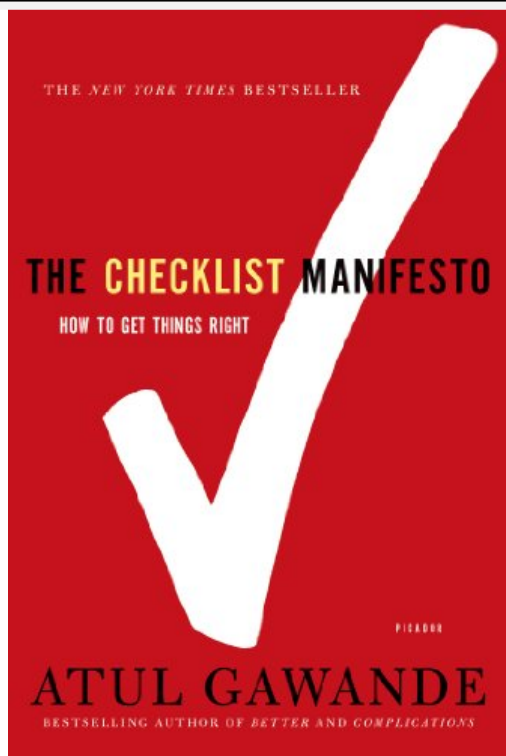

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Book Synopsis

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Book Synopsis

Amazon Exclusive: Malcolm Gladwell Reviews *The Checklist Manifesto*

Malcolm Gladwell was named one of *TIME* magazine's 100 Most Influential People of 2005. He is most recently the author of *What the Dog Saw* (a collection of his writing from *The New Yorker*) as well as the bestsellers *Outliers*, *The Tipping Point*, and *Blink*. Read his exclusive Amazon guest review of *The Checklist Manifesto*:



Over the past decade, through his writing in *The New Yorker* magazine and his books *Complications* and *Better*, Atul Gawande has made a name for himself

as a writer of exquisitely crafted meditations on the problems and challenges of modern medicine. His latest book, *The Checklist Manifesto*, begins on familiar ground, with his experiences as a surgeon. But before long it becomes clear that he is really interested in a problem that afflicts virtually every aspect of the modern world--and that is how professionals deal with the increasing complexity of their responsibilities. It has been years since I read a book so powerful and so thought-provoking.

Gawande begins by making a distinction between errors of ignorance (mistakes we make because we don't know enough), and errors of ineptitude (mistakes we made because we don't make proper use of what we know). Failure in the modern world, he writes, is really about the second of these errors, and he walks us through a series of examples from medicine showing how the routine tasks of surgeons have now become so incredibly complicated that mistakes of one kind or another are virtually inevitable: it's just too easy for an otherwise competent doctor to miss a step, or forget to ask a key question or, in the stress and pressure of the moment, to fail to plan properly for every eventuality. Gawande then visits with pilots and the people who build skyscrapers and comes back with a solution. Experts need checklists--literally--written guides that walk them through the key steps in any complex procedure. In the last section of the book, Gawande shows how his research team has taken this idea, developed a safe surgery checklist, and applied it around the world, with staggering success.

The danger, in a review as short as this, is that it makes Gawande's book seem narrow in focus or prosaic in its conclusions. It is neither. Gawande is a gorgeous writer and storyteller, and the aims of this book are ambitious. Gawande thinks that the modern world requires us to revisit what we mean by expertise: that experts need help, and that progress depends on experts having the humility to concede that they need help. --*Malcolm Gladwell*

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