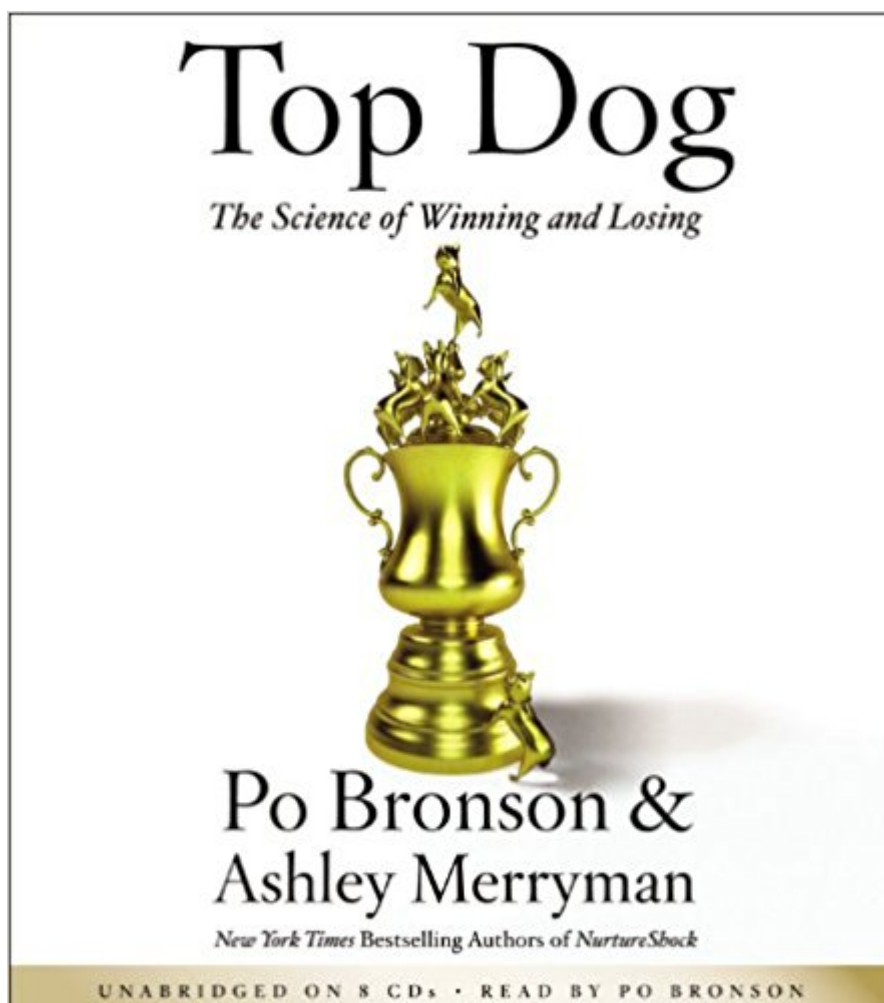




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Top Dog: The Science Of Winning And Losing



Synopsis

New York Times Bestseller Po Bronson and Ashley Merryman's work changes the national dialogue. Beyond their bestselling books, you know them from commentary and features in the New York Times, CNN, NPR, Time, Newsweek, Wired, New York, and more. E-mail, Facebook, and Twitter accounts are filled with demands to read their reporting (such as "How Not to Talk to Your Kids," "Creativity Crisis," and "Losing Is Good for You"). In TOP DOG, Bronson and Merryman again use their astonishing blend of science and storytelling to reveal what's truly in the heart of a champion. The joy of victory and the character-building agony of defeat. Testosterone and the neuroscience of mistakes. Why rivals motivate. How home field advantage gets you a raise. What teamwork really requires. It's baseball, the SAT, sales contests, and Linux. How before da Vinci and FedEx were innovators, first, they were great competitors. Olympians carry TOP DOG in their gym bags. It's in briefcases of Wall Street traders and Madison Avenue madmen. Risk takers from Silicon Valley to Vegas race to implement its ideas, as educators debate it in halls of academia. Now see for yourself what this game-changing talk is all about.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Q&A with Po Bronson and Ashley Merryman Q. Are you refuting the concept that it takes ten years of practice to get great at anything? Po Bronson: Not at all, we feel our book is additive to that story. Nobody is judged on how they practice. They're judged on how they perform when it counts. Practicing is not the same as competing. You can pitch a million baseballs to your son until he perfects his swing--but wait until he faces a pitcher who wants him to miss. You might have ten

