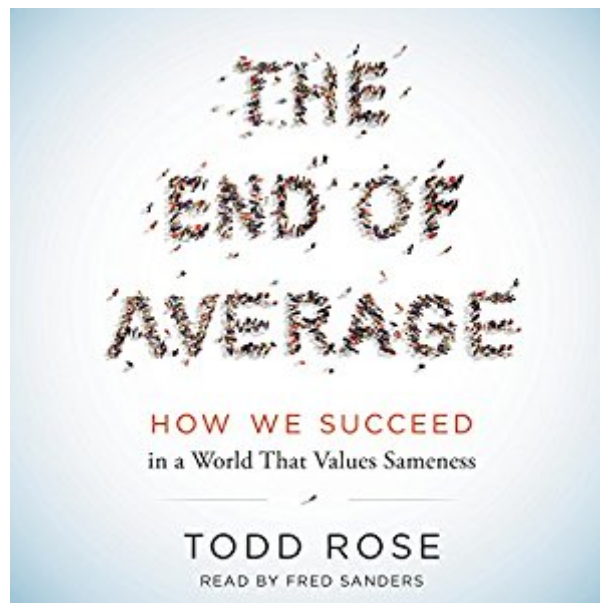




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# The End Of Average: How We Succeed In A World That Values Sameness



## Synopsis

Are you above average? Is your child an A student? Is your employee an introvert or an extrovert? Every day we are measured against the yardstick of averages, judged according to how close we come to it or how far we deviate from it. The assumption that metrics comparing us to an average-like GPAs, personality test results, and performance review ratings-reveal something meaningful about our potential is so ingrained in our consciousness that we don't even question it. That assumption, says Harvard's Todd Rose, is spectacularly-and scientifically-wrong. In *The End of Average*, Rose, a rising star in the new field of the science of the individual, shows that no one is average. Not you. Not your kids. Not your employees. This isn't hollow sloganeering-it's a mathematical fact with enormous practical consequences. But while we know people learn and develop in distinctive ways, these unique patterns of behaviors are lost in our schools and businesses, which have been designed around the mythical "average person". This average-size-fits-all model ignores our differences and fails at recognizing talent. It's time to change it. Weaving science, history, and his personal experiences as a high school dropout, Rose offers a powerful alternative to understanding individuals through averages: the three principles of individuality. The jaggedness principle (talent is always jagged), the context principle (traits are a myth), and the pathways principle (we all walk the road less traveled) help us understand our true uniqueness - and that of others - and how to take full advantage of individuality to gain an edge in life. Listen to this powerful manifesto in the ranks of *Drive*, *Quiet*, and *Mindset* - and you won't see averages or talent in the same way again.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This is a book to be read by every educator who thinks that one size fits all -- and that things have to be done differently in schools. It should also be read by administrators, school boards, and politicians who believe that one policy fits all -- or that any of one thing fits large groups of most anything. Rose's book clarifies how simplistically we think about others when it comes to lumping them into categories, having fallen prey to testing, averages, and statistics. Reading this will change your view -- and if it doesn't, you really haven't grasped the point: we are unique individuals with individual talents. And yes we are part of a larger society with responsibilities --- but we are not numbers and standard "deviations." Please Read It.

Todd Rose has been on my radar since 2010 when he was a contributor the fabulous book *Buzz* by Katherine Ellison. His book *Square Peg* is a laugh our loud, brutally honest memoir that provides inspiration, hope and laughter to parents. *The End of Average* is a game changer. This book is a must read for parents, educators, employers, and perhaps for all human beings. It helps us understand that our own unique traits, and those of our kids, co-workers and others are not weaknesses or deficiencies. Todd Rose gives a Ted Talk about *The Myth of Average*. It is a great talk, but it doesn't do the book justice. I purchased this in a hardcover version as I knew I would be referring to this book over and over as I do my best to find ways to support my kids, my co-workers and myself so we all can be the best we can be. Thank you Todd Rose for sharing so much of your own story and using your wonderfully unique brain to make this world more user-friendly. I hope that parents and educators will read this book and understand that a child who is not "living up to expectations" may be doing the best they can in a cockpit that isn't designed for them, and that the changes that need to be made may be in the environment and not in the child.

The author is making some important points about how, in practice, we can change our one-size-fits-all educational and business systems to accommodate more diversity. Our civilization has been moving more in the direction of personalizing education and the business worlds. This has been a result of a number of factors, especially the enormous access, at very low cost, to information resulting from the computer revolution. The author points out how our world, despite these shifts toward personalization, has a philosophy of the average that we have carried with us from the early days of the industrial revolution when the pioneers of education and industry were

learning to adjust to mass education and mass production. With the computer revolution, there is no need, in many respects, to appeal to these old ideas. The author wants to see a new way put into practice. I was very impressed with his practical philosophy, and think his ideas are helpful ones. The author puts an interesting historical perspective on this, presents a number of personal stories how his ideas can help identify leaders, and even tells something of his own story struggling to rise to a leadership position. I think, however, his point is that his practical philosophy can help all of us.

This powerful, original book shows why and how individuals and organizations have been limited by narrow categories and labels starting as early as "scientific management." Rose's careful research, insights from science, history, and psychology, and life experience show why there is no such thing as "average" when it comes to human potential; he clearly demonstrates that the very concept limits opportunities for individuals and organizations, especially in education and employment. Not just a well-founded critique of standardization and previous, conventional research, Rose also provides ways to capture individuality through a nonlinear (jaggedness principle) process, understanding of effects of environment (context principle), and appreciation of varied ways to create the success sought (pathways principle). As a career consultant with over 1000 clients who writes on courage and promotes individual, authentic growth and outcomes, I am now in my fourth, fifth and sixth careers (previously management consultant, diplomat, professor). So my own experience and work, as well as my clients', experiences support this significant work by Todd Rose.

I couldn't put this book down. I'll admit that as someone who has been trained to look for outliers as leverage for research and problem solving that it serves as a bit of confirmation bias, but the material in here is fantastic. Just enough statistics to let you know they did the math, but not too much to get you lost in the analysis. It definitely provides an interesting counter point to a 'one size fits all' world that is built around the middle of the bell curve but ends up fitting nobody in particular.

A brilliant presentation. Putting these ideas into practice, however, will be a challenge under the current administration that has little interest in public education, and less in individuals. We are looking at trends toward personalized medicine, and now personalized learning, but these concepts will only benefit a lucky few, if we can figure out the economics to apply this approach for everyone.

Each of the elements by which we all see the world (i.e. our frames of reference) has a history. Often we don't know -or even ask- where it comes from. Then comes a book that shows us that

what we believed as "self-evident" in reality is just a progression of ideas endorsed and expanded by groups of people through time. This is such a book. I expect it to have a higher impact than Thomas Kuhn's "Structure of Scientific Revolutions" as it is more accessible and its implications more immediate in our lives. My 12 year old son rephrased my explanation of this book in a super way: "So basically Dad, this book claims that what is "normal" is that everyone is different and that the "average person" does not exist." Indeed.

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