

SUMMARY

BY ALYSSA BURNETTE

LIFE'S AMAZING SECRETS

BY GAUR GOPAL DAS



Summary of “Life’s Amazing Secrets” by Gaur Gopal Das

Written by Alyssa Burnette

Discover the secret to a meaningful life.

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Introduction

Have you ever thought about your life as being like a car? Probably not, right? However, the author posits that this analogy can help us unlock the secret to a balanced life. Because the thing about cars is that they need balance to succeed. That's why a car has four tires to support each of its four sides. If any of those tires are deflated, the entire car suffers; it will be imbalanced and it won't run well. Gaur Gopal Das believes that the same is true of our lives. So, over the course of this summary, we'll examine the four key areas that Das believes are the four "tires" of our lives: our personal lives, professional lives, relationships, and our position in society.



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Be Grateful for The Little Things

This might sound like the most cliché advice in the world, but it might actually be the most helpful! The author firmly believes that cultivating an attitude of gratitude is key to developing a meaningful life. It's also not an easy thing to do, but that's exactly why the author believes it's so important. After all, complaining is easy; it's easy to look at our lives and come up with a long list of all the things we wish were different. Maybe we wish we were smarter, taller, or prettier. Maybe we wish we had what someone else had. Or maybe we're simply angry that our lives didn't turn out the way we'd hoped. There's no doubt about it: if we look hard enough, we can easily find things to complain about.

But the author invites us to think critically about that mindset and ask ourselves what happens when we have that attitude. If you spend all your time complaining, are you more likely to get what you want? If you are angry about your neighbor's new fancy car, is that somehow going to help you get that car? Of course not. Instead, you're just going to go through life being sad and angry and bitter, and that doesn't help anybody. That attitude just makes you unpleasant to be around and causes you to be miserable. So, if nothing good comes from complaining about the things we don't have, why not make an effort to be grateful for the things we do have?

Sure, it might take a bit of effort to cultivate an attitude of gratitude, but-- unlike complaining-- it has been proven that a lot of good things come from a positive attitude!

Here's why: we already know that stress is the result of intense pressure and/or negativity. This wears us down and causes us to become frantic, nervous, and worried. Stress is going to impact our lives no matter what, so it's important that we don't create needless stress for ourselves by looking for things to complain about in life. And because it's impossible to rid our lives of all stress, it's vitally important that we find positive ways to counteract the stress we do encounter. So, if you want to cultivate a meaningful life, the

author believes that developing a grateful heart is the most important place to start.

Because it's so easy for us to become overwhelmed by the pressure in our lives, we need to balance that negativity with frequent bursts of little, happy things. It can be something as simple as sharing a funny meme with a friend. Or maybe you look forward to picking up a pumpkin spice latte on your work every morning. If you take a close look at your life, you'll probably find a million little things to be thankful for every day-- things you normally take for granted. These small moments of joy can be anything and they will be different for every person. But no matter what brings you joy, the important thing is that you cultivate those moments and your gratitude for them. Because when you look at the things you have to be thankful for, you'll find that your outlook on life improves!

You'll also find that those moments of joy are going to reduce your stress and re-set the short fuse that many of us accumulate during the stressful workday. They can also help you to focus on the positive, which is crucial for mitigating stress. Because-- let's face it-- it's highly unlikely that anyone loves every single aspect of their job or life. Even if you try to maintain a grateful spirit, there's going to be something we hate doing, some task that feels mindless and unnecessary. And that's why it's important to work extra hard at cultivating an attitude of gratitude. Sometimes, it may be harder than others. And sometimes, we may find it difficult to concentrate on a task we dislike. But if we can focus on the positive aspects of our lives as much as possible, we can improve our overall outlook.

For example, maybe you just really hate a certain part of your job. Maybe there's nothing positive about it and you're just always going to hate it. But maybe that task is just a stepping stone on your path to something better. Maybe once you master that skill, you can move on to the job you really want. Or maybe it's simply paying the bills and you can be grateful for that. Altering your perspective in these small ways might not sound like much, but they can result in a substantial difference. In fact, if your outlook on life gets even slightly more positive, it can reduce your stress and improve your mental and

physical health! So, take some time to truly stop and smell the roses. Tell your friend a joke. Treat yourself to a cupcake. And as you fall asleep each night, try to make a mental list of all the things you're grateful for.

