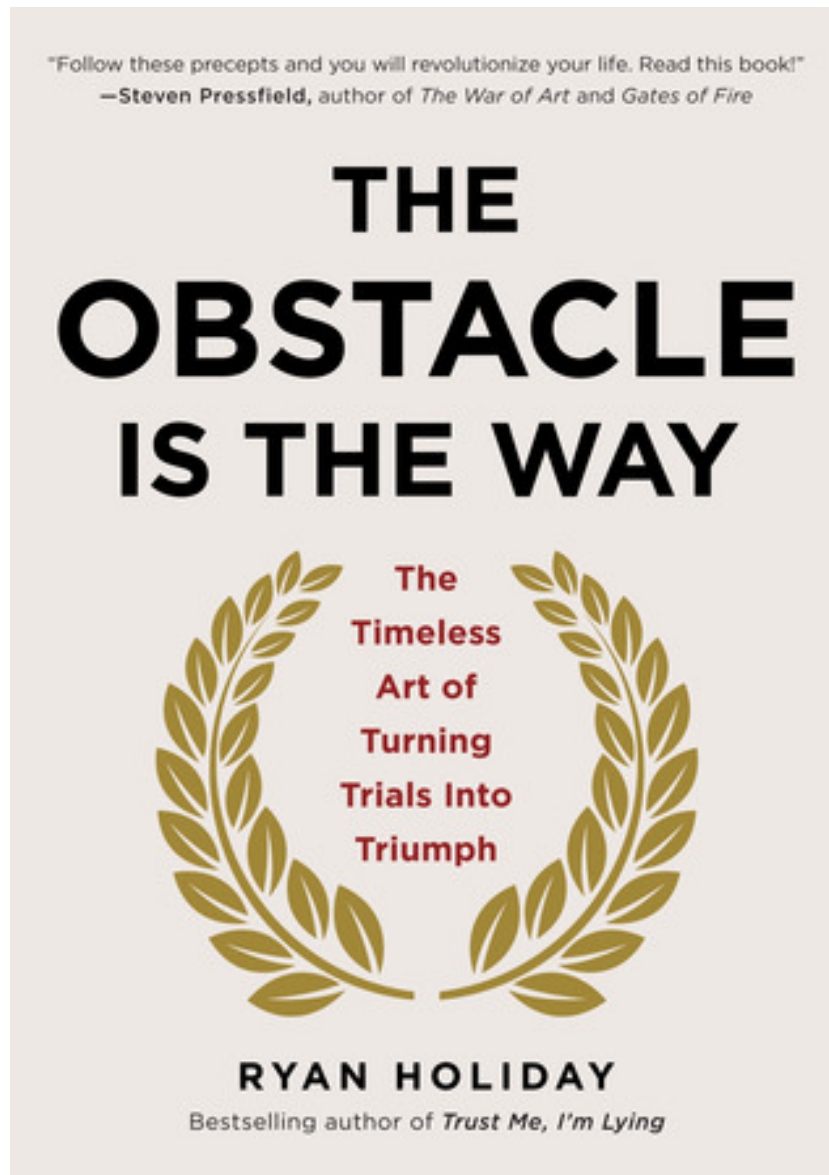


# The Obstacle Is the Way: The Timeless Art of Turning Trials into Triumph Book PDF Download



**By:  
Ryan Holiday**

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### Lenny D

Great advice, everyone: overcome adversity. Just do it! For example, if you have a contract from Penguin to write a self-help book but you have absolutely nothing to say, don't fret. This is an opportunity. You interned for a guy who wrote an anecdote-based guide to being powerful. There's no need to reinvent the wheel! Lay down that same track.

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Great advice, everyone: overcome adversity. Just do it! For example, if you have a contract from Penguin to write a self-help book but you have absolutely nothing to say, don't fret. This is an opportunity. You interned for a guy who wrote an anecdote-based guide to being powerful. There's no need to reinvent the wheel! Lay down that same track.

