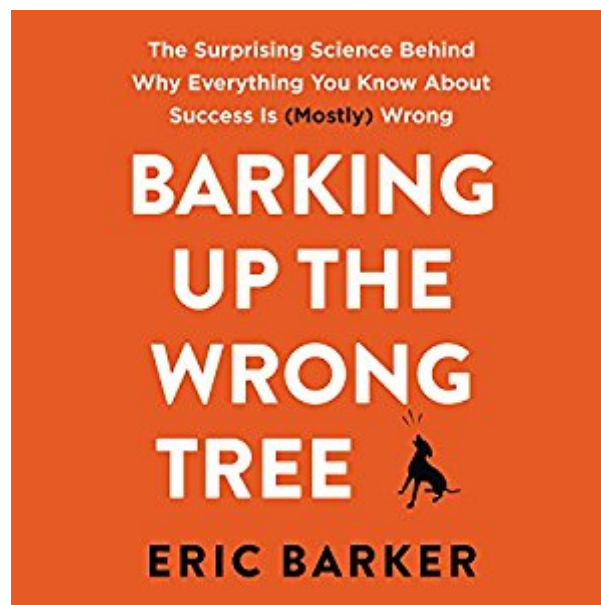




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# **Barking Up The Wrong Tree: The Surprising Science Behind Why Everything You Know About Success Is (Mostly) Wrong**



## Synopsis

Much of the advice we've been told about achievement is logical, earnest...and downright wrong. In *Barking up the Wrong Tree*, Eric Barker reveals the extraordinary science behind what actually determines success and, most importantly, how anyone can achieve it. You'll learn: Why valedictorians rarely become millionaires and how your biggest weakness might actually be your greatest strength Whether nice guys finish last and why the best lessons about cooperation come from gang members, pirates, and serial killers Why trying to increase confidence fails and how Buddhist philosophy holds a superior solution The secret ingredient to "grit" that Navy SEALs and disaster survivors leverage to keep going How to find work-life balance using the strategy of Genghis Khan, the errors of Albert Einstein, and a little lesson from Spider-Man By looking at what separates the extremely successful from the rest of us, we learn what we can do to be more like them - and find out, in some cases, why it's good that we aren't. *Barking up the Wrong Tree* draws on startling statistics and surprising anecdotes to help you understand what works and what doesn't, so you can stop guessing at success and start living the life you want.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This is the 1st book I've ever pre-ordered. I am a regular reader of the blog *Barking Up The Wrong Tree*, and I once thought would it be cool if Eric Barker can make a book out of these gems? And my God he did, and it did not disappoints one bit. Like Dale Carnegie, Eric Barker uses so many

stories, book references and great quotations to make his points across. There are stories such as how a poor boy in Mexico can become a world class neuro surgeon, how a clinically crazy person can win the enduring Race Across America, or how can an illiterate person in a horrible time and place and without proper education can conquer more land in 25 years than the Romans ever did in 400 years. There are also eye opening stories of how trust is completely lost in a Moldovan culture, how crimes create street gangs (and not the other way around) for protection, and how surprisingly civilised and organised pirates were. The author then backs them up with numerous scientific findings to validate the points he is making, just like the approach of Daniel Kahneman. For example, there are scientific explanations on why some people never quit, why people have depression, and why people commit suicide. Moreover, there are explanations on why high achievers can sometimes have anxiety problem or even depression, why the number ones in high school (the valedictorians) so rarely become the number ones in real life, why beautiful people normally become more successful, why nice guys finish first and last (and not in the middle), and why high achievers are rarely active in their social media accounts. Along the way we'll learn so many amusing facts, such as how an IQ of 120 does not make much difference than 180, 2 and a half to 4 hours after we wake up is when our brains are at its sharpest, how Hedonic Adaptation explains why after a brief change everything changes back to baseline (e.g. on diet and clean behaviour), how Viagra started out as a medicine for angina that had a serendipitous "side effect", that the US once had an (almost official) emperor, Emperor Norton I. And we'll also gain some great wisdom like "sometimes an ugly duckling can be a swan if it finds the right pond" or "life is noisy and complex, and we don't have perfect information about others and their motives. Writing people off can be due to just lack of clarity", or "things aren't as scary when we have our hands on the wheels." All of these wealth of information are then knitted nicely to become the central theme of the book: to discover the core determinants of success, through considering both sides of the argument with extreme stories and scientific facts. In each individual chapter the book then provides concluding analysis, such as the importance of quitting something that is not good for you to make room and time for something good for you, the scientific explanation on luck as a function of choice, the disadvantages dreaming will cause on your wellbeing, effort and reality, the best predictor of our child's emotional well-being is whether they knew their family history, the importance of sleep and self-compassion, and many more. The author also gives us so many practical tools for us to work out the determinant factors for success, on our own unique way, such as Shawn Achor's "twenty second rule", Cal Newport's "shutdown ritual", how to skillfully and sincerely use our network, figuring out whether we're filtered or unfiltered leader, the importance of setting a parameter in a negotiation, and the findings of Robert Epstein

