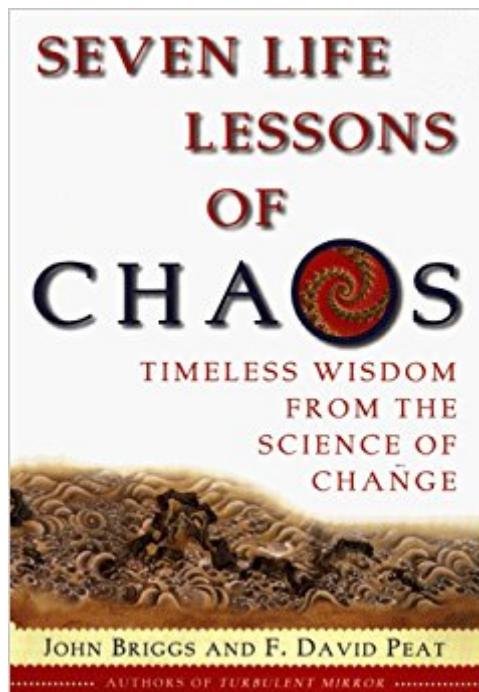


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# Seven Life Lessons Of Chaos: Timeless Wisdom From The Science Of Change



## Synopsis

The predicament of all life is uncertainty. While humans have had to deal with chaos since ancient times, only recent has science recognized it as a fundamental force in the universe. Chaos, theory, originally used to understand the movements that create thunderstorms, raging rivers, and hurricanes, is now being applied to everything from medicine to warfare to social dynamics and theories about how organizations form and change. Chaos is evolving from a scientific theory into a cultural metaphor. As a metaphor it allows us to query some of our most cherished assumptions and encourages us to ask fresh questions about reality. Our modern society has been obsessed with conquering and scientifically controlling the world around us. However, chaotic, nonlinear systems--such as nature, society, and our individual lives--lie beyond all our attempts to predict, manipulate, and control them. Chaos suggests that instead of resisting life's uncertainties, we should embrace the possibilities they offer. In this groundbreaking new book, John Briggs and F. David Peat unfold seven lessons for embracing chaos in daily life: Be Creative: how to engage with chaos to find imaginative new solutions and live more dynamically Use Butterfly Power: how to let chaos grow local efforts into global results Go with the Flow: how to use chaos to work collectively with others Explore What's Between: how to discover life's rich subtleties and avoid the traps of stereotypes See the Art of the World: how to appreciate the beauty of life's chaos Live Within Time: how to utilize time's hidden depths Rejoin the Whole: how to realize our fractal connectedness to each other and the world If you ever felt your life was out of control and headed toward chaos, science has an important message: Life is chaos, and that's a very exciting thing.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Attempting to extract lessons for daily living from the emerging science of chaos theory, Briggs, a professor of English at Western Connecticut State University, and Peat, a British physicist, have produced an often frustrating, intermittently suggestive guide. Chaos scientists seek hidden patterns underlying apparently random events. By heeding their example, the authors maintain, ordinary folk can learn to appreciate the interconnectedness of all things, to go with the flow of events, to unlock creativity through heightened tolerance for ambiguity and ambivalence, to pay attention to subtlety, to act according to one's internal rhythms. Skipping fluidly from irrational numbers to Zen paradoxes, from Vaclav Havel's notion of "the power of the powerless" to the I Ching to the egalitarian, "self-organizing" interactions of an Ojibway Indian community and Manhattan's food distribution system, the authors use chaos as an overworked metaphor in a barrage of analogies, speculative leaps, platitudes and anecdotes. Their unconvincing manual is riddled with sentences like, "Positive butterfly power involves a recognition that each individual is an indivisible aspect of the whole and that each chaotic moment of the present is a mirror of the chaos of the future." Scores of intriguing photographs (66 b&w; eight pages color), which form an integral part of the book, reinforce points about the dynamics of change and the liberating potential of chaos with images of colliding galaxies, Ice Age cave paintings, a traffic jam, a craggy British coastline, plots of heart rhythms. Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc.

There would have been no Jurassic Park without it. There is a perfume named after it. It is chaos, whose theory is the hottest one in science since relativity. The most powerful part of its allure is the relevance of chaos theory to human life struggles, yet no earlier book more than alluded to that connection. Briggs and Peat, whose *Turbulent Mirror* (1990) is one of the best popular books on the science of chaos (Briggs also wrote the lavish *Fractals* [1992] on chaos art), now give us a book that introduces the major ideas of chaos and shows how they can be used metaphorically. For instance, sensitive dependence upon initial conditions, or the butterfly effect, is the phenomenon of a tiny action, when amplified throughout a system, having unexpectedly disproportionate effects. (It is called butterfly after the chaos theory canard that a butterfly flapping its wings in China can cause a thunderstorm--or hurricane--in New York.) Apply this to politics, say, and apparently small initiatives can produce enormous changes. Briggs and Peat are careful to differentiate between scientific fact and metaphor, unlike some popular but often inaccurate self-help writers. The combination of factual

exactitude and imaginative application makes this the best book on chaos yet. Patricia Monaghan

Awesome book. After just reading the first chapter i could totally resonate with what was written. I am currently on the 7th chapter and had to re-read a few chapters to get a better understanding of the the subtlety of life experiences I experience daily. I will definitely need to re-read the book for better clarification of life experiences in the midst of everyday chaos.

These lessons have helped my understanding and comprehension of the universe, hitherto obscured by Newtonian Linear perspectives.

My experience with chaos theory has been in the math world. I was disappointed that the author does not allow that math and art have a similar connection through chaos. Lots of information to think about though.

A lot of our problems in this world come from rigid, black and white thinking. This book helps us to see both the simplicity and the complexity in life, and to open our minds to all that is around us.

Makes you think!

This book suggests an important, even necessary, shift in perspective. It is inspiring and hopeful. Whatever you are struggling with now this book will help you to find a solution.

Read this for a class. It's a bit dated overall and insightful read.

When life is pulling you in a certain direction, yield a little to the current. You might be amazed at what you find. The key is, it doesn't pay to fight the universe. Absorb the chaos theory as put forth by this book and it can change your life or, at the very least, your way of thinking.

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