

You are exceptional. You can do it. You possess the right qualities and you are among those special few who have made it. Imagine if someone told you this when you were just hired in a new company. How would your performance be? Or if you were about to take one of the toughest standardized tests?

In his book, "Give and Take," Adam Grant shows that numerous studies have been conducted to examine the effects of these exact words on people. Whether they are children, adults, or professionals, **these words of encouragement have a magical effect on people's performance.** They boost behavior and drive people to excel in their abilities to achieve the unachievable. In one experiment led by [researcher Brian McNatt](#), McNatt read the resumes of the auditors who were randomly assigned to believe in their potential. Then, he met with each of the auditors and informed them that they were hired after a highly competitive selection process, management had high expectations for their success, and they had the skills to overcome challenges and be successful. Three weeks later, McNatt sent them a letter reinforcing this message. **For a full month, the auditors who received McNatt's message earned higher performance ratings than the auditors in the control group, who never met with McNatt or received a letter from him.** This was true even after controlling for the auditors' intelligence test scores and college grades.

Adam Grant argues that people who tend towards giving more than taking, known as givers, are more likely to encourage other people to achieve their best by using this **magic of encouragement.** He argues that top performers are actually ordinary people, but they had a teacher, early in their lives, who is a giver who encouraged them to achieve their best, and so they developed a love for this hobby.

This has also led scientists to switch their perspective. *Traditionally, it was believed that top performers had raw talent and then, surrounded by supportive family and teams, they developed a burning desire and motivation to outperform.* But the book argues that motivation precedes talent. **It is the motivation that has led them to develop a burning talent.**

"Give and Take: Why Helping Others Drives Our Success" is a groundbreaking book written by [Adam Grant](#), who is **not only a top-rated professor at the Wharton School but also a leading expert in the field of organizational psychology.** This field looks at how people behave in the workplace and how their behavior affects their success. In his book, Grant introduces a new perspective on success. He categorizes people into three types based on their social behavior: *givers, takers, and matchers.* Givers are those who give more to others than they receive, takers are those who take more than they give, and matchers strive to maintain an equal balance of giving and taking. While it might seem intuitive to think that takers or matchers are the most successful, Grant presents compelling evidence to show that givers, those who consistently put others' interests ahead of their own, are actually the ones who achieve the greatest success in the long run. This book challenges traditional notions of success and provides a fresh perspective on how we can achieve success by helping others.

My decision to write a summary of “Give and Take” was driven by **the profound impact the book had on my understanding of success**. Adam Grant’s unconventional perspective, which emphasizes **the power of giving as a path to success**, **challenged my previous beliefs**. I felt compelled to share these insights with a wider audience. By summarizing the book, I hope to make its valuable lessons more accessible to those who haven’t read it, and inspire them to adopt **a more giving-oriented approach in their personal and professional lives**.

1-Minute Summary

The book "Give and Take" by Adam Grant challenges traditional ideas of success. Grant argues that how we interact with others - whether we are givers, takers, or matchers - has a big impact on our achievements.

- Givers are selfless and prioritize helping others.
- Takers focus on their own needs and take more than they give.
- Matchers aim for an equal balance of giving and receiving.

Surprisingly, the book argues that givers, though seemingly disadvantaged, are most likely to succeed in the long run. Their generosity builds strong relationships, inspires others, and creates a positive cycle that leads to more opportunities and success.

The book encourages readers to reflect on their own style and consider if shifting towards being a giver might benefit them. It emphasizes the importance of balance and avoiding burnout.

In this blog post, we will go over:

- **Overview of the Book**
- **Deep Dive into Each Style**
- **The Story of Marie Arcuri**
- **Practical Applications**
- **Personal Reflections**
- **Final Remarks**

Overview of the Book

“Give and Take” presents a new perspective on the path to success. Instead of focusing solely on hard work, talent, or luck, Adam Grant suggests that **the way we relate to others is a major factor in our success**. He categorizes us into givers, takers, and matchers based on how we interact with others. Givers are those who give more than they receive, takers receive more than they give, and matchers strive for a balance between giving and receiving. While it might seem counterintuitive, Grant argues that givers are often the most successful. This is because **givers**

foster stronger relationships, inspire greater effort and ambition in others, and create more value in their interactions, all of which can lead to greater success in the long run.

