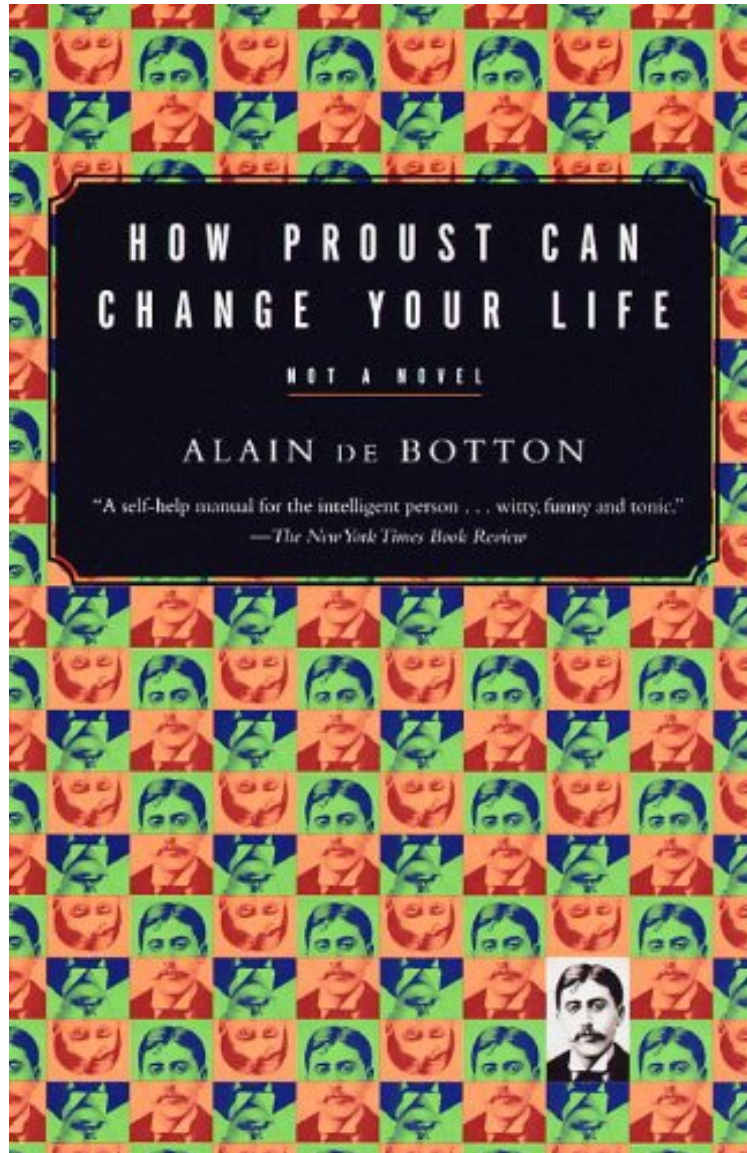


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## How Proust Can Change Your Life

*Alain De Botton*

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**Alain De Botton : How Proust Can Change Your Life** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised How Proust Can Change Your Life:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Educational and full of good humor. A new angle on mindfulness By Mind Doc Absolutely delightful, thought-provoking, educational and full of good humor. A new angle on mindfulness. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. He is a very good writer and you never get bored reading him By Nagi book worm I have started liking Alain's book. He is a very good writer and you never get bored

reading him.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. InformativeBy Nataša MVThe book does give some basic information on Proust and what to expect reading his books. Still I expected some deeper insides.

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 un clichéd 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.

.com 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" Copyright 1997 Reed Business Information, Inc.