

Why You Should Probably Read Less

VOX Discussion Night – Hot Takes

A Question for You

- How many of you have read a bestseller non-fiction book?
- (Atomic Habits, Sapiens, The Subtle Art...)
- Now, how many of those books *actually* changed your behavior, habits, or worldview – beyond quotes or trivia?

The Problem with Reading

- Reading feels like progress, but often only entertains.
- In sports, it's obvious you can't read your way to skill.
- In intellectual fields, it's easier to confuse reading with doing.

Why Sports Make It Obvious

- No one thinks a book alone makes you a good swimmer.
- You must *do* the moves, not just read them.
- But in science, politics, or self-help, the gap is less obvious.
- Reading produces words; we mistake that for competence.

My Own Trap

- I once read countless books on learning science.
- I could recite the methods perfectly...
- But when solving physics problems, I froze.
- Knowing $\neq$ doing. Insight without action is just a daydream.

Even Einstein Warned Us

- Albert Einstein:
- “Reading, after a certain age, diverts the mind too much from its creative pursuits. Any man who reads too much and uses his own brain too little falls into lazy habits of thinking.”

So What is Learning?

- Not reciting facts or quotes.
- Not collecting books read.
- It's doing something differently than you would have before.

Closing Thought

- Next time you pick up a book, ask yourself:
- Am I reading to avoid swimming, or to swim better?