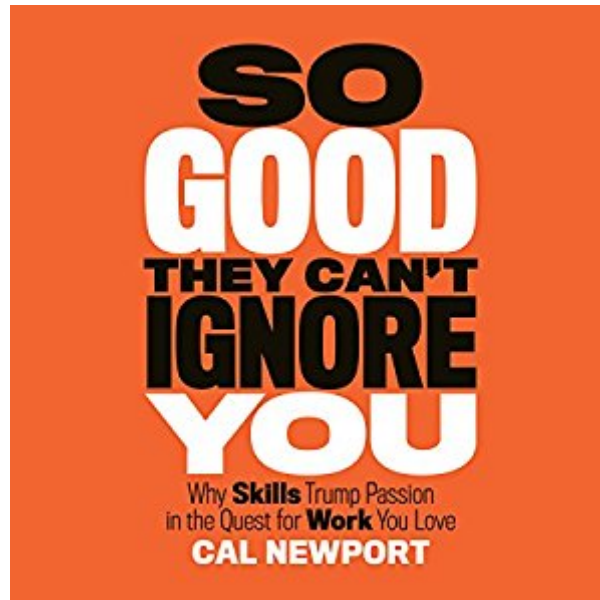




The book was found

# So Good They Can't Ignore You



## Synopsis

Cal Newport's clearly written manifesto flies in the face of conventional wisdom by suggesting that it should be a person's talent and skill - and not necessarily their passion - that determines their career path. Newport, who graduated from Dartmouth College (Phi Beta Kappa) and earned a PhD from MIT, contends that trying to find what drives us, instead of focusing on areas in which we naturally excel, is ultimately harmful and frustrating to job seekers. The title is a direct quote from comedian Steve Martin, who, when once asked why he was successful in his career, immediately replied, 'Be so good they can't ignore you', and that's the main basis for Newport's audiobook. Skill and ability trump passion. Inspired by former Apple CEO Steve Jobs' famous Stanford University commencement speech in which Jobs urges idealistic grads to chase their dreams, Newport takes issue with that advice, claiming that not only is this advice Pollyannaish but that Jobs himself never followed his own advice. From there Newport presents compelling scientific and contemporary case study evidence that the key to one's career success is to find out what you do well and where you have built up your 'career capital' and then to put all of your efforts in that direction.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I've been following Cal Newport's ideas for a while now, so when I learned that he was coming out with a book, I pre-ordered it from . I was not disappointed. If you have a child or know someone in college who is trying to figure out what to do with their life, or even if you're north of fifty and still wonder what you'll be when you grow up, then this book is for you. *So Good They Can't Ignore You*, is so good that you shouldn't ignore it. The central premise that sets this book apart from so much

life advice that is out on the market is that following your passion is terrible advice. There are two main reasons for this: first, very few people at a young age know enough about life to choose something to be really passionate about, and even if they do, they are bound to be wrong. If Steve Jobs had followed his early passion, maybe he would have made a dent in the universe as a Buddhist monk. Second, while most people would love to have a job that allows them to be creative, make an impact on the world, and have control over how they choose to spend their time, jobs like that are rare and valuable, and the only way to get something valuable is to offer something in return. And the only way to be in a position to do that is to master a difficult skill. Passion doesn't waive the laws of economics, and if it's not difficult it won't be rare. The book cites the example of Julia, who quit a secure job in advertising to pursue her passion of teaching yoga. Armed with a 4-week course, she quit her job, began teaching, and one year later was on food stamps. Here's a hint: if a four-week course is enough to allow you to set up shop, do you think you might have a little competition? Taking the economic model a step further, the book argues that you must develop career capital, which comprises skills, relationships and a body of work. The long and arduous process of building your capital also opens up your options and refines your own understanding of what you really like to do and what you can be good at. Newport offers the craftsman mindset in place of the passion mindset. The passion mindset asks what the world can offer you in terms of fulfillment and fun; the craftsman mindset forces you to look inside and ask what you can offer the world. You have to create value to get value, and that takes time and deliberate practice. It's the only way to get so good that they can't ignore you. The nice benefit is that rather than being good at something because you love it, you love doing something because you've gotten good at it. (Note the similarity to Carol Dweck's growth mindset.) What's the little idea? Another idea that Newport challenges is the common advice that you should have a big idea--set a big hairy audacious goal for your life and then work backward from it. The master plan approach certainly works for some people, but how many people do you know who have actually lived their lives that way? Instead, you should work forward from where you are, taking small steps that expand your capabilities and build up your career capital. In this way, more options and possibilities open up. Newport compares career discoveries to scientific discoveries, most of which occur in what's called the "adjacent possible", or just on the other side of the cutting edge of current knowledge. The book is well-written. Newport emulates Malcolm Gladwell's technique of telling individual stories to illustrate the main point in each chapter. In addition, the arc of the stories follows a master story thread through the book, so that you feel like you are brought along on his quest to figure it all out. Here comes the part I did not like about the book, and I would not devote so much space to it if the author were not an

MIT PhD, just beginning his career as an assistant professor of computer science. The methodology in the book is suspect in two ways. While its stories are the book's great strength, the plural of anecdote is not data, and it's surprising how little hard data we're given. I certainly buy in because it makes sense and it matches my own life experience, but someone with a more skeptical point of view may be a tougher sell. In at least one case, where he does use a peer-reviewed study for support, he overstates the case. Citing a paper by Amy Wrzesniewski, he states that the happiest, most passionate employees are not those who followed their passion into a position, but those who stayed around long enough to be good at what they do. If you read the actual paper, you won't find that conclusion, and in fact the author stresses that the sample size of 24 is too small to draw any firm conclusions. That said, I strongly recommend this book to just about anyone, regardless of where you are in your career.

First of all, I would say that this is a fantastic book that I wish that I read right after high school. As someone who is always in the pursuit of becoming better, it is always easy to look back and wonder if you have decided on the right path. You could be successful in many different paths but deciding on a path and becoming great at it is far more fulfilling. So good they can't ignore you is a great model to base your life off of, whether professional or personal life. It can take a lot of hard work to build up the career capital needed to obtain this "status," but it is this hard work that differentiates people in this world. Coming from a new entrepreneur, being so good they can't ignore you is vital. There are many turbulent times in entrepreneurship, but always striving to become the master of your craft and build enough career capital will make it so that you can overcome this turbulent times. The only reason why I rated this 4/5 instead of 5/5 is that I wanted more. It's a fairly short read (took me 2-3 days) and it left me wanting more. I guess I'll just have to read Cal's other books!

originally gave this book a 3 star review, but read it again, and its definitely a 5 star read. sometimes its ones own frame of mind when absorbing content. a must read if you are considering building a career or following your so called "passion".

I was in a point of my life where I was not able to balance and focus on what i actually want to have as a long time career. In this modern world you do have to know how to do different types of jobs and have multiple skills, but what skills are your best is what you need to focus on. The best thing that this book taught me was when we do our job search we always approach thinking that what we will get from it instead we should focus on what we can give to the company through this job. This

actually changed my point of view and my approach in my job search and even in my career.

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