These small positive things might sound cliché, but remember that our brains are basically computers. We have the power to program them with a vast array of information, so it's up to us to choose whether we want our brains to focus on the positive or the negative. Even simple things-- like the thoughts we dwell on and the attitudes with which we approach our days-- go a long way towards programming our brains. So, if you want to start building tiny, happy habits, start by programming your brain to look on the bright side!



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Finding Peace Through Mindfulness

Do you consider yourself to be a spiritual person? Many people do not identify as spiritual or religious because they believe that spirituality is not necessary for them to experience a meaningful life. However, the author believes that cultivating your spiritual life is vital if you want to unlock the secret to a happy life. And mindfulness is one of the best ways to start. You don't have to be religious or believe in any particular deity to practice mindfulness. That's because mindfulness focuses on meditation and spiritual awareness without placing any one religion at the center. Although practices like meditation are currently in vogue and some people might want to dismiss them as the next big fad, the truth is that meditation is so much more than instagrammable yoga poses. In fact, it's more like a workout for your brain! And just like workout equipment is designed to help you exercise different parts of your body, there are different meditation exercises to help you accomplish a variety of mental health goals.

One of the best workouts for strengthening your emotional intelligence is a practice called mindfulness. It works by improving our concentration and training both our attention and meta attention. You might not know that there are two different types of attention, but there are, and they're both vitally important in sharpening our focus. Attention-- the state of being alert and focused on what's going around us-- is what's implied when people tell us, "Pay attention!" But meta attention can be defined as "attention of attention," or the state of awareness about how much you're actually paying attention. So, for example, when you're listening to a lecture and you're focusing on what's being said and actively taking notes, that's paying attention. But when you start drifting off and thinking about what you're going to have for lunch-- and you call yourself on it-- that's meta attention.

As you can imagine, training your meta attention can do wonders for your success in your daily life because once you hone the ability to notice when you're zoning out and bring yourself back into the present, you'll be about a thousand times more focused. If you practice this consistently enough, you

can ultimately train yourself to practice deep concentration for long periods of time, increasing both your productivity and mental acuity. And in addition to helping you focus, mindfulness can also help you to relax. By practicing a concentrated relaxation of your mind, you can disconnect from the stresses and anxieties of the day and clear your mind. In fact, Alan Wallace, a mental relaxation specialist, asserts that mindfulness can help your brain do a sort of “factory reset” and return to its default state of happiness, the state we started in as children before life got in the way.

So, if you’re ready to go start your mindful routine right now, here’s what you can do. Start by finding a comfortable sitting position where you feel both relaxed and alert. Once you’re situated, start by taking three slow, deep breaths and then transition to breathing naturally. As you do so, focus on your breathing, taking note of the rise and fall of your chest and how the air feels in your nostrils. Be conscious of moments when your mind starts to wander and gently bring your attention back to your breath. You can do this for ten minutes or for any period of time that feels comfortable for you.



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Unlock Your Professional Potential

Successful people understand that, in order to be successful, you must constantly adapt. Because as you adapt, you learn what does and doesn't work. You learn to reject unhealthy thoughts and habits and replace them with better ones. So, in this chapter, we'll take a closer look at some of the most important lessons you should learn if you want to be successful.

The author observes that thinking outside the box is one of the most vital ingredients for anyone's success. No matter what your goals are, no matter what industry you work in, thinking outside the box is crucial to your personal development and improvement. But it can also be one of the hardest mindsets to cultivate. That's because we spend the first eighteen years of our lives learning to conform to society. We learn, for example, to be quiet and respectful of others when they are speaking. We learn not to be know-it-alls or show-offs or tattle-tales. And as a result of this teaching, we often allow our ideas and accomplishments to take a back seat to those of others. But the author observes that sometimes, this can harm us. Because although it's important to be respectful and kind and to know when to be quiet, it's also important to know when to speak up. In other words, we have to know when to go with the flow and when to challenge the status quo.

Knowing when to do those things is especially important from a business perspective. Because if you're unable to think outside the box, you might miss out on a lot of opportunities that require creative thinking. For example, let's say that your company is trying to come up with a product that will be the next big thing. You need to think of something that will beat your competitors and be a national sensation. (No pressure at all, right?!) Coming up with an idea like that can be tough, especially if you're not able to think critically and creatively. Faced with that amount of pressure, it might be easy to give in and avoid trying something new. After all, you might get it wrong. You might come up with an idea that nobody likes. And both of those things are totally possible. But if you never try, one thing is for certain: your competitors will beat you to it. Because sure, you might have had a bad idea or two along the

way, but you might have had a great one in the end! But if you never try, you'll never know. And you'll always be beaten by the people who do keep trying, who aren't afraid of failure, and who push on to develop those awesome ideas. So, in the end, your business will likely become obsolete.

