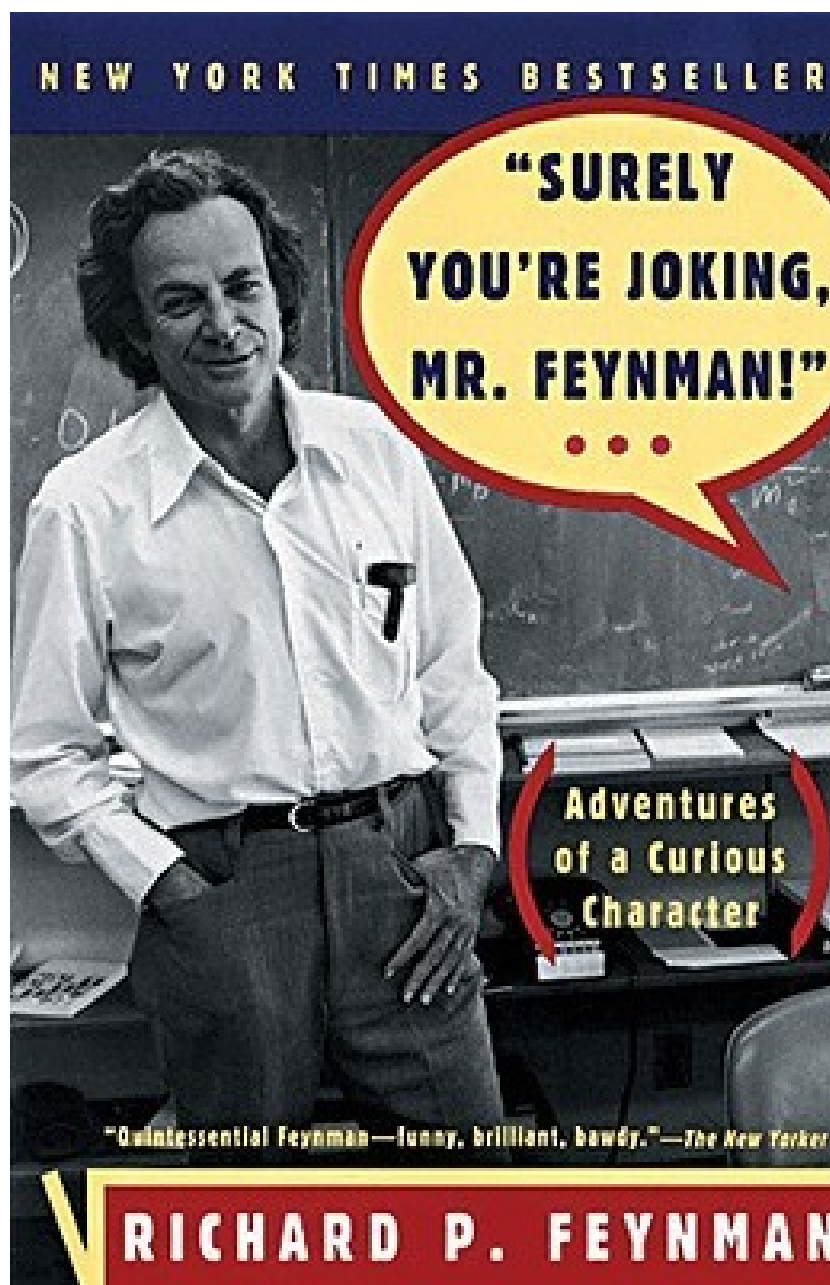


Surely You're Joking, Mr. Feynman!: Adventures of a Curious Character Book PDF Download



By:
Richard Feynman

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What people Say:

Emily

This book of anecdotes is written in a very casual, fun way that makes it easy to read. The problem is that the author, Nobel-Prize-winning physicist Dick Feynman, is annoying. All the anecdotes involve him discovering a hidden talent, using it, delighting others (or himself if that's his real goal) and then being applauded for it (sometimes only by himself). For example, he discovers that he's a great artist, musician, safecracker, and critic. Everything revolves around him showing off and being

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I can't really recommend this book. Maybe mischeivous self-aggrandizing guys would enjoy it but otherwise, I suggest a pass.

Otis Chandler

This book was a pure delight. The subtitle "Adventures of a Curious Character" is spot-on. Feynman

gave an amazingly human and honest view into his philosophy and take on life, thought a series of stories.

One thing that struck me most deeply was his passion for learning new things. You would think a world-famous Physicist would just be passionate for Physics - but Feynman was curious about everything he saw. He dabbled in art and was successful enough to have a show, he joined a Brazilian Bongo

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One thing that struck me most deeply was his passion for learning new things. You would think a world-famous Physicist would just be passionate for Physics - but Feynman was curious about everything he saw. He dabbled in art and was successful enough to have a show, he joined a Brazilian Bongo group and competed with them, he hung out in Vegas until he grokked gambling, he spent time in strip bars in Arizona until he figured out how to pick up women, he cracked safes in Los Alamos for fun - the list goes on! My take: you should have your passions - but you should also have your hobbies. I think I need a new hobby :)

I really enjoyed his lessons learned from observing the Brazilian educational system. He noted that many of the students were simply memorizing words and formulas and had no understanding of the concepts they applied to. I think this is not a unique problem in education.