Aside from some of the facts within the actual anecdotes on which I don't trust he's done appropriate research since each of them are presented perfunctorily and exclusively to evince his successful-people habits (and not to interject any complications of reality) there is little in this book you couldn't get from Dove chocolate wrappers. It's not

advice, just banal. I would be shocked if Holiday, a so-called media manipulator, put his heart into this drivel. The pacing, tone, and almost computer-generated writing give the effect of a student trying to meet a page requirement the night before a due date. Here's a sampling:

This wouldn't be especially egregious if it weren't the whole book, but it is. That's it, folks. There's no point at which it transcends to advice that will move your life forward. Flip to any page; if it isn't an anecdote about how some famous person got famous by exhibiting a given virtue, it's just more of this run-on about how you have to find the way in which your obstacle is the way. There are no specifics about how exactly one is supposed to tackle "obstacles," which is a ludicrously broad concept, just droplets raining down from the Platonic form of Cant. Rather than actionable instructions, these platitudes are vast like the oceans. They run into each other, have no discernible borders, and are so huge as to be unwieldy, so unwieldy as to be pointless. The only real linkage here is the classical Stoic advice to maintain equanimity. This could have been conveyed in a much more powerful way. Like by the Stoics, for example. (He admits as much in the intro.)

The book revolves around dozens of small, unrelated and intellectually unlinked anecdotes. Seemingly anyone who's ever done something well is an example, contradictions be damned. The most hilarious thing is how poorly-rendered Holiday's history is.

No word on whether the Native Americans just got out-stoic'd by the "pioneer spirit." The next time

you'll read such a vacuous, half-lidded recitation of Western History, it'll be when your sixth-grader is preparing a report he didn't research enough. I have a feeling that's the case here.

It's vaguely insulting to be told that all obstacles are just a bunch of Oedipal Sphinxes. That's easy to say when your career began with a chance encounter with your favorite author, who announced that at that moment he was really looking for a research assistant to hire, and

Probably harder for the kids in sub-Saharan Africa to really leverage their malnutrition into a fierce and fulfilling career in PR. Fuck this book.

## Marcus

This isn't much more than a superficial repackaging of stoicism combined with some semi-interesting anecdotes and a whole lot of trite motivational affirmations. The book is written in the style of Holiday's mentor, Robert Greene, but where Greene does something rare and surprising by compensating for his lack of personal experience with deep and compelling research,

falls flat. The anecdotes are common and superficial and their ties to Stoicism feel tenuous at best. Then

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falls flat. The anecdotes are common and superficial and their ties to Stoicism feel tenuous at best. Then, to make it worse, rather than allowing the stories and quotes from the stoics to speak for themselves, they are always followed by explicit and repetitive advice that just constantly restates the one idea that yes, the obstacle is the way.

I really like Ryan. I think he's done some great work elsewhere. I have heard him interviewed and he is a sincere and positive guy. This book feels rushed and incomplete though.

## Jazzmin Hunter

About as useful as starting with a list of amputees, picking out only the successful ones, getting their stories, and then writing a book called "Having a Limb Chopped Off is the Way".

## J.F. Penn

This is an intelligent self-help book packed with examples from history of people who made it through adversity into greatness. It also offers a system for approaching life as a more average person, turning obstacles into advantages, and using relentless persistence to achieve what you want.

We all face obstacles in our lives, what matters is how we perceive them and work with them to move on. "When we aim high, pressure and stress obligingly come along for the ride," so we have to find ways of

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move on. "When we aim high, pressure and stress obligingly come along for the ride," so we have to find ways of dealing with them, as well as the aspects of life that may blindsides us with randomness.

Holiday uses Stoicism as a basis for the book, but it's not a dry philosophy book by any means. He makes the words from thousands of years ago come alive through modern example. As someone who studied Greek and Latin at school, I appreciated the 21st century take on the subject. Through perception, action and will, we can achieve despite obstacles. I particularly liked the chapter on 'amor fati,' love of fate.

## Brad Feld

I don't know Ryan Holiday, but I heard of this book from Tim Ferriss and was intrigued by the description so I decided to dose myself in some stoicism. Dynamite book – I'm glad I put the time in. Holiday covers the topic well in a very accessible way.