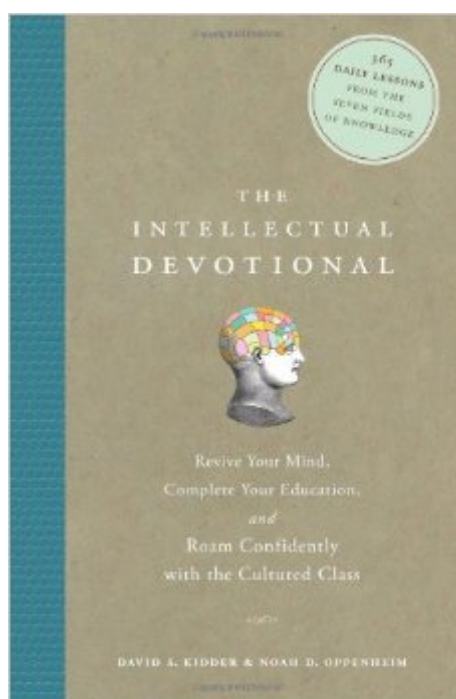


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The Intellectual Devotional: Revive Your Mind, Complete Your Education, And Roam Confidently With The Cultured Class



Synopsis

This daily digest of intellectual challenge and learning will arouse curiosity, refresh knowledge, expand horizons, and keep the mind sharp. Millions of Americans keep bedside books of prayer and meditative reflection—collections of daily passages to stimulate spiritual thought and advancement. The Intellectual Devotional is a secular version of the same—a collection of 365 short lessons that will inspire and invigorate the reader every day of the year. Each daily digest of wisdom is drawn from one of seven fields of knowledge: history, literature, philosophy, mathematics and science, religion, fine arts, and music. Impress your friends by explaining Plato's Cave Allegory, pepper your cocktail party conversation with opera terms, and unlock the mystery of how batteries work. Daily readings range from important passages in literature to basic principles of physics, from pivotal events in history to images of famous paintings with accompanying analysis. The book's goal is to refresh knowledge we've forgotten, make new discoveries, and exercise modes of thinking that are ordinarily neglected once our school days are behind us. Offering an escape from the daily grind to contemplate higher things, The Intellectual Devotional is a great way to awaken in the morning or to revitalize one's mind before retiring in the evening.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"The Intellectual Devotional" is an intriguing concept and fairly well executed. Each day of the week features a brief, one page article about a given subject, followed by a smattering of "additional facts"—Monday's topic is history, Tuesday's is literature, Wednesday's is the visual arts, Thursday's is science, Friday's is music, Saturday's is philosophy and Sunday's is religion. I've been reading

the book for a couple of weeks now, and I've found the brief essays to be informative, up-to-date and (on topics with which I'm already familiar) accurate. I read each daily "devotional" at breakfast over a cup of coffee, and it's a pleasant way to start the day (and certainly less painful than the newspaper). Several of the reviews on Amazon have criticized the book's small type, and this is in fact something to be wary of if you have vision problems. The first paragraph on each page is in what appears to be a regular-sized font, but subsequent paragraphs are quite a bit smaller. The "Additional Facts" (which set out some of the most intriguing ideas on each page) are quite small indeed.

This is a fun book, no doubt about it, and quite educational in its own right. But it is also full of errors and misrepresentations from page one -- mostly minor ones, but even those are glaring embarrassments for a work which continually flaunts how "intellectual" and "cultured" it is. The very first entry, for example, deals with "Egyptian hieroglyphics." Any amateur Egyptologist worth his or her salt will immediately tell you that the proper term is "hieroglyphs" -- "hieroglyphic" is the adjectival form of the word. A nitpick, perhaps, but one that tends to raise the hackles of Egyptian history professors. Later entries contain cringe-inducing mistakes, such as the claim that the Hebrew Torah is the Christian Old Testament. In fact, the Hebrew Tanakh is equivalent to the (Protestant) Old Testament: the Torah consists only of the Pentateuch, the Five Books of Moses. This is not a minor point. Other entries contain not so much outright errors, but a lack of nuanced understanding. To refer to the Mass as a "ritual reenactment," for instance, may pass muster for a Calvinist, but would make any Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Episcopalian, etc. wince at the authors' lack of understanding. In short, it's certainly a book worth buying and enjoying. But take its summaries with a grain of salt. Tackling such massive swathes of learning necessitates that the work be far wider than it is deep.

Do you frequently find yourself at a loss for words? Are you the constant listener to someone else's mindless chatter simply because you can't think of anything interesting to say? Authors Kidder and Oppenheim offer factual options in this cleverly written book to enliven your conversations and broaden your knowledge on a variety of subjects. Their compilation offers History, Literature, Visual Arts, Science, Music, Philosophy and Religion explained in brief one page summaries. Each day you read one page only, absorb it. By the end of the week you will have explored each field of knowledge at least once a week. As your knowledge expands, so does your confidence and your conversations have more interesting substance. Each day, while reading the book, I shared the

information I had learned with my husband and friends who were delighted to discuss Ernest Hemingway, Cloning, illusion vs reality, Hammurabi's code of Laws, Noah, Plato, The Solar System, Vaccines, Albert Einstein, the Solar system, Da Vinci, Plato, Handel, atoms, Aristotle, Mozart, and Vermeer's "Girl with a Pearl Earring" painting, just to mention a few passages. Actress Scarlett Johansson portrayed "the girl" in a recent film based on Vermeer's life, so we gained more insight into how that portrait, "Girl with a Pearl Ear-ring," manifested, then our conversation strayed naturally to the quality of current motion pictures like "The Horse Whisperer" and "Island," in which Scarlett Johansson was also featured, and that is exactly the purpose of this book, "to wake up our brains," enliven our thoughts, enhance our communication skills so that we become more confident and knowledgeable and stop hesitating to engage in diverse and dynamic conversations. No need to be a hesitant, shy, silent observer. After reading this book, step into life armed with more knowledge and facts!

What a fabulous concept! As a fan of daybooks and devotionals, I love the idea of this book. Covering seven key areas of knowledge, one for each day of the week, it delivers what it promises in the title and subtitle. I would have given the book FIVE stars if it weren't for the incredibly SMALL TYPE that makes reading very difficult for middle-aged readers like me -- especially at the end of the day. I am hoping that the publishers will release a "large print" version for anyone past 50. I will look forward to more editions of this wonderful book. Other than the typesize, it's highly recommended.

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