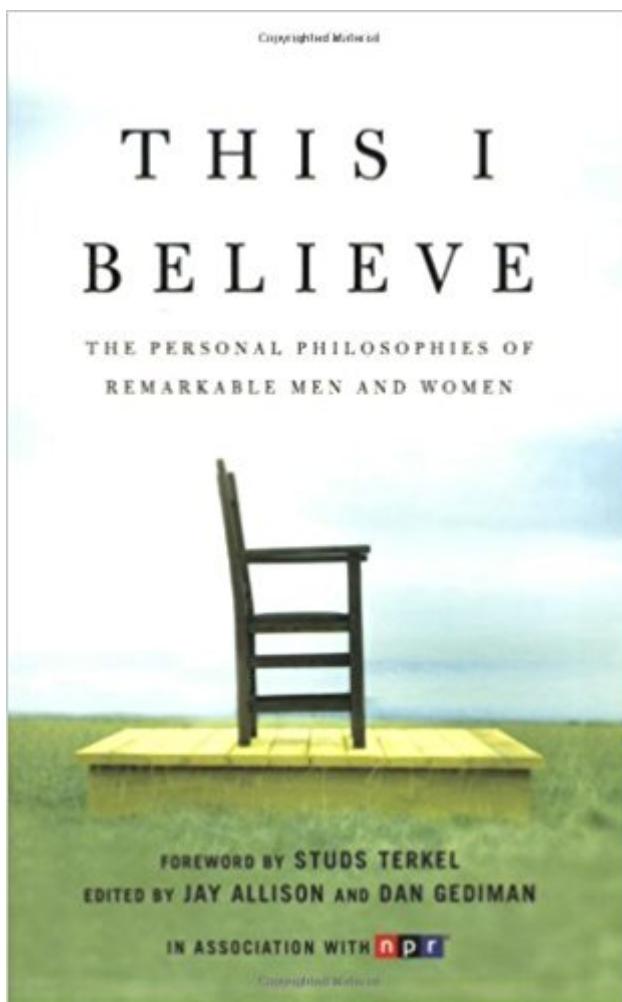


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This I Believe: The Personal Philosophies Of Remarkable Men And Women



Synopsis

"A welcome change from the sloganeering, political mudslinging and products of spin doctors." — The Philadelphia Inquirer

Based on the NPR series of the same name, This I Believe features eighty Americans — from the famous to the unknown — completing the thought that the book's title begins. Each piece compels readers to rethink not only how they have arrived at their own personal beliefs but also the extent to which they share them with others. Featuring many renowned contributors — including Isabel Allende, Colin Powell, Gloria Steinem, William F. Buckley Jr., Penn Jillette, Bill Gates, and John Updike — the collection also contains essays by a Brooklyn lawyer; a part-time hospital clerk in Rehoboth, Massachusetts; a woman who sells yellow pages advertising in Fort Worth, Texas; and a man who serves on Rhode Island's parole board. The result is a stirring and provocative trip inside the minds and hearts of a diverse group of people whose beliefs — and the incredibly varied ways in which they choose to express them — reveal the American spirit at its best.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Starred Review. In the 1950s, the Edward R. Murrow—hosted radio program This I Believe prompted Americans to briefly explain their most cherished beliefs, be they religious or purely pragmatic. Since the program's 2005 renaissance as a weekly NPR segment, Allison (the host) and Gediman (the executive producer) have collected some of the best essays from This I Believe then and now. "Your personal credo" is what Allison calls it in the book's introduction, noting that today's

program is distinguished from the 1950s version in soliciting submissions from ordinary Americans from all walks of life. These make up some of the book's most powerful and memorable moments, from the surgeon whose illiterate mother changed his early life with faith and a library card to the English professor whose poetry helped him process a traumatic childhood event. And in one of the book's most unusual essays, a Burmese immigrant confides that he believes in feeding monkeys on his birthday because a Buddhist monk once prophesied that if he followed this ritual, his family would prosper. There are luminaries here, too, including Gloria Steinem, Warren Christopher, Helen Keller, Isabel Allende, Eleanor Roosevelt, John Updike and (most surprisingly, considering the book's more liberal bent) Newt Gingrich. This feast of ruminations is a treat for any reader. (Oct.)

