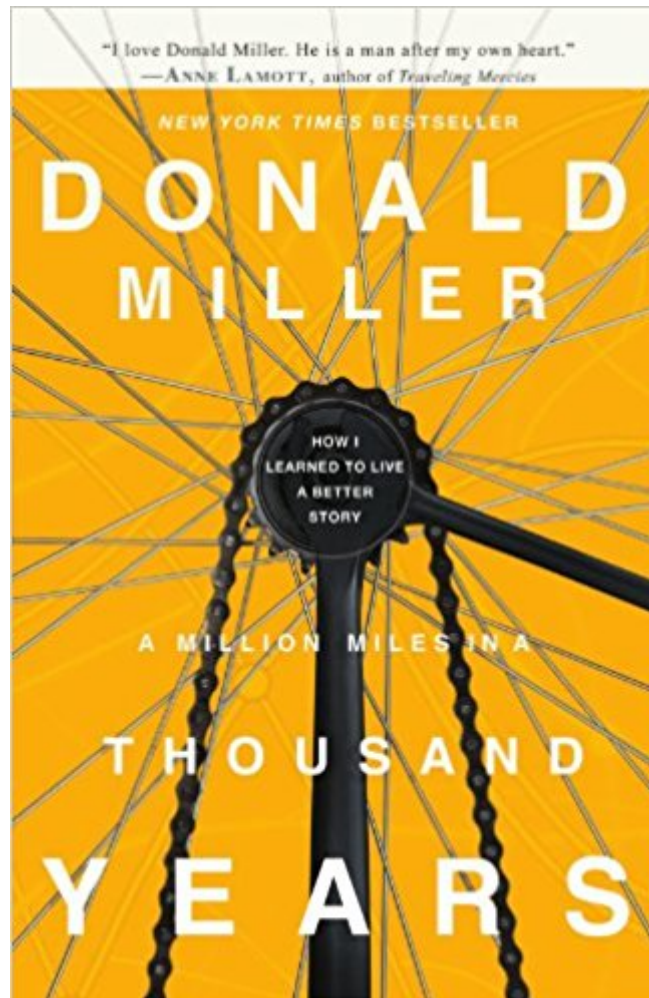


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# A Million Miles In A Thousand Years: How I Learned To Live A Better Story



## Synopsis

After writing a successful memoir, Donald Miller's life stalled. During what should have been the height of his success, he found himself unwilling to get out of bed, avoiding responsibility, even questioning the meaning of life. But when two movie producers proposed turning his memoir into a movie, he found himself launched into a new story filled with risk, possibility, beauty, and meaning. *A Million Miles in a Thousand Years* chronicles Miller's rare opportunity to edit his life into a great story, to reinvent himself so nobody shrugs their shoulders when the credits roll. Through heart-wrenching honesty and hilarious self-inspection, Donald Miller takes readers through the life that emerges when it turns from boring reality into meaningful narrative. Miller goes from sleeping all day to riding his bike across America, from living in romantic daydreams to fearful encounters with love, from wasting his money to founding a nonprofit with a passionate cause. Guided by a host of outlandish but very real characters, Miller shows us how to get a second chance at life the first time around. *A Million Miles in a Thousand Years* is a rare celebration of the beauty of life.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Miller, the accidental memoirist who struck gold with the likable ramble *Blue Like Jazz*, writes about the challenges inherent in getting unstuck creatively and spiritually. After *Jazz* sold more than a million copies but his other books didn't follow suit, he had a classic case of writer's block. Two movie producers contacted him about creating a film out of his life, but Miller's initial enthusiasm was dampened when they concluded that his real life needed doctoring lest it be too directionless for the screen. Real stories, he learned, require characters who suffer and overcome. In desultory

fashion, Miller sets out to change his own life "to be the kind of guy who seeks out his father, chases the girl and undertakes a quest. Along the way, he comes to understand God as a master storyteller who doesn't quite control where his characters are going. An unexpected bonus of this book is Miller's insights into the writing process. Readers who loved *Blue Like Jazz* will find here a somewhat more mature Miller, still funny as hell but more concerned about making a difference in the world than in merely commenting on it. (Oct.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Donald Miller has helped more than 3,000 businesses clarify their marketing messages so their companies grow. He's the CEO of StoryBrand, the cohost of the Building a StoryBrand Podcast, and the author of several books, including the bestsellers *Blue Like Jazz* and *A Million Miles in a Thousand Years*. He lives in Nashville, Tennessee, with his wife, Betsy, and their dogs, Lucy and June Carter. *Â Â*

This is one of those life changing books! I have probably listened to all of it or a portion of it 25 times or more. Donald Miller's writing style speaks to all ages (20 and up) and people from all walks of life. As an educator, I have been recommending it to friends and colleagues ever since it came out.

