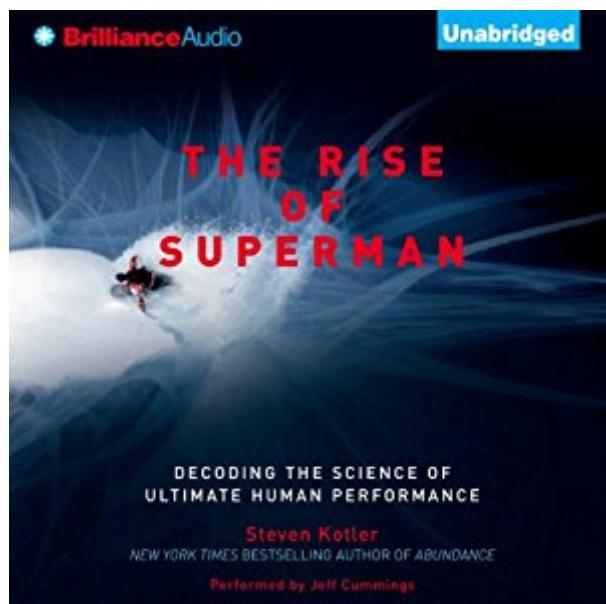


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The Rise Of Superman: Decoding The Science Of Ultimate Human Performance



Synopsis

In this groundbreaking audiobook, New York Times best-selling author Steven Kotler decodes the mystery of ultimate human performance. Drawing on over a decade of research and first-hand reporting with dozens of top action and adventure sports athletes like big wave legend Laird Hamilton, big mountain snowboarder Jeremy Jones, and skateboarding pioneer Danny Way, Kotler explores the frontier science of "flow", an optimal state of consciousness in which we perform and feel our best. Building a bridge between the extreme and the mainstream, *The Rise of Superman* explains how these athletes are using flow to do the impossible and how we can use this information to radically accelerate performance in our own lives. At its core, this is an audiobook about profound possibility; about what is actually possible for our species; about where - if anywhere - our limits lie.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This was a tough book to review. One reason is that I have read Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's 1990 perennial bestselling book *Flow - The Psychology of Optimal Experience*, his 1993 book *The Evolving Self: A Psychology for the Third Millennium*, and his 1996 book *Creativity, Flow and the Psychology of Discovery and Invention*. *Flow*, the psychological research behind it, the relevance to sports, business, and life, have been around for decades. Jimmy Johnson, the once coach of the Dallas Cowboys gave some credit for his superbowl wins in the 1990's to reading Csikszentmihalyi's book *Flow*. With this background, I opened this book on the relevance of flow to action adventure sports with trepidation. The strengths in this book are also some of the weaknesses. You will gain a

new appreciation of action sports heroes that deserve greater recognition. Discover the accomplishments of legendary surfer Laird Hamilton, skateboarding sensation Danny Way (although you will gain more from watching the documentary "waiting for lightning" which is available on Netflix), rock climbing fanatics Alex Honnold and Dean Potter, among others. I knew many of the stories but Steven Kotler is a journalist and knows how to trigger intrigue. The concept, science, and applications of entering into the deep psychological state of flow plays second to Steven's attempts to draw you into the death defying feats in sports. Let me be absolutely clear - if you are uninterested in adventure sports, you will not enjoy this book. I'll give you a few examples of what I mean. Kotler describes amazing physical feats that only someone familiar with the sport can visualize: In describing a skateboarding move by Danny Way, he writes, "Moments later, he kicks off the contest with a seventy-foot, 360 mute grab over the gap and a McTwist - an inverted backside 540 with another mute grab - out of the quarterpipe." In describing another skateboarding move, he writes, "In 2011, Bobby Brown threw the world's first Triple Cork 1440 - which is four spins and three flips, and all off-axis." Or there is Alex Honnold's climb up Half Dome where he writes, "Up a zesty finger crack, then a few easier pitches, then one of the route's trickier sections - a nasty boulder problem above a small ledge." It is tough to describe a kayaking, surfing, skateboarding, mountaineering, or skydiving journey and many times, I had to re-read sections over and over to get a visual image. It was because of this that I ended up putting this book down several times. And when I returned to reading, I usually received ample reward. Perhaps the best chapter in the book is Chapter 2 with the focus on revolutionary accomplishments on two separate occasions by Laird Hamilton on a surfboard. Completely immersed in huge waves, Laird instinctively attempted moves that no surfer had ever talked about or seen before. These moves changed the landscape of surfing and you can envision every detail. In this particular chapter, you could understand how Laird in the state of flow transformed his skill set, himself, and then everyone who heard about the events. (years of training leading to moments of deep concentration, a loss of self-consciousness, a sense of control in a task that slightly exceeded his skills) In other sections of the book, I wasn't fully convinced that flow could be given credit for innovation. More accurately, I felt as if flow was being oversold as the panacea for reaching our potential. So why did I give the book four stars? Because this book is one of the best on the topic of flow. The description of the conditions that increase the likelihood of flow states ("flow triggers") are clear and distinguished from the actual experience itself. The neuroscience research and discussions of the quantified self offer a new window into what it feels like to be in flow. You won't learn much about how to apply the knowledge about brave action sport characters to your own life, but then again Steven Kotler doesn't make this promise. This is an