research on how to reduce stress, among many others. All in all, this book is the most complete analysis for its subject, using unorthodox approach and very amusing wide range of information that makes it very fun to read. What Freakonomics did for economics, Why Do Men Have Nipples? did for medicine, and Moonwalking With Einstein did with memory, Barking Up the Wrong Tree does it brilliantly with exploring the keys for success in the real world. I couldn't recommend it more.

Eric hit a home run with his first book. It is excellent! I read with a highlighter in my hand to mark good points, things to think about later, and ideas and suggestions to re-read later. I painted his book yellow! Now that I've finished it I will keep it out to review over the next week. Then it will occupy a place on my "favorite books" shelf. I've been a fan of his blog for years along with his weekly newsletter. It's a must for my weekly reading. If you've read other books on success in life this book is a must read since as his subtitle suggests much of what you thought you know is (mostly) wrong.

This book is so chock-full of useful information that I highlighted it over 200 times. What do I like about the book? First, it's full of great stories that stay with you. There's James Waters with his mental strategies that got him through Navy SEAL training, a Harvard MBA, and a White House job. There's Alfredo Quiñones-Hinojosa, the illegal Mexican migrant worker boy who became a world-renowned neurosurgeon at Johns Hopkins. There's Spencer Glendon with the debilitating ulcerative colitis that became a world-class money manager anyway. Dozens of vivid, funny, inspiring stories of ingenuity, grit, and optimism here. Second, Barker amply supports all recommendations with research findings. So you will learn fascinating, counterintuitive concepts from social psychology, behavioral economics, game theory, neuroscience, genetics and evolutionary biology. It reminds me of *Algorithms to Live By: The Computer Science of Human Decisions*, another great book that's full of ingenious mindhacks. Third, it's full of usable unconventional wisdom. Were pirates the progressives of their day? Why do so few valedictorians become millionaires? Why do jerks succeed? (Hint: they ask for what they want and self-promote to their bosses.) Reading no single book will turn you into an overnight success, but this one has a lot of signposts for living a happier, more fulfilling life. You'd be wise to read and share it.-- Dr Ali Binazir, Happiness Engineer and author of *The Tao of Dating: The Smart Woman's Guide to Being Absolutely Irresistible* the #1-rated dating book on for 4+ years

I've been following the Barking Up the Wrong Tree blog for over 2 years now, so this book was a real treat. One thing I love about Eric is his ability to challenge widely-held assumptions and make you look at things differently. This book is filled with tons of insightful research and anecdotes, but Eric also does a great job keeping the reader's attention and keeping his points accessible by always zooming in on the "so what"...which I think makes all the insights a lot more actionable. He covers a lot of ground, so it moves quickly. I feel like you end up cherry picking the things that are most relevant to you at the time. I look forward to re-reading this in a few months, because I know I'll probably latch on to other great insights that I didn't focus on the first time around. Great stuff!

I have read a lot of the books mentioned here and liked them all. This format is refreshing. Viewing each assumed truth from both sides. I like the examples mixed in with research references. The best part is the application summary to wrap it all up. The hardest part is the chapters lengths necessary to get through a complete subject. Amazing that it is available on Kindle Unlimited. So good I want to buy a copy anyway.

One of the few email blogs I look forward to...and actually read thoroughly...was delighted to have Eric Barker finally publish a book! His approachable, humorous, relatable, factual, entertaining style of writing on subjects most would rather not self reflect on makes this book a must read. For Boomers to Millennials. Thanks Eric for helping us know each other, and ourselves a bit better without being preachy. Looking forward to your next book already!

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