

## Bibliographical Reference

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## Topic of reading

### *Why Games Make Us Better and How They Can Change the World*

## Main points

Summarising what she had written till that point, 14 Fixes.

In eventuality, comparing the two worlds of reality and games

- Reality sucks
- Games are saviour

Proving with evidence that gaming is part of our DNA

Gaming is something that has been used as a survival tool from Lydians till today,

It can and should be used to help our evolution and is leading to our reinvention.

## Key terminology

**Lydians:** Lydia was an Iron Age kingdom of western Asia Minor located generally east of ancient Ionia in the modern western Turkish provinces of Uşak, Manisa and inland İzmir. Its population spoke an Anatolian language known as Lydian. Its capital was Sardis. The Kingdom of Lydia existed from about 1200 BC to 546 BC

**Herodotus:** Herodotus was an ancient Greek historian who was born in Halicarnassus in the Persian Empire. He is known for having written the book The Histories, a detailed record of his "inquiry" on the origins of the Greco-Persian Wars

**Famine:** Extreme scarcity of food.

**Tuscany:** is home to some of the world's most recognizable Renaissance art and architecture, including Michelangelo's "David" statue, Botticelli's works in the Uffizi Gallery and the Duomo basilica

**Etruscan:** The Etruscan civilization is the modern name given to a powerful and wealthy civilization of ancient Italy in the area corresponding roughly to Tuscany, south of the Arno river, western Umbria and northern and central Lazio

### Key quotations

Reality is better: reality is our destiny. (348)

[For starving Lydians] Games were a way to raise real quality of life. This was their primary function: to provide real positive emotions, real positive experiences, and real social connections during a difficult time. (349)

We play games endlessly, no matter how limited our resources. Moreover, when we play games, we consume less. (350)

We are wrapping real problems inside of games: Scientific problems, social problems, economic problems, environmental problems. (351)

If they did it then, we can do it again today. (353)

Games aren't leading us to the downfall of human civilization. They're leading us to its reinvention. (354)

### Key references

Yudkowsky, Eliezer. "If You Demand Magic, Magic Won't Help." Less Wrong, March 22, 2008. [http://lesswrong.com/lw/ou/if\\_you\\_demand\\_magic\\_magic\\_wont\\_help/](http://lesswrong.com/lw/ou/if_you_demand_magic_magic_wont_help/).

McGonigal, Jane (2011) *Reality is Broken: Why Games Makes Us Better and How They Can Change the World*. London: Johnathan Cape.

### Overall 500-word summary

In her conclusion, Jane used the first few pages to summarise all 14 Chapters of her book that she called 14 Fixes. During the 14 Fixes, she had compared and analyzed how Gaming has become beneficial for us and how it can be better than reality.

At one point of her book, she sounded depressing towards reality: *"Reality is easy, Reality is depressing, it's unproductive and hopeless. It's disconnected and trivial. It's hard to get into. It's pointless, unrewarding, lonely, and isolating."* (348) and more, however soon after that she pointed out the most important factor: *"The reality is also better: Reality is our destiny"*. (348) You can understand most of what she wanted to conclude in that statement.

As hard as the reality it may be, as escapism the game may seem, both can work together and make our life better. She mentioned how *"our most important mission in life is to engage with reality, as fully and as deeply as we can."* (349) using that, she explained how in games we can achieve all of it, taking Lydians as an example, the games they used to distract themselves had a *"primary function: to provide real positive emotions, real positive experience, and real social connection during a difficult time."* (349)

She later continued the benefits of games, how some tasks are easier to achieve in games, such as getting a group to work together. *"We are using games to create better rules of engagement and to broaden our circle of cooperation. More and more we recognize the unrivaled power of gameplay to create common ground, to concentrate our collective attention, and to inspire long-term efforts."* (350)

She then remained on how Lydians were to realize the benefit of games in terms of preserving the recourses, how this applied to our era and how we are looking for different ways to prevent exhausting Earth's resources. This could mean using the games to find new creative ways to tackle this and other important issues.

There is a section that I personally like, is when she wrote about how the dice game may have helped Lydian's to cope with the famine, but it didn't help them solve it. I like to compare the Lydians games to a painkiller, it stops the pain but doesn't heal you, as for current games, are like antibiotics: They remove the pain by removing the cause of the pain.

After three pages of proving how Lydian story can be true, she concluded her book on how games and reality are harmonizing and how games fill our real lives with positive emotions, positive activity and so on. *"Games aren't leading us to the downfall of human civilization. They're leading us to its reinvention"* (354) she hoped and wished that we interrogate our lives with games more. *"If we commit to harnessing the power of games for real happiness and real change, then a better reality is more than possible."* (354)

I agree with her resolves. However, there are few topics that she scratched the surface of but never went into details. For example, the origin of the Etruscans were the Lydians that were the best in the dice games. This could very well be the reason behind the great urban skills she mentioned on page 352, and she mentioned the effect of games on our psychology and its improvement, but she never went into the amount of details that I hoped. I think the effect of games on human psychology is a wide topic that needs challenging.