistic for any system.

The best form of government is when it's run by the people. This happens through a smaller group of representatives in charge that speak for everyone. However, people differ more in their views as they become more educated.

In other words, it's easier to unite a large group if they all think the same way. **This means it's less difficult to control people if they're less educated and propaganda has more of an influence on them.** Corrupt officials can use indoctrination to push people to get behind a cause that actually limits their freedoms.

Another problem is that the dictator in charge of a socialist government will want to focus on the greater good. That means inhibiting the freedoms and rights of minorities.

Enforcing an equal distribution of wealth causes such leaders to make decisions that are morally ambiguous. This means that the people will never get a ruler who fights for democracy and individual rights. Thus, people with low moral standards end up on top.

Lesson 3: The more free a country was in the aftermath of World War II, the more it thrived.

These days we have a pretty good idea how much the actual toll of WWII took on the world. Even back in the author's time, it was clear that it would take a lot of work to rebuild the state of European nations. And it was clear that focusing on individualist ideals rather than collectivist ones was going to be important.

For the UK alone, choosing a more socialist system would destroy moral virtues like independence, responsibility, and self-reliance. "The Plan" would take over people's lives as they blindly began following orders. Collectivism would hold up the rebuilding of society.

The author recommended focusing on letting the market do a lot of the heavy lifting that recovery would require. His proposition was to let individualism uphold competition. This would bring UK living standards back to pre-war levels and above within just a few years.

He further warned against governments looking inward by identifying the limitations it would put on nations working together to bounce back. If the national economy were planned without consideration for the world market, it could lead to inequalities between countries. This was a threat to long-term harmony.

Looking back now, we see that the UK didn't choose to become socialist. And just look at the difference it made in how much better they fared than other nations that weren't so smart!

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The Road To Serfdom Review

At first, the ideas in *The Road To Serfdom* felt too complex for me, but toward the end, I realized just how important these ideas are. Although this book is old it brings up a lot of powerful points about the amount of control a government should have. While I think that some political control in the economy might be a good idea, this book taught me that totalitarianism is always going to be an awful thing.

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Who would I recommend The Road To Serfdom summary to?

The 21-year-old political science major who wants to learn about what people thought of government after World War II, the 58-year-old who loves being politically involved and could use some help to see the dangers of the socialist ways that some of our systems are heading, and anyone that wants to see why they should protect freedom.