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National Public Radio listeners have been moved to tears by the personal essays that constitute the series *This I Believe*. Created in 1951 with Edward Murrow as host, the sometimes funny, often profound, and always compelling series has been revived, according to host Jay Allison, because, once again, "matters of belief divide our country and the world." Oral historian Studs Terkel kicks things off, and 80 personal credos follow. Essays from the original series are interleaved with contemporary essays (selected from more than 11,000 submissions) to create a resounding chorus. English professor Sara Adams avers that one should "be cool to the pizza delivery dude." John McCain states, "I believe in honor, faith, and service." Iranian-born writer Azar Nafisi writes, "I believe in empathy." Jackie Robinson said, "I believe in the goodness of a free society." Rick Moody believes in "the absolute and unlimited liberty of reading." Appendixes offer guidelines and resources because the urge to write such declarations is contagious, and schools and libraries have been coordinating *This I Believe* programs, which we believe is a righteous endeavor. Donna Seaman

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I bought this book because I myself am researching the difference between personal philosophies and traditional ones. While this book gave me some guidance, it does read like a chicken soup for the soul with a more finite focus. Some of the stories are great and really moving most though just fall under the category of bland recycled cookie cutter philosophy. As promising as the book is I just felt it could have been a bit deeper. For the few good ones in there and to feel apart of history as this book was based on a 1950 radio spot I would pick it up again but as a read for true personal

growth may be best to skip it.

80 essays. For me, 25 gems, the remained are good to very good. The anecdote from John McCain when he was a prisoner of war still gives me goose bumps. Jackie Robinson's and Helen Keller's essays are reminders of who we are: children of God. Will purchase the other two "This I Believe" books. Have written my own "This I Believe" and will submit for publication. A hidden gem of this book is to suggest you go deep within yourself and ask yourself, "What do I believe?" A fine legacy to pass on to future generations.

It is so difficult to see through the eyes of others, and to have empathy with their differing perspectives. These essays are so very thought-provoking, and it's interesting to see which ones will resonate with people I am closest to. The results are always surprising. This year, we have college application essays due--what a wonderful resource for examples of meaningful, 500-word personal statements!

I've read this book a few times and get more out of it each time. This is a thinking book.

This is a really good idea for a book, with its short and thoughtful pieces by a variety of writers and thinkers. And not only is it a good idea, but it works! I like the combination of pieces written decades ago and those written recently. It provides much food for thought; the writing is intelligent and at times inspirational. I plan to use this book in a university course I am teaching for those reasons.

Great book

"This I Believe" can be approached as a quick read of a couple hours or a casual read with occasional stops to contemplate the latest essay. Even though the collection is an extract from a large number of contributions, there will be some you can skim right through, thinking, "yeah, whatever" or that it wasn't that interesting a thought. I admit I felt almost guilty for not giving some of the authors more than a moment's notice, considering the person was talking about a core belief with passion. My guess is that a typical reader will feel the same, only for a different group within the diverse set. However, there are others that should prompt more serious thought. After all, the purpose of the essays is two-fold: give a window into what other people hold true, and also promote thinking about one's own values and beliefs. To me, it's less important to try to write my own essay

than to ponder whether I agree with the author's belief, or how it might apply to me, or whether I recall family members or others with similar beliefs. Even so, these are not long, deep essays, given the limit of a couple of minutes when spoken. The ones focused on religion, for example, are only a key thought or two, usually with a relevant example of their application or their origin. Others recall an important moment or two in one's life, perhaps where somebody else made a difference in the author's future. These are often the most personal and best essays. I found "This I Believe" on NPR. The ones I recall from this book are fine as short essays, but they are even better on the radio. The amusing take on barbecue is an example: made to be spoken. Many others are really personal stories that read well, yet probably would be an even nicer CD for the car. The mixture of famous people and "regular" (albeit articulate enough) people was absolutely necessary. Reprinting some from the 1950s was a good touch, showing that many beliefs hold true fifty years later, as you would expect. The new essay by a woman who also contributed fifty years ago was one of the highlights. The book could maybe have used some "bad guys" or cynics to express their beliefs. The authors are good folks (please leave aside whether you think Bill Gates, Newt Gingrich, etc. are "good"), in that they describe positive beliefs and values, people who often want to make a positive contribution to the world. Maybe some meanies or troublemakers could have explained what beliefs made them tick, too. The background on the original "This I Believe" from the 1950s complements the individual contributions and was very helpful. Jay Allison's introduction also nicely reviews the genesis of the NPR program and how the process unfolded.

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