

Skills for a Scientific Life by John R. Helliwell, CRC Press, Boca Raton, 2017, 215 pp., ISBN-13: 978-1498768757

When I agreed to review this book, I had no idea that Helliwell had referenced me as a reviewer in his chapter on how to review a book. Nevertheless, I kept this review unbiased, just like the previous review I wrote for a book by the same author.

Helliwell has been a scientist renowned for his contributions to the crystallography community and to society in general for over three decades. In recognition of his contributions to the crystallographic community, Helliwell was named winner of the American Crystallographic Association's 2014 Patterson Award and the European Crystallographic Association's 2015 Max Perutz Prize, just to name two of his many honors.

In this book, the author sets out describe how to be a good scientist and a good citizen. While the book is directed towards academic scientists and scientists-to-be, industrial scientists will benefit from reading it. For example, the chapter on promoting gender equality is relevant to all aspects of human endeavor, given the steps backward we have been reading about lately. This book is half memoir and half how-to-manual. In other words, Helliwell provides guidance on being a well-balanced scientist through numerous examples from his own scientific career.

The book is broken into eight sections consisting of a total of 34 chapters. Each chapter is a short essay covering a particular topic, so the book is an easy read. The sections broadly cover how to know if you are really cut out to be a scientist, how to be a better researcher, how to be a good citizen scientist, how to be a good teacher, how to reach larger audiences, how to be a leader in the community, and guidance on dealing with the outside world.

There is one error, in which Eisenhower is wrongfully given credit for starting the Manhattan Project. This will be rectified in subsequent printings. I do have one complaint—the typeface is rather small. This is typically done to make the reader pay attention, but it is not necessary and makes it difficult for older readers like myself.

Another book I recommend is *Thank You for Being Late* by Thomas Freidman. *The New York Times* op-ed columnist's latest work could not have come at a better time. Friedman does a great job of analyzing how the latest technology is changing the world and how to have a healthy respect for that change. Perhaps the most important lesson is that life is a learning process and that in order to thrive we have to keep learning.



The final book of the Dark Forest trilogy, *Death's End*, by Cixin Liu and translated by Ken Liu, has come out. This is first-class science fiction and when I have some time I will go back and reread *The Three-Body Problem* and *The Dark Forest* to catch any of the nuances I may have missed the first time around.

March is TRYPOD month. Apparently, only 1 in 5 Americans listen to podcasts, so podcast publishers are trying to raise awareness to the general public by asking people who listen to podcasts to let others know about them. Here is my contribution. I listen to a wide variety. KCRW's *Left, Right and Center* and KAMU's *1A* are balanced (really) political podcasts. WHYY's *FreshAir* is always a great listen, with interviews and reviews for modern living. To balance things out, I listen to PRI's *ScienceFriday* podcast, the *Nature Podcast* and *This Week in Technology* from TWIT.tv. Finally, humor is the best medicine and I really look forward to NPR's *Wait, Wait Don't Tell Me* every Saturday.

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