Deep Dive into Each Style

Givers are characterized by their selfless nature and their tendency to put others' needs before their own. They are always ready to lend a hand, share resources, or provide support, often going above and beyond to help others. They give more than they receive, and they do so without any expectation of reciprocation or reward. An example from the book is the story of [David Hornik](#), a venture capitalist who operates as a Giver. Despite the competitive nature of his industry, Hornik shares information openly and invests time in helping others, including his competitors. In real life, we can see examples of Givers in those who **volunteer their time for community service, mentors who go the extra mile to support their mentees**, or colleagues who are always willing to help out their team members.

Takers are characterized by their self-interest and their tendency to take more than they give. They often prioritize their own needs and interests over those of others. They are always looking for what they can gain from others and are less likely to help unless there's something in it for them. An example from the book is the story of a networker who uses connections for personal gain, often without reciprocating the help. In real life, we can see examples of Takers in those who always take the best tasks in a team project, leaving the hard work to others, or those who take credit for others' work.

Matchers are characterized by their sense of fairness and balance. They aim to maintain an equal exchange of resources, favors, or help. They operate on the principle of reciprocity - if they give help, they expect to receive help in return; if they receive help, they feel obligated to give back. An example from the book is the story of a businessperson who operates as a Matcher, always looking to reciprocate the help or favors they receive from others. In real life, we can see examples of Matchers in those who keep track of favors given and received, ensuring that they return the help they get and get help in return for the help they give.

The Story of Marie Arcuri

In 1985, a student named **Marie Arcuri** faced a significant challenge. She was preparing for the [CPA exam](#), a standardized test that she struggled with. Unfortunately, she didn't pass on her first attempt.

A few days later, she received a letter from her teacher, Skender. **He had written to every student who had taken the exam**, offering congratulations to those who passed and words of encouragement to those who didn't. Marie has kept this letter for over a quarter of a century. The letter read:

"Your husband, family, and friends love you because of the beautiful person you have made yourself—not because of a performance on an examination. Remember that... Focus on

November. Concentrate on practice... I want what's best for you. You WILL get through this thing, Marie. I write on my tests, 'The primary purpose has already been served by your preparation for this exam'... Success doesn't measure a human being, effort does."

This letter had a profound effect on Marie. Skender's words **encouraged her to believe in her potential** and set high expectations for her to succeed. She took the exam again and passed two sections, leaving two more to go. Along the way, Skender continued encouraging her. He would call her and check on her progress, making sure she stayed on track and didn't give up.

Marie passed the final section and earned her CPA in 1987, two years after she started taking the four sections of the exam. Today, Marie owns two Lexus automobile dealerships. She credits not only her accounting background and skills in reading financial statements but also the character, passion, and determination that Skender helped her build.

Marie's story is a testament to **the power of encouragement** and the impact of being a Giver. Skender's commitment to ensuring that Marie got through her challenges led her to realize that she'd rather be defined by perseverance than by whether or not she passed an exam. His encouragement was based on her being *"the most involved and committed individual I have ever met. Her persistence set her apart."*

This story illustrates the principles discussed in "Give and Take" and shows how being a Giver can have a profound impact on others' lives.

Practical Applications

If you want to apply the principles from "Give and Take" in your own life, start by **reflecting on your own behavior**. Are you a Giver, a Taker, or a Matcher? If you find that you're more of a Taker, try to shift your behavior towards giving. This doesn't mean you have to give away everything you have. Instead, **look for opportunities to help others**. This could be as simple as offering a *word of encouragement*, *lending a listening ear*, or *sharing your knowledge and skills*. If you're a Matcher, that's a good start. But remember that while it's important to maintain a balance, being a Giver can lead to greater success. So, try to give more than you take. You can apply these principles in all areas of your life, whether it's at work, in your personal relationships, or in your community. Remember, the goal is not to give until you have nothing left, but **to create a positive impact on the people around you**.

Shifting towards being a Giver involves cultivating a mindset of generosity. Start by paying attention to the needs of those around you. Look for opportunities to offer help, whether it's sharing your knowledge, providing support, or simply lending a listening ear. Remember, being a Giver doesn't mean you have to exhaust your own resources. It's important to take care of your own needs and set boundaries. When interacting with Takers, be mindful of your boundaries. Takers may try to take more than they give, so it's important to protect yourself from being taken advantage of. **Don't hesitate to say no when necessary**. When dealing with Matchers, remember that they value fairness and reciprocity. When a Matcher gives to you, they

expect something in return. So, make sure to reciprocate their actions to maintain a positive relationship.

