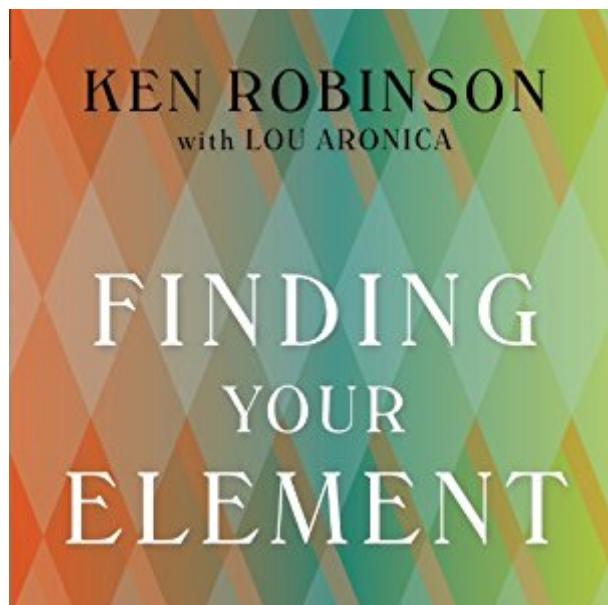


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Finding Your Element: How To Discover Your Talents And Passions And Transform Your Life



Synopsis

Sir Ken Robinson's groundbreaking book *The Element* introduced listeners to a new concept of self-fulfillment through the convergence of natural talents and personal passions. *The Element* has inspired people all over the world and has created for Robinson an intensely devoted following. Now comes the long-awaited companion, the practical guide that helps people find their own Element. Among the questions that this new book answers are: How do I find out what my talents and passions are? What if I love something I'm not good at? What if I'm good at something I don't love? What if I can't make a living from my Element? How do I help my children find their Element? *Finding Your Element* comes at a critical time, as concerns about the economy, education, and the environment continue to grow. The need to connect to our personal talents and passions has never been greater. As Robinson writes in his introduction, wherever you are, whatever you do, and no matter how old you are, if you're searching for your Element, this book is for you.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Ken Robinson wrote this book as a follow-up to his other book *The Element: How Finding Your Passion Changes Everything* by Ken Robinson, Lou Aronica (Reprint Edition) [Paperback(2009)]. He takes a 360 view of your life and walks you through it all. You do a series of exercises where you ask yourself deep questions. You find your element when you find the intersection between your passions and aptitudes. He has three major principles: Principle #1: Your Life is Unique. We're all

different. We're all a mix of nature and nurture. Principle #2: You create your own life. Carl Jung: "I am not what has happened to me, I am what I choose to become." Principle #3: Life is Organic. We all change. We don't have a linear path. He incorporates a lot of examples of successful people who had a completely nonlinear path to success. Vivek Wadhwa, famous for his work on immigrants working in the technology field in the United States, realized that "there is no link between what you study in college and how successful or otherwise you are later in your life." Ken Robinson talks about a lot of the existing literature and methods for finding out what your passion is and he's fairly critical of them. He talks about what's called the Forer Effect, also known as the Barnum Effect. You mold your personality to conform with what people tell you your personality incorporates. Robinson is in favor of using personality types to describe yourself, but he says not to let the personality definitions (MBTI for example) limit you.

According to Ken Robinson, what he characterizes as "The Element" is not a physical location but the challenge is to locate it, nonetheless. "It's about doing something that feels so completely natural to you, that resonates so strongly with you, that you feel as if this is who you really are." Some people locate it in childhood, others decades later, and still others never. "Finding your Element is a quest to find yourself...it is a two-way journey: an inward journey to explore what lies within you and an outward journey to explore opportunities in the world around you." Robinson wrote *The Element* (2009) with Lou Aronica who also assisted with the writing of *Finding Your Element* four years later. Ever since the first book was published, Robinson explains, "people have asked me how they can find their own Element, or help other people to find theirs." In response, this sequel has five main thematic threads that weave throughout the book, each of which is intended to help the reader reflect and focus on finding their own Element and, if they wish to, help others to do so. Robinson provides ideas and principles as well as stories and examples, stories, and other resources such as 15 exercises to complete (more about them in a moment) and clusters of questions to consider at the end of each chapter before moving on to the next. In fact, each chapter title is a question. "Although there are ten chapters in the book, *Finding Your Element* is not a ten-step program." Just as Oscar Wilde once suggested, "Be yourself. Everyone else is taken," Robinson suggests that only the reader can answer the questions posed. "In the end, only you will know if you've found your Element or if you are still looking for it. Whichever it proves to be, you should never doubt this is a quest worth taking.

I read an excerpt or an interview about *Finding Your Element* somewhere and somehow I got

hooked into the idea that this book contained some revolutionary wisdom on discovering your true calling in life. For me, this wasn't the case. The book is stuffed with a great many tired platitudes, and its "revolutionary insight" basically boils down to the obvious idea of "do what you love." I'm not saying this is bad advice, or that the commonsense wisdom, spoken through the silver-tongued mouth of Sir Ken Robinson, won't inspire some to get off their butts and take action. But the majority of the book contains disappointingly obvious cliches backed up by real-life accounts of people who have followed this obvious advice, and, unsurprisingly, had positive results. *It worked for Sally-Jo... It can work for you, too!*For me, the book never digs deep enough into the gritty, challenging areas of helping people transition to a meaningful career. Rarely if ever, for example, does the text address the fact that we live in a techno-industrial civilization that is specifically designed to prevent most people from fulfilling their individual creative potential, and to enslave us in a monolithic, hierarchical corporate economy. "You always have choices," Sir Ken boasts confidently. Well, in today's world of neoliberal domination, choices are becoming narrower and narrower for the vast majority of the population. The book feels somewhat out of touch with the struggles of everyday people. It's very genial throughout, and the tone is avuncular, as if a rich old uncle is talking to his young rich nephew about whether or not he should be a horse jockey or continue in the family silver business.

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