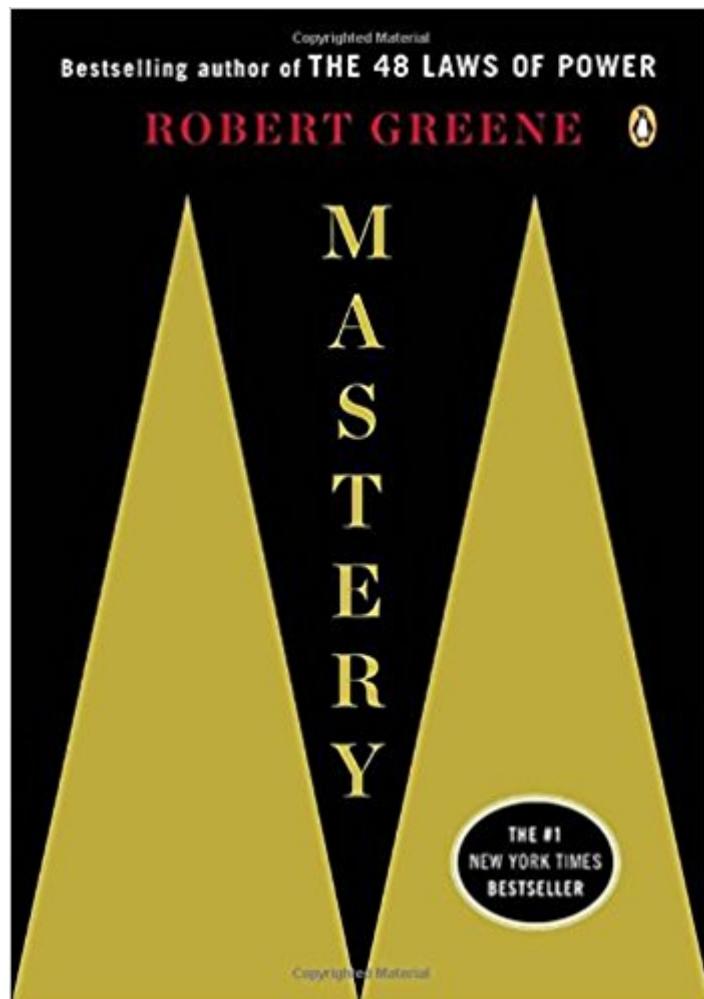


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# Mastery



## Synopsis

The #1 New York Times-bestseller from the author of *The 48 Laws of Power* Each one of us has within us the potential to be a Master. Learn the secrets of the field you have chosen, submit to a rigorous apprenticeship, absorb the hidden knowledge possessed by those with years of experience, surge past competitors to surpass them in brilliance, and explode established patterns from within. Study the behaviors of Albert Einstein, Charles Darwin, Leonardo da Vinci and the nine contemporary Masters interviewed for this book. The bestseller author of *The 48 Laws of Power*, *The Art of Seduction*, and *The 33 Strategies of War*, Robert Greene has spent a lifetime studying the laws of power. Now, he shares the secret path to greatness. With this seminal text as a guide, readers will learn how to unlock the passion within and become masters.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Greene's specialty is analyzing the lives and philosophies of historical figures like Sun Tzu and Napoleon, and extracting from them tips on how to manipulate people and situations. A cutthroat worldview that has earned him a devoted following among a like-minded readership of rappers, drug dealers and corporate executives." —The New York Times  
"Compelling." —Forbes  
"Illuminating." —The Guardian

Robert Greene has a degree in classical studies and is the author of several bestselling books, including *The 48 Laws of Power*, *The 33 Strategies of War*, *The Art of Seduction*, and *Mastery*. He lives in Los Angeles.

This is an extremely powerful work on how to achieve mastery in one's life. Mastery can be thought of as the unique way each of us can fully actualize our potential for greatness and enjoy a fulfilling life. Achieving Mastery in life is a lot of work but it is the way to a flourishing life (a life of self-fulfillment). Spinoza's quote "All things excellent are as difficult as they are rare" came to mind several times as I read the book. The author provides ideas and strategies that can improve the process for those willing to expend the effort. I plan to re-read and work with the ideas and strategies covered in this book and apply them to my personal context. I also plan to purchase copies of the book for my wife and 2 teenage sons so they can benefit from this material as well. The work begins by discussing how to discover one's purpose in life. This is unique to each individual and needs to be well thought through. The author gives 5 strategies for finding your life's task and illustrates these strategies with historical and contemporary figures. Two of the strategies he discusses that really gave me a lot to think about are: 1.) Occupy the perfect niche - the Darwinian strategy. In this strategy you need to find the career niche that best fits your interests and talents and then evolve that niche over time. I found the example of V.S. Ramachandran very interesting. 2.) Let go of the past - the adaptation strategy. The following quote from this section that really resonated with me: "You must adapt your Life's Task to these circumstances. You do not hold on to past ways of doing things, because it will ensure you will fall behind and suffer for it. You are flexible and looking to adapt." The author then covers the Apprentice Phase which he breaks into 3 steps: 1.) Deep Observation - the Passive Mode 2.) Skills Acquisition - the Practice Mode 3.) Experimentation - The Active Mode. There are detailed strategies for completing the ideal apprenticeship. These are illustrated by examples. 2 of my favorites in this section were "move toward resistance and pain" as illustrated by the example of Bill Bradley and "apprentice yourself in failure" as illustrated by Henry Ford. All 8 strategies are worth thinking about in detail. The next section covers learning through a Mentor and is one of the best parts of the book. The example of Michael Faraday is used as a great illustration. There are strategies discussed for finding the appropriate mentor(s), knowing when to break away from the mentor and what to do if you cannot find a mentor (the example here is Thomas Edison and there is an interesting tie-back to Faraday). Having a mentor is the most effective way to gain deep knowledge of a field in the least amount of time - it greatly accelerates that path to Mastery. The next section deals with social intelligence and seeing people as they are. Benjamin Franklin is used as an example. There are 7 deadly realities covered in this section (envy, conformism, rigidity, self-obsessiveness, laziness, flightiness and passive aggression) as well as strategies for acquiring social intelligence. The fifth section is on

