

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Book Review for The Algebra Of Happiness By Scott Galloway

-Pakhi Dahiya

Title	:The Algebra of Happiness
Author	:Scott Galloway
Publisher	:Portfolio
First Copyright Year	:April 16th 2019
Number Of Pages	:224 (Hardover)

Scott Galloway is a professor of brand strategy at the New York University Stern School of Business, and the author of the “bestselling book” of “The Four: The Hidden DNA of Amazon, Apple, Facebook and Google” discussing the strategies of above mentioned companies. In the introduction of the book he writes “My publisher was nudging me to write a follow-up book to The Four: The Hidden DNA of Amazon, Apple, Facebook, and Google, and much to her horror, I informed her my second book would be about happiness”

While reading the book, I couldn’t help but agree with his publisher’s horror, wishing he had stuck to brand strategies instead of trying to - unsuccessfully- come up with life strategies.

He tries to endorse his book coyly by clearly showcasing achievements as failures, coming off as boastful, misogynistic and ignorantly privileged when I reckon he was going for the perception of candid and frank straight talking. Moving on from the introduction to the content, it feels like a compendium - a very short compendium- of flashcards of the most conventional antiqued (and since proven comprehensively incorrect in research) sort of advice. In his introduction, the author makes clear that he wished for the book to be a collection of advice, gathered from his observations, and backed by anecdotes. It is important to note that he did not even intend to back his advice by evidence and thus probably hasn’t even done any preliminary research or considered other people’s opinions before doling out all this advice. This prompts one to take a skeptical view of his advice in the first place. Alas, even what he intended to do - back up the advice with anecdotes- seems to have come through only in very few cases and most of it feels like reiterating the principle advice or nonsensical unrelated incidents. Most of his shallow advice does not stand up to scrutiny.

Further it is immediately clear that this book is only intended for privileged immature men with a narrow world view. This is openly demonstrable from his continued usage of words like “wife” instead of the more gender-neutral “spouse”. Add that to the prejudiced and misguided advice in the book about how “women look for successful rich men as prospective partners” and the toxic masculinity as well as the misogyny is crystal clear.

The assumptions he makes while doling out his advice are outrageous. He assumes everyone actively wants to be conventionally married in a world where the proportion of such people is on the decline. He assumes that everyone wants children in an increasingly childfree world. He assumes no one likes their job which is very untrue (yours truly stands a testament against that) and more such senseless assumptions.

When I try to understand his purpose in writing this book, the only possible reasons that come to mind are either to boast about his accomplishments in a condescending manner or to make some quick money.

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You will find no new advice and even the one that has been reused seems to me the selectively most problematic one. In short, this book is un-innovative and problematic at best.

It pains me to give such a negative review of a book with the author as a professor of such an esteemed business school, but it is what it is. The only redeeming attribute of this book was that it is short - hence decreasing the amount of time spent in the unpleasant experience of reading it.

References:

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/living-single/201908/around-the-world-marriage-is-declining-singles-are-rising> <https://www.apollotechnical.com/job-satisfaction-statistics/>