Personal Reflections

Reflecting on my experiences, I've observed patterns that align with the concepts in "Give and Take". I've noticed that individuals who frequently help others, akin to the Givers in the book, often foster strong and meaningful relationships. They are typically well-regarded in their communities and workplaces, and their generosity often inspires others to act similarly. Conversely, those who predominantly take from others without reciprocating, much like the Takers in the book, tend to have fewer genuine relationships. Their actions often lead others to be cautious in their interactions with them. Lastly, those who strive to maintain a balance between giving and taking, similar to Matchers, usually have relationships based on fairness and reciprocity. They often operate on the principle of 'quid pro quo', expecting to receive help when they give it, and feeling obligated to return the favor when they receive help.

The concepts and insights from "Give and Take" have profoundly influenced my approach to giving and taking. The book's emphasis on the success of Givers in personal and professional settings has inspired me to incorporate more giving in my interactions. I've become more conscious of the ways in which I can contribute to others' success and well-being, whether it's by sharing knowledge, providing support, or simply lending a listening ear. I've also learned the importance of setting boundaries to ensure that I don't overextend myself. **At the same time, I've become more aware of the behaviors of Takers and Matchers, and this awareness has helped me navigate my interactions with them more effectively.** Overall, *"Give and Take" has encouraged me to strive towards becoming a Giver, while also being mindful of the need for balance and reciprocity in my relationships.*

Final Remarks

"Give and Take" presents **a fresh perspective on the path to success**. It suggests that our interactions with others, specifically our tendency to give, take, or match, play a significant role in our success. The book introduces us to Givers, who consistently put others' needs ahead of their own; Takers, who prioritize their own needs and interests; and Matchers, who strive to maintain a balance between giving and taking. Interestingly, the book argues that **Givers, despite seeming to be at a disadvantage, often achieve the greatest success**. This is because their generosity fosters strong relationships, inspires others, and creates a positive ripple effect that can lead to unexpected opportunities and success. Reflect on these insights and consider your own style of interaction. Are you predominantly a Giver, a Taker, or a Matcher? How might these styles be influencing your personal and professional success? Consider ways in which you might shift towards being more of a Giver, while also maintaining a healthy balance and not overextending yourself.

Actionable Summary

Actionable steps to become a Giver based on the summary of "Give and Take"

Identify your style:

Reflect on your recent interactions. Did you give more than you received, take more than you gave, or try to maintain an even balance?

Shift towards giving:

Small acts: Look for everyday opportunities to help others. Offer to cover a colleague's task, share resources, or simply lend a listening ear.

Knowledge sharing: Do you have a specific skill or knowledge? Organize workshops, mentor someone, or write a blog post to share your expertise.

Positive reinforcement: Like Adam Grant's experiment, praise and encourage others. Write a thank-you note, acknowledge someone's achievement, or offer words of support.

Become a mindful giver:

Set boundaries: Avoid burnout. It's okay to say no to requests if they drain your time or resources.

Recognize takers: Be cautious of those who consistently take advantage of your generosity. Learn to politely decline unreasonable requests.

Appreciate matchers: Reciprocity is important in these relationships. Match their effort to maintain a positive dynamic.

Long-term benefits:

Stronger relationships: People appreciate those who genuinely care and support them.

Increased success: Your generosity can inspire others to help you, creating a network of support.

Personal growth: Giving back can be fulfilling and lead to a greater sense of purpose.

Remember:

Balance is key: Don't become a doormat. Aim for sustainable giving that benefits both you and others.

Start small: Simple acts of giving can have a ripple effect.

Focus on the impact: See giving as an investment in building positive relationships and creating a better work and personal environment.

By following these steps, you can gradually develop a more giving approach to life and experience the personal and professional rewards that come with it.

You Might Also Like:

- [Hidden Potential by Adam Grant: Book Summary and Insights](#)
- [A Dose of Excellence: A Summary of What It Takes Book by Stephen Schwarzman](#)
- [Book Summary: "Outlive: The Science and Art of Longevity" by Peter Attia MD and Bill Gifford](#)