

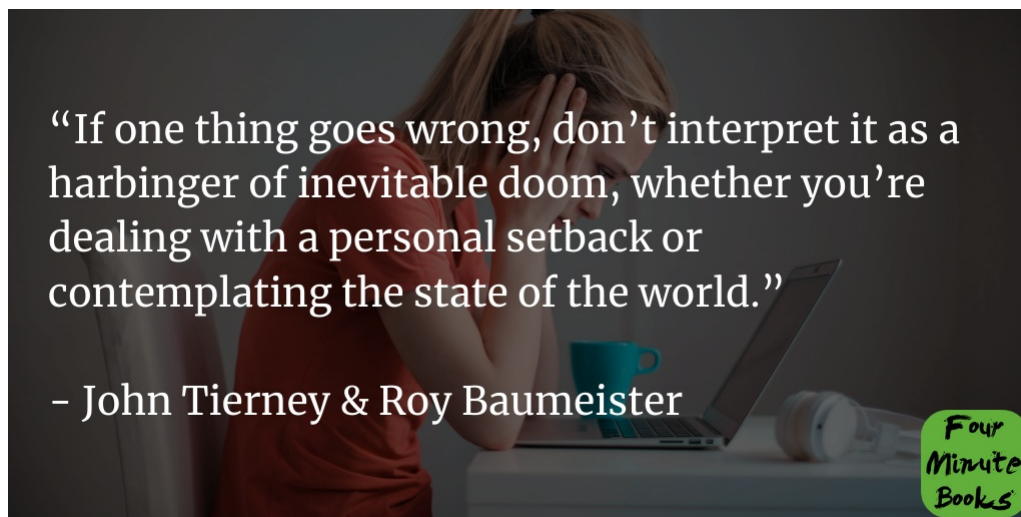
The Power Of Bad Summary



1-Sentence-Summary: *The Power Of Bad* gives some excellent tips on how to become happier by identifying your tendency toward negativity and what psychology and research have to show you about how to beat it.

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:



It's 12:45 am and you're laying there in bed, wide awake and in horror as you remember something embarrassing you said when you were 12. It doesn't help that you just watched the news tonight and all they talked about was how awful everything is right now.

We live in a world where negative things seem to get all the attention, whether in our own minds or otherwise. You get a whole bunch of positive thoughts but for some reason, the one bad one takes control of your brain. Why is this? And how do we fix it?

Social psychologist Roy Baumeister and experienced science writer John Tierney are here with the solutions in their book *The Power of Bad: How the Negativity Effect Rules Us and How We Can Rule It*. You'll get some answers on why negativity is so powerful, as well as science-based strategies to bring more optimism into your life.

Let's see how much we can learn from this book in just 3 lessons:

1. For every negative experience you have, try to get at least four positive ones.
2. People listen to criticism more even when it's within a sea of compliments, but it can help them grow if done correctly.

3. If you're around someone with a bad attitude, you're more likely to develop one yourself, so you should remove these people from your life.

Negativity isn't good but learning about it is about to help you become happier! Let's go!

Lesson 1: You need to have five positive experiences to combat the overwhelming effects of just a single negative one.

How do you measure whether you should stay in a relationship or not? The perfect one doesn't exist, after all. Our partners are usually great but once in a while their dark side comes out. Does that mean you should leave?

One of the authors, Roy Baumeister, once asked himself this same question. To help him decide, he started tracking the good, bad, and neutral days. Months later the data showed that for every two good days there was 1 bad.

In other words, only 67% of days were good, so he left the relationship.

Baumeister's efforts show the power of a positivity ratio, which is how many bad events there are relative to good ones. **It's an important number, too, because research shows that it has to be high if you want to succeed.**

There's a famous study by psychologist John Gottman that shows the truth of this. He had married couples track their positive and negative interactions. In the end, those with an even number of both broke up. But those who were the happiest had five good interactions for every bad.

If you're trying to improve yourself, though, Baumeister suggests you shot for a minimum of four positives for every negative. So if you miss a run, for example, don't be too hard on yourself, just try to make it happen for the next four days.

Lesson 2: Sandwiching criticism between compliments doesn't work, but when you deliver feedback correctly it can help others grow.

I recently saw a video while scrolling through Facebook that interested me because I could relate. It showed a woman standing between two large jars. One began filling slowly with jelly beans, which eventually reached the brim.

The woman picked up the full jar and held it tight. Then one single jelly bean drops into the other jar and she immediately drops the full one and picks the other up.

In this example, the jar full of jelly beans represents all of our positive interactions, while the other is a symbol for the bad ones. **The lesson, then, is that we have so much good going on, but the negative takes over our minds, no matter how small.**

Sometimes we need to give people feedback though. You might have heard that you should say something nice, give the information, and then add another compliment at the end. This is also known as the feedback sandwich, but it doesn't work.

One psychologist did a study in which he told students they were reading words that described their personalities. Although most were positive, a few insults were scattered in there. Amid all the good, these were all the students could remember.

So when you need to give feedback, remember what doctors do when sharing bad news with patients. They involve them in the conversation by asking them questions. This two-way conversation helps them understand that they have more control than they initially think.

Lesson 3: Remove people that have a bad attitude from your life so that you don't catch their infectious negativity.

Eliza Byington knows a thing or two about the power of a bad apple. Where once her office was tense and gloomy, one day everything changed for the better. What happened? The grumpiest employee started working from home!

They say that one bad apple will ruin the bunch, and this is true for people too. How you feel and perform is a function of the attitudes of the people around you. In the famous words of Jim Rohn:

“You are the average of the five people you spend the most time with.”

Science has a word or two to say about this, too. **Patients who have good social support, that is, a good network of family and friends who are positive, recover faster.**

On the other hand, if those family and friends are negative, they give social undermining and slow recovery.

Research in the workplace shows similar results. Teams with only one person with a negative attitude perform as bad as those where everyone is a downer! The authors suggest watching out for three types of bad apples:

- The Jerk, who is rude.
- The Slacker, marked by laziness.
- The Downer, a person that is always pessimistic.

To limit their effect on your team, start by catching it early before they can make things worse. Another useful tactic is to change the situation, like a unique task or a different environment.

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The Power Of Bad Review

I love the lessons this book teaches! It may sound counterintuitive, but *The Power Of Bad* is one of the best books on happiness that I've ever read. The advice and scientific research to back it up is motivational to help anyone and everyone get over the bad things in life to have more of the good!

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Who would I recommend The Power Of Bad summary to?

The 29-year-old who is a pessimist at heart but is sick of always being miserable, the 53-year-old that loves to learn about psychology and how to use it to improve their life, and anyone that wants a new perspective on how to be happier.