years of experience in the advertising industry, but how do you handle the day your biggest client tells you they're leaving for a rival agency? Ashley Merryman: The truth is, nobody puts in ten years before they start competing. The world doesn't work that way. We are all thrown into competitive situations, long before we've had enough practice. Our results are still judged; our fate is still determined by how we do. To survive these trials, we need more than practice. We need competitive fire. Q. Did researching this book change how you each compete? Ashley Merryman: I'm a girl. All my life, I've been told to "play nice." I heard it on the playground and then the grown-up version they say in boardrooms: women are better at coalition-building, not competing. The science says that's wrong. And it's not just about toughening up. Women are prone to weigh risks more carefully than men; when women are confident they have a good chance to succeed, they'll compete. Sometimes this is an asset (in certain domains), but sometimes it's a hindrance. I've learned to recognize when to tap into my gender's knack for risk-analysis, and when to ignore it. Po Bronson: I didn't let many people know it, but before working on this book, I'd had a full-hip replacement and a few unsuccessful surgeries on my leg. I had many setbacks during rehab; I could barely walk at times. This affected every dimension of my life--it sapped my energy for my writing work and my volunteer projects. I was just losing my edge and my will to fight. Researching the book inspired me; it reminded me who I am. It restored my zeal for attacking big challenges. I hope the book does that for readers, first and foremost: gets them eager to surmount the challenges in their lives. Q. Everyone says that companies must innovate to remain competitive--but does it work the other way around? Doesn't competition destroy creativity? Po Bronson: There is a belief that creative genius is fragile and needs to be shielded from competition and comparison. But the research says that's a myth. Leonardo da Vinci loved to have his art put side by side with the work of others for debate over whose was best; Bach, too, liked to compete against other musicians in public concerts. Chemical fire extinguishers, food canning, transcontinental air travel--each began as the prize winner of a competition. Competition doesn't kill creativity: it facilitates creative output by supplying motivational drive. Ashley Merryman: Whether professional musicians or school children, studies have shown competition fuels creativity and even improves the quality of the work produced. More than that, the skills that make you a great competitor--such as a willingness to push boundaries, trust one's instincts, problem-solve--those are the same skills needed for innovation. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Bronson and Merryman follow up the best-selling *NurtureShock* (2009) with this intriguing look at the nature of competition. Most of us are taught from an early age that it's good to be

competitive, but we're not usually taught how to compete. Sure, we can learn how to play a sport, and we can practice the skills, but practicing is not the same as competing. You can perfect your baseball swing in practice, but how do you react when you're facing a pitcher who wants you to miss? The key element of competition, the authors say, is the ability to compete under pressure in situations that are not under one's own control. Using plenty of real-world examples, from Olympic athletes to fighter pilots to intelligence operatives, the authors persuasively argue that technical skill is only one part—in many cases, the least important part—of what it takes to come out on top. Expect lots of talk-show play for this one. --David Pitt --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I grabbed this book thinking it might give me some insight into the people that I manage. More specifically, I wanted to learn about teams, team dynamics, and what differentiated winning teams from losers. Instead I got a book very much focused on the individual. Why do we compete. How much anxiety does it create to compete and how do different people handle it. The nice thing about the authors is they are basing their book off of countless scientific studies. You don't get a lot of trite statements or colloquialisms. The authors are good at taking the evidence of these studies and creating a compelling story. In the end, I learned several things about the differences between men and women in terms of competition, anxiety levels in competitors, playing not to lose, etc. I just wish there was more coverage on teams and the inner dynamics of winning teams. Well written. Well researched. A good solid read.

Very well written and a joy to read. As someone who has to often synthesize scientific evidence for my job as a researcher what the authors have accomplished is no small feat. I only wish there was more research presented on how to teach children how to be good at competing like assessing when to compete and when not to, how to handle losing, how to handle the physiologic stress of entering into competition....etc. I disagree with one section where the authors conclude, after telling the story of how 5% of top coders win 80% of the prize money, that competition is inherently good and fun. Well it's only good and fun for that 5%.

This is a very interesting book and an easy read for those of us who like to understand human behavior and psychology. It is filled with often counter-intuitive information about why competitiveness is actually good. There are some broad ideas that can be gleaned for parents, teachers, and managers about various things that might improve performance, but it is really not a

guide for individuals. When you have finished this book, you won't have a list of things to do to improve your chances of good performance, but you will have an idea about the kinds of things that matter. So this is a thoughtful book for thoughtful people. Hopefully others will be prompted to provide more practical advice for people to follow. Having said all this, I still easily recommend this book for people who are curious about what makes people perform well.

Top Dog by Po Bronson and Ashley Merryman starts out with a very exciting pace. There was a brief glimpse at the science of competition. It then slows to more boring pace of information and studies I think would be helpful parents raising young children, yes there is a difference between boys and girls. There is plenty to help you understand competition in the work place. My favorite was situational- anger. One I have become quite acquainted with over the years. I was looking to improve my game instead this book will improve my life with insight on motivating others as a leader and motivating myself.

Very interesting read! I have for my whole life been the guy that is ok at the skill in itself but for some reason always tend to lose when things really matter... But I think it is now slowly changing which is crazy exciting! :) Need to read the book again though, a lot of information to process! Fun fact: The book "ends" at 58% in the kindle, so a whopping 42% of the book is references and a few last words. So it is not as heavy of a read as it seems to be at first!

Po Bronson's previous book has been instrumental in causing teachers and coaches (and, I hope, parents) to rethink the nature of talent and innate abilities as the best predictors for future success and/or proficiency in an activity. In a time when human beings are taking less and less responsibility for their actions and choices (please read into this the hottest of political topics!) by relegating all of them to the fate of genetics, Mr. Bronson and Mrs. Merryman show that the complex interplay of our choices along with our genetic make-up is hardly immutable. (On a side note... Would like to see less and less of the evolutionary speculation in books like this. Some credibility is lost and an unnecessary worldview is presented for a book of this nature.) Still, this book is an invaluable resource for those interested in the nature of motivation and the product of our choices.

A great read with great insights from one of my favorite writers . I know him personally and the guy is just one of those tremendous people you meet once in a while

really good book

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