



How Proust Can Change Your Life

By Alain De Botton

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How Proust Can Change Your Life By Alain De Botton

Alain de Botton combines two unlikely genres--literary biography and self-help manual--in the hilarious and unexpectedly practical *How Proust Can Change Your Life*.

Who would have thought that Marcel Proust, one of the most important writers of our century, could provide us with such a rich source of insight into how best to live life? Proust understood that the essence and value of life was the sum of its everyday parts. As relevant today as they were at the turn of the century, Proust's life and work are transformed here into a no-nonsense guide to, among other things, enjoying your vacation, reviving a relationship, achieving original and unclichééd articulation, being a good host, recognizing love, and understanding why you should never sleep with someone on a first date. It took de Botton to find the inspirational in Proust's essays, letters and fiction and, perhaps even more surprising, to draw out a vivid and clarifying portrait of the master from between the lines of his work.

Here is Proust as we have never seen or read him before: witty, intelligent, pragmatic. He might well change your life.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

This is a genius-level piece of writing that manages to blend literary biography with self-help and tongue-in-cheek with the profound. The quirky, early 1900s French author Marcel Proust acts as the vessel for surprisingly impressive nuggets of wisdom on down-to-earth topics such as why you should never sleep with someone on the first date, how to protect yourself against lower back pain, and how to cope with obnoxious neighbors. Here's proof that our ancestors had just as much insight as the gurus du jour and perhaps a lot more wit. De Botton simultaneously pokes fun at the self-help movement and makes a significant contribution to its archives.

From Publishers Weekly

Generally writers fall into one of two camps: those who feel that one can't write without having a firm grasp on Proust, and those who, like Virginia Woolf, are crippled by his influence. De Botton, the author of *On Love*, *The Romantic Movement* and *Kiss and Tell*, obviously falls into the former category. But rather than an endless exegesis on memory, de Botton has chosen to weave Proust's life, work, friends and era into a gently irreverent, tongue-in-cheek self-help book. For example, in the chapter titled "How to Suffer Successfully," de Botton lists poor Proust's many difficulties (asthma, "awkward desires," sensitive skin, a Jewish mother, fear of mice), which is essentially a funny way of telling the reader quite a lot about the man's life. Next he moves on to Proust's little thesis that because we only really think when distressed, we shouldn't worry about striving for happiness so much as "pursuing ways to be properly and productively unhappy." De Botton then cheerily judges various characters of *A la recherche* against their author's maxims. At the beginning, when de Botton drags his own girlfriend into a tortuous and not terribly successful digression, readers may be skeptical, but they will be won over by his whimsical relation of Proust's lessons?essentially an exhortation to slow down, pay attention and learn from life. Is it profound? No. Does this add something new to Proust scholarship? Probably not. But it's a real pleasure to read someone who treats this sacrosanct subject as something that is still vital and vigorous. 25,000 first printing; author tour. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc.

From Library Journal

Here's an antidote for readers paralyzed by the anxiety of influence. Novelist and literary biographer de Botton (*Kiss & Tell*, Picador, 1996) sets out to exorcise the influence of Marcel Proust, using the words of the great French author of *In Search of Lost Time* most engagingly for and against him. In the process, de Botton fashions a hilarious work of authorial self-help. Like Julian Barnes in his *Flaubert's Parrot*, de Botton knows his author intimately, from what newspaper snippets he would have read each morning to what he and James Joyce said to each other the one time they met ("Non."). In pithy sections, spliced with kitschy photos and plenty of white space, he takes on Proust's personal and writerly idiosyncrasies: the length of his sentences; his loving devotion to minutiae; his elevation of the quotidian; his hypochondria. De Botton might not make us better people (he quotes the perennially miserable Proust on love in a Q-and-A format: "how to be happy in love"), but he will make us more careful readers. For all literature collections. ?Amy Boaz, "Library Journal"

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Victor Elam:

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Vincent Cartagena:

A lot of people always spent their free time to vacation or go to the outside with them family or their friend. Were you aware? Many a lot of people spent that they free time just watching TV, or perhaps playing video games all day long. If you need to try to find a new activity that's look different you can read a new book. It is really fun for yourself. If you enjoy the book you read you can spent the entire day to reading a reserve. The book How Proust Can Change Your Life it is extremely good to read. There are a lot of people who recommended this book. They were enjoying reading this book. When you did not have enough space to create this book you can buy the particular e-book. You can m0ore quickly to read this book from the smart phone. The price is not to cover but this book offers high quality.

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