interesting read, the author is an excellent writer (despite the caveats listed above), and I walked away thinking more deeply about the importance of entering into this state of flow when I write, work out, and spend time with other people. For this, I am grateful for the time spent.

Perhaps I went into this book with faulty expectations... I was expecting something that may delve deep into neurobiology and related phenomenon or something that would really illuminate a possible way to leverage the elusive flow state. However, most of the book was filled with banal exposition of the lives of action/adventure athletes. I found it a little interesting, but for the most part, I just couldn't find myself caring. One anecdote could have provided enough of a context to work with, but more than half of the book is filled with vapid tales that appear intended to motivate or some kind of tributary. The book seems filled with lots of talk of flow state with the very occasional timid suggestion of reproducing the state. Weak read.

Interesting approach to flow. For me there was some good insights, but too many stories of extreme athletes. For me its ok to use them as examples of people that force nature and reach flow, but I do get the point after a couple of examples. At the beginning it did capture my attention about the subject, but then every chapter with one of the stories its kind of too much, you've made your point!! This makes the book too long and, although stories are different, the point is repetitive.

I got this for my husband. He was reading another book by this author and really liked it. I got this on audio book because he travels a lot. I like how it shows what holds you back -- even if you think things are "good" - can be used by you against yourself. I know so many women in my community who have allowed their perception of what their religion wants of them to hold them back. The discussion on extreme athletes is interesting - as someone who is not athletic

Bought this book a while ago, but it's really opened my eyes to an entirely new way of thinking about experiences and moments of clarity within my own life. This book is not only well-written and interesting, but if you take the introduction of flow states and do more research online then it can lead you into discovering many other biohacking methods. In all, this book was very insightful and thought-provoking. I have already recommended it to many friends and it has forever changed my approach to my work and leisure life.

I picked up *Rise of Superman* because I would like to spend more time in flow states. I believe in

hustling hard and hustling smart but I know that I don't actually spend that much time in flow. Flow states are a result of evolutionary psychology that drastically increases awareness of the world around us. The book does a great job of illustrating flow state science by telling stories of superhuman feats accomplished by action & adventure athletes in flow. for these kinds of athletes reaching flow states is literally a matter of life and death, so they make great case studies of something that for everyone else is kind of nebulous. However, sometimes it's difficult to visualize a complex skate boarding trick, if you are not a skater. It would have been neat if the kindle version of the book linked to Youtube videos. It would have been interesting to see the book say more about addicts and flow states. As flow states naturally recreate the cocktail of neurotransmitters that addicts chase. You always hear that addicts need to replace one addiction with another, it would be really fascinating to see some research done on training addicts to enter flow states. I've said before that I think that the human capacity for invention, creativity, collaboration and generosity multiplied by the steep growth curves in technology have a real chance in the next 50 years of eradicating: poverty, war, hunger, disease, environmental issues, lack of education, even aging and death. If we can harness the power of flow, 50 years from now we will be able to look at the world and see these demons vanquished from the world.

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