I really enjoy Donald Miller's books, and *A Million Miles in a Thousand Years* is no exception. At times, it feels like it should be titled *Blue Like Jazz II*. Like Miller's other books, *AMMIATY* is a memoir laced with great thoughts about spirituality, Jesus, and life in general. Miller is honest and open about his struggles, which is why I believe so many people like his writing. Reading *AMMIATY* made me feel like I was watching the sequel to a movie I really enjoyed years ago and was getting to find out what happened to the main character in the years since we last saw him. The theme that ties this book's chapters together is the idea that every life is a story, and the same elements that make a good story on screen are the ones that make good lives. As Miller worked with Steve Taylor on developing *Blue Like Jazz* into a screenplay, he learned a bit of what goes into making a story relatable, memorable, and generally good all around. Early in the book Miller writes, "Nobody cries at the end of a movie about a guy who got a Volvo. But we spend years living those kinds of stories and expect life to feel meaningful. Maybe that's why we go to so many movies, because our real lives don't feel meaningful anymore" (xiii). If you think about it, I think that's the way a lot of our lives play out. We don't plan on it, but somewhere along the way, we decide to settle for comfortable

lives, instead of lives of significance. That point and the insights that Miller draws from it are what make the book worth reading. At times, however, Miller does come off a little self-indulgent. A Million Miles in a Thousand Years is essentially a collection of Donald Miller's thoughts. There were some sections where I wanted to hit the fast-forward button, as if Miller were rambling on to hear himself think. This wasn't often, but there were a few times I felt this way. [Again, this is just my feeling on it, so please forgive me if you read the book and didn't feel the same way.] In one chapter, Miller writes that our lives are not like movies, because there will never be resolution. "I don't believe an act of man will make things on earth perfect, and I don't believe God will intervene before I die, or for that matter before you die. I believe, instead, we will go on longing for a resolution that will not come, not within life as we know it, anyway" (201). I understand what he's getting at, and there is a sense in which this eternal longing for resolution in our lives will always remain. There's always strife, death, unfulfilled desires, and needs surrounding us. The hope of the Christian life is that a resolution is coming, but it's more than that - that the resolution to the struggles and strife of this life can be found here and now in Jesus. Yes, there will still be disappointment for the Christian and there will still be difficulty and persecution... BUT the Christian life is about living in the hope of God's kingdom coming into this world.

I am an avid reader of self-help/memoir type books. I can honestly say this is one of the best I have ever ridden. It was easy to read, I was able to get through it quickly but found myself wanting to slow down because I didn't want it to end. It will crack you up and make you cry. He has many antidotes scattered around the book (it's not a linear timeline but it works perfectly here) mixed with messages that make you stop and think. I wrote many things down and feel compelled to read this book over and over again in the future. It is a simple story about this man's story and his pursuit to make it a better story, a better life. We can all learn from that. I will recommend to many friends and put his other books on my list.

While there is little I agree with Miller on politically, his writing resonates with me because of our similar childhood experiences. Like a lot of kids who grew up in the 70's and 80's, when divorce was as easy as ordering a burger at Micky D's, we both grew up in fatherless homes. This problem continues to plague America as men struggle to find an identity after growing up in a world of estrogen. Miller bravely shares his father issues as well as dealing with his new found success after writing the best seller Blue Like Jazz and a giving something back to the community. He does this when he has the sudden epiphany that he needs to start living his life as if he's a character in a

book which leads him to begin the amazing adventure of riding a bicycle across America.

Miller's meandering prose worked for Blue Like Jazz. It was consistent with the theme of the book. You were intrigued by his thoughts and it being all over the place. It just worked. But it didn't work for me here. I never felt like there was much of a thesis or point. Other than the one that you get right away and from reading the cover "we should be living a better story"... There you go folks. No need to read any further. I digress. It does have some nuggets to come away with. And the idea of taking the elements of story, and what makes a good story, and then observing how that is potentially what makes a good life is interesting. And the idea of God being an author trying to write our story for us and making it grand if we but only let Him do so. But I felt like I got that idea after the first few chapters. Then just trudged along for the rest of the book. My one other hang up was how he confessed early on that making the movie of Blue Like Jazz was about telling a story. And not the truth. That movies and life are different. And learning how to construct a good story involved making things up. And that is how the book felt. Like he was just making things up to also make it a better story. Worth reading? Ehh...coin toss.

Donald Miller is an author who has previously written a best-selling memoir, and was then contacted by two movie producers wanting to make the book into a movie. In the process of exploring how to bring the book to life on the screen, in a way that would keep the audience interested and engaged, Miller investigated the elements that, when combined, result in a good story. Because the book was basically about Miller's life, this led him to the idea of living a better story (rather than editing it afterwards). If you have ever wondered whether you could be living a better or more meaningful life, this book could provide the spark you need to make a change, and give you some ideas for what that change might look like. Miller is never preachy but shares his own experiences with truth & a rare vulnerability. He invites us to share his journey, and to join him in taking the risks and doing the hard work required for us to live a good story ourselves.

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