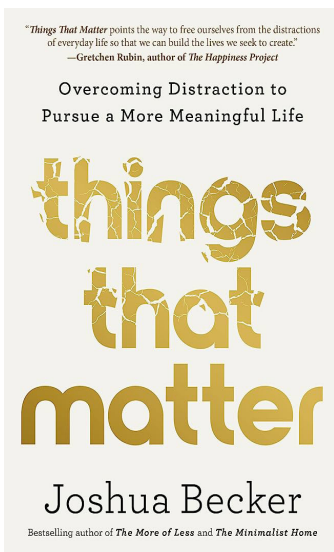


EXECUTIVE BOOK SUMMARIES

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Joshua Becker is one of the leading voices in the modern simplicity movement. He writes and speaks on minimalism.

Things That Matter

THE NUTSHELL

Waterbrook 2022

PART 1: THE OBJECTIVE AND THE OBSTACLES

1. A Life with No Regrets: *Beginning with a View to the End*

There may be no greater pursuit for yourself *and* others than choosing to live a meaningful life focused on the things that matter. I define *minimalism* as “the intentional promotion of the things we most value by removing anything that distracts us from them.” It isn’t negative; it’s positive. Because when we own fewer possessions, we liberate precious energy, time, and focus that we can direct toward more meaningful pursuits.

2. Distracted from Meaning: *Letting the Lesser Crowd Out the Greater*

Today, to an extent never before known, we are distracted by the trivial, the novel, and the (seemingly) urgent. The problem begins when distractions take over our lives and push out more important pursuits. Indulging in distractions can go from being an occasional pastime to becoming an ingrained part of our lifestyles. When a distraction becomes a lifestyle, we lose control over the lives we are living. We lose intentionality.

PART 2: DISTRACTIONS OF A PARALYZED WILL

3. Dreams Overshadowed: *Overcoming the Distraction of Fear*

Many people would rather be disappointed and unfulfilled doing things that are safe than go through the anxiety of chasing valuable dreams and goals.

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Sadly, they prefer a safe, meaningless status quo over taking a risk that might lead to failure—or might lead to success. If fear is keeping you from purposefully living the life you've always desired, try discovering your hidden fears and intentionally redirecting them.

4. Wounded: *Overcoming the Distraction of Past Mistakes*

In our pursuit of the things that matter to us, past mistakes can be a drag, a distraction, and a deterrent from moving ahead. By “past mistakes,” I’m talking about anything negative you’ve done or that has been done to you that is preventing you from making progress or achieving accomplishments. One way or another, we are all influenced by troubles in our pasts. You can’t change the past, but you can move beyond it in hope of a better future.

PART 3: DISTRACTIONS OF THE LESSER GOOD

5. The Me Monster: *Overcoming the Distraction of Happiness*

When we shift our focus off ourselves, we live lives of greater meaning and greater contribution. When we serve others without concern over what we might receive in return, we experience the beauty of selfless love. And when we direct our resources of time and money toward others, we begin to discover pursuits more valuable than material possessions, fame, beauty, or sex. You’ll find that you have fewer regrets about how you’re living your life.

6. Enough Is Enough: *Overcoming the Distraction of Money*

When we consider the men and women we most want to emulate with our lives, aren’t they always the most generous among us? They are kind, loving, thoughtful, and selfless. They are quick to share their time, money, talents, and spirit. There may be times when we wish to be rich, but deep down we realize that the people we most admire are generous, not wealthy. If we are to reach the end with little regret, we must be so as well.

7. Litter on the Road to Purpose: *Overcoming the Distraction of Possessions*

Look around at your own home. All that clutter used to be money and time. The more you own, the greater the burden on your life your possessions become. *Owning* less leads to *wanting* less. And that is one of the reasons I am so passionate about minimalism and helping people experience its benefits. Once we see the advantages of owning less, it is a small step to experiencing contentment with our possessions.

8. Trending: *Overcoming the Distraction of Applause*

Finding our self-worth in recognition and approval from others is always a foolish pursuit. It negatively impacts the decisions we make and the lives we choose to live. Furthermore, applause never fully satisfies our hearts or souls. Even those who have reached the pinnacle of fame and prestige in our society long for more of the same. As the saying goes, you can never get enough of what you don’t need to make you happy.

9. Beaches Get Boring: *Overcoming the Distraction of Leisure*

I believe that for just about everybody, the most fulfilling thing we can do, in the long term, is to focus on our work. Anything that contributes good to others is *work*, regardless if we’re getting paid for it. I’m *not* against rest, relaxation,

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and fun. I just don't want you to miss out on the things that matter to you. What I'm against is making leisure your objective. Because if leisure is your *objective*, it will inevitably displace your highest priorities.

10. Blinking Lights: Overcoming the Distraction of Technology

I still frequently catch myself wasting time on social media or reading a news story that is irrelevant to me. Bring intentionality to every technological platform and interaction you encounter. Take meaningful breaks to reevaluate its role in your life to see if powering down your devices is a way to power up your purpose. Use technology to promote things that matter rather than being distracted from them.

PART 4: ENDING OF THE BOOK, BEGINNING OF A MORE MEANINGFUL LIFE

11. Live the Story You Want Told: And Expect Surprises

I'm sure you understand that finishing this book isn't the end of struggling against distraction. But the struggle is different when you have a clear knowledge of who your adversaries are. Even then, clearing away the distractions is not the ultimate point in all this. The ultimate point is to live a life of meaning and purpose. So take the power position over the distractions in your life. Get going on the things that matter to you.