

## BOOK REVIEW

### ELON MUSK: The Life, Lessons & Rules for Success

**Author: Influential Individuals**

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#### INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

I was not FC, in fact, rather skeptic towards Elon Musk making frequent international headline news as a wealthiest businessman, leading technology-innovative-futurist exploring mindset, and world mover. My skepticism vanished when one day I listened to my favorite columnist talking about Elon Musk's extraordinary qualities, "Elon Musk is extremely confident in his idea yet he embraces, welcomes, and carefully listens to those who have different opinions". I wanted to know Elon Musk ever since.

Upon a Google search of "books about Elon Musk", I found this book a good starter. It is one book in a series of eight books on some of the world's most influential individuals; titled "ELON MUSK: The Life, Lessons & Rules for Success" and written by Influential Individuals, Elon Musk is the first in this series on business, scientists, success, and self-help. The author's intent is to present Musk's success story—how he has come to where he is as a world leading top scientist and business leader, from his humble beginnings, getting bullied in school, studying two distant majors (physics and business in his undergraduate years), and

almost completely running out of money during his early experiences in business.

The book is well structured, clearly presented in 10 chapters: Early Life, The Young Entrepreneur, The Rise of SpaceX, Tesla Hits the Road, Solar City Shines Through, Valuable Lessons, 40 Little Known Facts, 60 Greatest Quotes, 15 Rules for Success, and Conclusion.

#### REVIEW

**Chapter1: Early Life** Born to a rich family in South Africa, his father an engineer and pilot, his mother (originally from Canada) a model and dietician, Musk has British, American, and Dutch roots. Pretoria, his hometown, is one of South Africa's major cities well-known in academic study. As a child he loved reading – devouring several books at a time. His passion in reading led to an early interest in computers. At the age of 12, Musk taught himself programming and designed the code for a BASIC-based video game, being able to sell it for \$500. One interesting event in his early life was being bullied throughout his childhood, at one time being hospitalized, due to his bookishness and social awkwardness. But he was resilient

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despite the difficulties.

At the age of 17, he decided to move to Canada and it was not all smooth. However, his hard work and entrepreneurial spirit went on throughout his college years. He was able to sell computer parts and personal computers to earn extra money. During his two years at Queen's School of Business in Kinston, Ontario, Musk's superior intellect was evident among his classmates. He was then offered a scholarship to the University of Pennsylvania where he pursued a dual degree in physics, and economics.

It was during his study at Penn that he developed an interest in solar power and renewable energy. He shifted interest from video game business to the Internet, renewable energy, and space travel. "I like to make technologies that are real and ...are important for the future and useful.", he said.

**Chapter2: The Young Entrepreneur,** just two days after being accepted into Stanford, Musk decided to drop out and started his first company, Zip2, the web software company, which in 1999 he sold it to Compaq Computer for \$307 m. Elon Musk's second business was X.COM, an online financial services and payment provider. In 2000 X.com merged with Confinity and became PayPal, the leading online payment provider. In 2002, eBay acquired PayPal in a \$1.5 billion deal.

**Chapter3: The Rise of SpaceX** Space Exploration Technologies Corp. or SpaceX grew out of Musk's concept of landing a miniature greenhouse on Mars and growing plants. The goal of SpaceX as a company is to develop rocket technology and make humanity a spacefaring civilization using space launch vehicles. SpaceX is now considered the world's largest private producer of rocket engines. Musk believes that space travel is a necessary step in the preservation and expansion of the human race.

**Chapter4: Tesla Hits the Road** "Either I went all in, or Tesla dies"- Elon Musk. Like Steve Jobs, his icon idol, Elon Musk is an extra hard-working man. He is fully occupied with SpaceX, yet he found time to venture

into another company, Tesla Inc. Musk wanted to make EVs efficient, and affordable while reducing pollution and oil dependence. Founded in 2003, Tesla is now a leading innovator in electric vehicles using lithium-ion batteries.

**Chapter5: Solar City Shines Through** After Tesla comes solar energy as a subsidiary of Tesla. SolarCity Corp. was founded in 2006 and later merged with Tesla in 2016 offering energy storage services. SolarCity has been at the forefront of solar energy growth across the U.S.

**Chapter6: Valuable Lessons If** things are not failing; you are not innovating enough." – Elon Musk

Elon Musk has proven himself a visionary and effective leader. This is evident from many interviews and people who know him on a personal level. He inspires others around him for something better. He stands up for what he believes in and sticks to his ideas, continuing to prove the naysayers wrong while welcoming criticism in a positive way. This is his extraordinary quality for success. His love of reading books on philosophy has shaped his life goal, aiming high for human beings rather than just making money. This dates back to his childhood when he read close to two books everyday on a wide range of subjects. Musk is and always has been a great learner. He never stops learning.

**Chapter7: 40 Little Known Facts** This chapter presents information some of which is beyond our imagination, e.g. like many famous entrepreneurs such as Steve Jobs, Musk's salary at Tesla is a modest \$1. The Musk Foundation runs a simulated Mars environment that allows visitors to experience what life could be like on Mars including a waste-burning toilet! Another fact is: along with Bill Gates, Warren Buffett, Mark Zuckerberg, and many others, Elon Musk has signed the giving pledge—a promise to donate the majority of his wealth to philanthropic causes.

**Chapter8: 60 Greatest Quotes** In line with Chapter 7, this chapter is full of valuable quotes that Musk has said, that in a way reveal his success. For instance, "Really pay

attention to negative feedback and solicit it, particularly from friends...it is incredibly helpful.”, “Talent is extremely important.”, “Work like hell. You just have to put in an 80-100-hour week every week.”, “I always have optimism, but I am optimistic.”

**Chapter9: Elon Musk’s 15 Rules for Success** To sample a few rules of the 15: Work ridiculously hard, Musk is known for his fierce work ethic. Even in the present day he is still working 100-hour work weeks; Be a trend setter, instead of competing with others in established markets, Musk prefers solving problems in emerging markets. And another rule: “Attract great people. The most important part of creating a company is to attract the right people”.

**Chapter10: Conclusion** This chapter gives a brief, convincing conclusion—it is not his achievements but his persistence through failures, setbacks, and hardship in life that makes Elon Musk amazing.

In summary, after reading the whole book, regardless of how the author writes this up since there are no references and no research support mentioned, I came to be assured that Elon Musk is a self-made man whose achievements come at no surprise. What makes him extraordinary and outstanding is his superior qualities many of which were constructed early in life—e.g. his passion in reading and reading widely.

Secondly, he has no fear of failure. He sets ambitious goals for the betterment of mankind rather than wealth. He has been through many hardships in life, e.g. living on \$1 a day, and his ambitious goals which have led him to experience many setbacks. Musk starts off assuming that his idea is wrong and it must be corrected. That is why he is so willing to listen to friends with opposing ideas. Chapter 6 is full of the secrets about Musk’s high success and why it exists.

## CONCLUSION

I would strongly recommend this book to anyone interested in knowing Elon Musk better. It is a great introductory book to begin

to know Elon Musk. It is an inspirational book for entrepreneurs, business owners, and for anyone seeking self-improvement, inspiring the reader to get rid of fear and set ambitious life goals. The book is also good for high school children as it is easy to read and simple. Advanced learners might still find this book a good starter, before moving on to more sophisticated books. For most individuals having a chance to work with Elon Musk, all have said something like this: “Elon Musk thinks 10 or 20 steps ahead. And no one can really predict what he will do next”.