No one wants that! And that's why the author argues that our mindsets need an update. If we want to survive in the ever-changing business world, our thought processes will need a complete overhaul. And that means learning new ways of thinking and new strategies. Adopting an entirely new mindset might be tough, but the author believes that it's absolutely vital for survival. To help you adopt that new mindset, the author posits that you must first get your emotions under control. Human beings naturally fear what they do not understand. It's an evolutionary defense mechanism that has helped us survive and evolve. But while this might have been helpful to our neanderthal ancestors, today, it often means that we're hesitant to try new things. That's usually because we're afraid of leaping into the unknown. We worry that we'll get it wrong, that we'll fail, or that we'll look silly. In fact, sometimes we're so afraid that we just never try anything new at all! And that's why you have to get your emotions under control if you want to learn new things.

So, how do you do it? Well, the first step is to admit that failure can be an opportunity. No one likes to fail or admit that we did something badly, so we often imagine failure to be the worst possible outcome in any situation. But the truth is that failure is an opportunity to learn! Because every time we get something wrong, we have a chance to learn how to get it right. So, if we can start by relinquishing our fear and embracing failure as an opportunity, we'll be on the path to learning new things!



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Finding Peace in Your Personal Relationships

Who hasn't heard the expression "we fell in love?" It seems like this phrase-- or some version of it-- is present in every song, movie, book, and TV show we encounter! In fact, we are constantly bombarded by the idea that two characters met and "fell in love." Or your friend tells you that meeting her new partner "was just fate" or "meant to be." A new romance might be "written in the stars," while two new lovers might be "starstruck." Likewise, you might have heard it said that "love is blind" or that you "just can't help falling in love." And because these phrases-- like lying!-- have been so normalized, you might not see anything wrong with them. But have you noticed the one thing they all have in common? Although these phrases can apply to a variety of different people and scenarios, the one thing they have in common is the implication that love is a mystical thing beyond your control.

However, the author asserts that deconstructing this assumption is crucial to finding lasting love. And once you dismantle the idea that love is fragile and beyond your control, it's important to replace that belief with the truth. The truth is that love is all about being committed and intentional. Being intentional in your love for your partner can help you to avoid a common mistake: falling for the fairytale fantasy. Whether you've thought about it in precisely those terms or not, we've all been there. We've all gotten swept up in the picture perfect images portrayed by romance movies or the blissful lyrics of love songs. Because the media only represents a very one-sided image of romance, we often succumb to the mistaken idea that it's supposed to look like that all the time. Even if we know real life isn't always perfect, sometimes we still find ourselves being unreasonably disappointed when our picture perfect romances are revealed to be less than perfect.

Maybe your knight in shining armor snores. Maybe, when you get to know each other better, you realize your significant other has some nagging insecurities or unattractive traits. Your moments together stop feeling like a scene from a romance movie. And at this point, many people grow

disillusioned and decide to jump ship. Because it's not perfect, we assume that it must be fated to self-destruct. But that's not always true at all! While it's certainly true that some people are just incompatible or that some partners are toxic to each other, that's not always the case. Sometimes relationships are abandoned because people have the wrong ideas or assume that the relationship is doomed just because the honeymoon period has ended.

But the author knows that real love only flourishes with time, trust, commitment, and mutual communication. This last part is especially important because mutual growth is the most important ingredient for a successful relationship. That's because mutual growth involves honesty and realism. You accept that you're attracted to each other, but that neither of you are perfect. You accept that you're going to have bad days, stressful days, or days where you get on each other's nerves. You accept that you both have room to grow and improve. And rather than giving up on each other, you're committed to growing together and encouraging each other to become better.



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Final Summary

Sometimes, we look at other people's lives and wonder why they're so successful. We wonder if they know some secret to success that the rest of us have missed somehow. The author posits that there is indeed a secret to an amazing life, but it's a secret that everyone can find! According to the author's theory, you should envision your life as a car. When you think about your life that way, you can remember that the car of your life should be equally balanced on four tires. These four tires represent the four key areas of your life: your personal development, your professional development, your relationships with others, and your spiritual life.

When you cultivate an attitude of gratitude and practice mindfulness, you can find peace with yourself, your life, and your spirituality. And when you open your mind to constructive criticism and new ideas, you can unlock your professional potential, no matter what industry you work in. Last but not least, you can improve your relationships with others by being thoughtful and intentional in the way you love.



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