Another lesson learned from Feynman's studies of science is to never take any data for granted. Always always question the sources. Whenever Feynman did an experiment he would re-generate many of the numbers on his own - even if they had been published in other places. For many things we are (and not just in science) standing on the shoulders of giants. The easiest way to be led astray is if those results were never right to begin with.

I think Feynman was in his heart a true educator and scientist, with real integrity. And I think it drove him nuts how many important decisions are made using unscientific principles. This book was a light-hearted attempt to point that out - not to mention, a very entertaining read.

Brendon Schrodinger

The title of this collection comes from a tale that took place early in Feynman's career where he was invited for an afternoon tea with the dean of his university. The dean's wife is serving and asks him the above question. Richard never drinks tea and

The title of this collection comes from a tale that took place early in Feynman's career where he was invited for an afternoon tea with the dean of his university. The dean's wife is serving and asks him the above question. Richard never drinks tea and never moves in the same society that does, little own the society that has lemon OR cream with it.

A big theme of these stories and indeed a running theme in Feynman's life is that he had no time for formalisms, rituals or societal views. He does attribute a lot of this to his upbringing. His father was a uniform maker and often dealt with clients of all types of notoriety and he knew that underneath all those uniforms were just another naked ape. He passed on his views to his children and Richard went so far as to nearly not accept his Nobel Prize. To him it was another form of bullshit and that his reward had already been awarded with other scientists using his findings.

It's no argument that Feynman was a brilliant physicist, but he also had many interests. And a great proportion of these stories are about these interests or how his interests intersected with his physics work. There is only one story in this collection that is technical in any way. The collection reads as if you had somehow run into Feynman in a seedy bar in 1960s Vegas (there's a story about this time) waiting for a showgirl to finish work. He is a great orator and the origins of these stories are that they were recorded and transcribed by Ralph Leighton, a drumming pal of Richard's. Yes, Feynman played the bongos.

So while you have this brilliant man, in some ways ahead of his time in the ways that he thought and how he acted, there are some hints that he is a man of his time. Reading these stories you come to realise that Feynman was quite the womaniser. He appreciated the female form in a socially acceptable way for the time that he lived in. And so when someone from the twenty-first century reads this book he can come across as a bit sleazy. I am not going to defend his attitudes nor am I going to condone them. Personally I found nothing overtly offensive about his actions or his attitudes. But I can imagine my partner reading this and sighing at several statements made by him.

The book covers times in his childhood right up until late in life. There is a nice large chapter on his time at Los Alamos working on the Manhattan Project. There are also stories about his time in Brazil and Japan and his love for immersing himself in a different way of life. There are also a couple of great chapters on education; one about the standard of students he sees while in Brazil and the other concerning a time when he was asked to be on a panel to decide high school texts for his school region.

I'd recommend this read to most people. It is extremely accessible, with little jargon or technical physics. It talks more on his philosophy of living, learning and how to deal with the world around you. He is definitely a great orator and that is why his legacy lives on. This book remains a popular seller in the general sciences and recordings of his lectures and interviews are popular on youtube. It's

great to know that we still have so much of him around.

And for those who want more there are plenty more collections of his wisdom. There is also a biographic graphic novel.

William

The story of Feynman changed fundamentally, what I think about the world around me.

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The story of Feynman changed fundamentally, what I think about the world around me.

The story of Richard and his father helped me to understand, that

. Parents could pique the interest of the child very early and could give him real answers if he asks why again and again.

He changed my view about scientists. He proved that the

. You rarely have a chance to meet pedagogues who can help you fall in love with learning and set the fire of science in you, as Feynman did.

Penny

Feynman is a physicist who taught at Cornell and Princeton, worked on the Manhattan Project and won the Nobel Prize. He's also a complete hoot. The book is a series of autobiographical stories --

pranks pulled as a student at MIT and at Los Alamos, teaching himself to paint, scientific discoveries he made, his three marriages, how he was rejected by the draft board for being mentally suspect (they asked him if he ever heard voices and he said yes he did and then went on to describe what he found

Feynman is a physicist who taught at Cornell and Princeton, worked on the Manhattan Project and won the Nobel Prize. He's also a complete hoot. The book is a series of autobiographical stories -- pranks pulled as a student at MIT and at Los Alamos, teaching himself to paint, scientific discoveries he made, his three marriages, how he was rejected by the draft board for being mentally suspect (they asked him if he ever heard voices and he said yes he did and then went on to describe what he found interesting about that. He said that sometimes when falling in and out of sleep he'd imagine conversations with his foreign-born colleagues and the voices in his head spoke accurately with their accents -- but that if he tried to imitate such accents he could not do so at all. So how was it that one part of his brain had captured accents correctly but another hadn't? This was entirely typical of Feynman's wide ranging curiosity and intelligence, but the end result in this case was that the psychologists decided he was nuts. His colleagues at Cornell were vastly amused by this.)

What I love about Feynman -- first of all, his great interest in everything and his willingness to experiment. The great joy he found in working things through (he said that the reason he'd never tried drugs, though he was tempted, was that he enjoyed thinking too much and didn't want to risk that.) Also, he's clearly so very intelligent and reading his book, his thoughts seem so easy to follow -- it makes the world of science seem accessible.