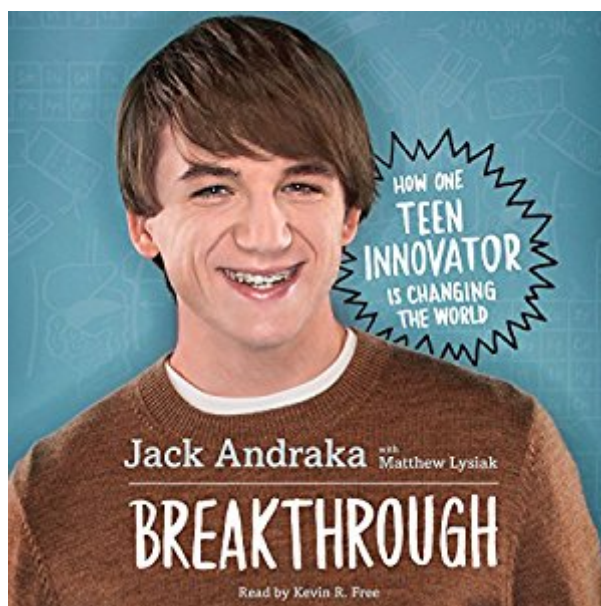


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Breakthrough: How One Teen Innovator Is Changing The World



Synopsis

Jack wouldn't give up. After a dear family friend died of pancreatic cancer, Jack Andraka decided to create a better method of early detection. It took 200 letters before Jack found lab space to pursue his idea and months of work to make it a reality, but in the end he did it. Jack's early-detection test for pancreatic, ovarian, and lung cancers has the potential to be more than 400 times more effective than the medical standard and costs only three cents. Jack was 15 at the time. Jack's story is not just one of dizzying international success; it is a story of overcoming depression and homophobic bullying and finding the resilience to persevere and come out. His account inspires young people, who he argues are the most innovative, to fight for the right to be taken seriously and to pursue their own dreams. With hands-on science experiments included, Jack's memoir empowers his generation with the knowledge that we can each change the world if we only have the courage to try.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Jack Andraka was quite young when he wrote this autobiography, but what he had already accomplished is amazing. He developed an inexpensive test for pancreatic cancer as a science fair project. My own physician thinks that the test, perhaps after some modifications, could be FDA-approved and become routine in a few years. There is some public criticism of the work (the conduct of the whole peer review that must follow), and of the originality of the idea. That laid aside, the narrative is remarkable. Jack felt inspired to do the project after an uncle died of the disease and when he had an epiphany (over the use of carbon nanotubes) in an AP biology class in high school.

He persisted, writing 200 letters to get lab space at Hopkins in Baltimore to do the experiments. In the book, he talks about rejection letters. "That one hurt," he says about one particularly boorish one. Sometimes he sounds a little naïf about the merits of catching cancer early. Pancreatic cancer can be so aggressive that it takes incredible social support to overcome it even if it could be cured if caught earlier. Steve Jobs died of pancreatic cancer ultimately, although of an unusual variety that would not be detected by Jack's test. Jack's book was promoted heavily by public relations and the publisher. He spent the last half of his senior year in high school on the road, doing his homework on airplanes and in hotel rooms. One hotel room in Houston, he says on Twitter, had a "free fish" for him to take care of. As a freshman at Stanford, the travel pace has apparently necessarily slowed. But it sounds like Stanford is supporting the followup work to get his test peer-reviewed. Jack has also advocated open-access for scientific journals, all following the tragic loss of Aaron Swartz. Paywalls could make it difficult for a high school or college student to get a major project proposed, let alone started. I think his advocacy could lead to developing another documentary film on the issue, but ethically and legally the issue is complicated. The book has an appendix with "recipes" for a few home science experiments and some math puzzles (for example how to make a lava lamp). Even "Survival Mom" on Facebook would enjoy trying these. I forgot in writing the review so far to note Jack's narrative of coming out as gay, which at first even threw his older brother for a spin (Luke has also won an important science fair award on mine pollution). Both he and his brother engage in kayaking (as shown on Instagram). Not "just a nerd" Jack seems to be quite physical and athletic.

I purchased the book for my little brother. He said he enjoyed reading it and would recommend it to his friends (15 yrs old) so I am leaving this rating based on his opinion. I am very impressed with this young man and I wish him much success!

Jack is such a great inspiration and example for all of us. This book should be read by everyone-especially teachers, school administrators and students-to be reminded our youth and the rest of us, too-can do whatever we want. It is time to stop holding students back-let them know they can do anything and they will. Thanks, Jack and Luke, for inspiring us all.

Very interesting story about a remarkable young man. Was so amazing to read about all the things he created at such a young age. Way to go Jack. Good to read about such positive and inspiring young people. Would like to know more about what he does with his gifts and talents as he gets older.

An important story of how a few mentors can make all the difference in a young person's developing resilience and realizing potential.

Fantastic book to inspire your teens and preteens! Our daughter loved it and so did we!

My 12 year old son read this book and loved it. Very inspiring in many ways.

Buy this book and be amazed. Jack Andraka, his family, his experiences, and his heart of gold will inspire you. The world is truly a better place because of Jack. See why.

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