awakening the dimensional mind. This is where you see more and more aspects of reality and develop ways to become more creative (and not get stuck in the past). There are several strategies on creativity discussed in detail. I found the discussion on ways to alter one's perspective especially illuminating. These include avoiding:<sup>\*</sup> Looking at the "what" instead of the "how"<sup>\*</sup> Rushing to generalities and ignoring details<sup>\*</sup> Confirming paradigms and ignoring anomalies - (key quote: "...anomalies themselves contain the richest information. They often reveal to us the flaws in our paradigms and open up new ways of looking at the world")<sup>\*</sup> fixating on what is present, ignoring what is absent (Sherlock Holmes example)The section continues with strategies and examples for this "creative-active" phase. My favorite was a section on Mechanical Intelligence with the Wright Brothers as an example.The Final Section is on Mastery as the fusing of the Intuitive with the Rational. The strategies in this section are very powerful and I will be returning to them again and again. Here are the 7 strategies:1.) Connect to your environment2.) Play to your strengths (this is very important - see further thoughts on this below)3.) Transform yourself through practice4.) Internalize the details - the life force (Leonardo Da Vinci example)5.) Widen your vision6.) Submit to the other - the Inside Out perspective7.) Synthesize all forms of knowledgeThis is a very powerful book filled with a lot of good ideas and strategies. There are ideas I plan to continue to "chew" on and think more deeply about while I work to integrate these ideas and strategies into my personal context.A lot of the book stresses the importance of self-discipline, persevering through difficult challenges, the importance of an adaptive and active mind, independent thinking and integrating all of one's knowledge. Here are a few recommendations I would make to augment the material covered in this book:1.) For Self-Discipline and Willpower (and perseverance): Willpower by Tierney and Baumeister The Power of Habit by Duhigg Grit (see TED Talk by Angela Duckworth and the GRIT assessment as well - Grit Assessment can be found at: available at [...])2.) For an adaptive/active mindset (and recovering from failure) Mindset by Carol Dweck Aapt by Tim Harford3.) For a great fictional example of many of the ideas covered in the book, I would recommend Ayn Rand's The Fountainhead (Roark as a positive example; Keating as a negative example of what the author calls "the false self")4.) Other Real world examples Richard Feynman (see his books "Surely You're Joking, Mr. Feynman" and "The Pleasure of Finding Things Out")5.) Finding your strengths Strengthsfinder 2.0 by Tom Rath VIA Survey of Character Strengths (available at [...])

This book has encouraged and empowered me at a time when I quit corporate america and stepped out on faith to build my own business and expand my brand. It has given me real world examples of

other "Masters" and their craft and told their stories of how they did essentially the same thing I am doing. I am still in the process of reading this book, but love it so far!

Greene strikes the right notes in *Mastery*. He thematically replays the novice, apprentice to master pattern in dozens of well-known to less known "Masters" from music to mathematics. Greene is particularly focused on the transition of the "expert" apprentice as they breakthrough into Masters of their own ways. Using the usual set of overachievers to get every readers attention (Einstein, Bach, Edison, et. al.) and introduces lesser known, though no less significant Masterful outcomes and breakthrough. Greene delivers a compelling and interesting narrative. There's a lot in here to be savored. You can see Greene masterfully reveal his premise. The book gets better as you go. I highlight stuff. As I look at the remains of the read not too many highlights in the first third and I have to admit that I was not drawn in in the middle and I recall the moment I was sucked in. Finally, I must have exited control and highlighted way too much for the purpose of "high lighting". I'm not sure how one categorizes Greene's writing. Are they analytical history, process-ology, philosophical discourse or simply a unique genre? This reader hasn't figured that out but just really enjoys Greene's discussion.

I didn't exactly know what to expect from this book. I was looking around to find secrets that were definitely hidden. and I really didn't know what to look for, either. Well, this book delivers about 5-fold on those secrets. this book is for someone who has available time to just stop, take some walks maybe, then come home to this book in quietness. if you want to live your life in a hurry, then forget it. if you live for distractions, then forget it. but for someone searching honestly, it's a godsend and I thank Robert Greene for spending his time conceiving and executing this bombshell! maybe a better description is timebomb. . . 'cause stuff will definitely go off sooner or later in you. thanxjohn

100% worth reading. Greene uses compelling stories from history to explain how the geniuses and greats of the past got to where they are today. It crushes the myth of the lone genius and shows how masters all used apprenticeships to get where they are. I learned more about how to succeed from this book than I did in 12 years of school.

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