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### Book Reviews: The Moment of Lift, Naked Economics

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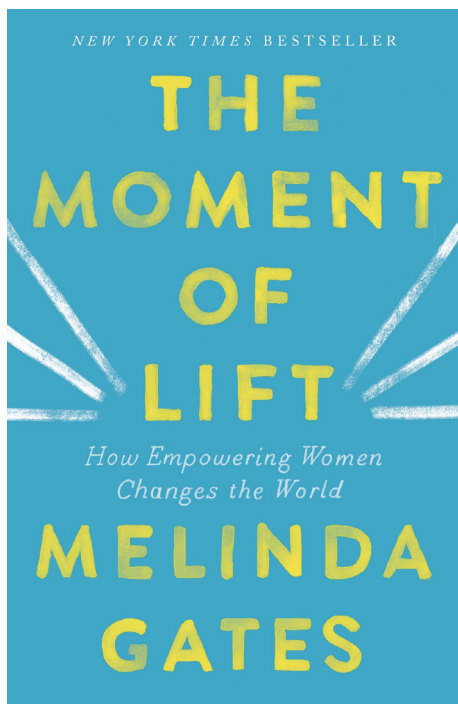
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# Marriott Student **Book** Reviews



## The Moment of Lift

By Melinda Gates

Book Review by Sarah Romney

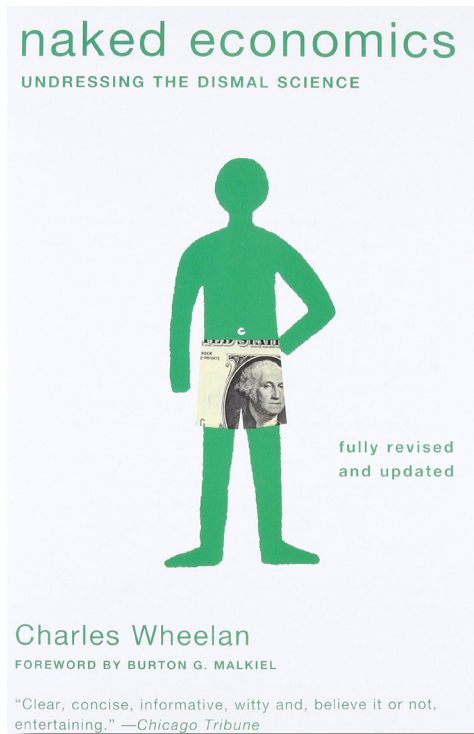
How do we end poverty? World hunger? High death rates? These are complicated issues that people have been trying to solve for centuries, but Melinda Gates proposes that the solution to many of the world's problems is to give women a voice "because when you lift up women, you lift up humanity." In *The Moment of Lift*, Melinda Gates shares stories and lessons she learned while working with her husband, Bill Gates, through the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

With the foundation, Melinda Gates has traveled to countries all over the world and met with women from varying cultural backgrounds. Many of the women suffer from sickness, starvation, abuse, and oppression. Because of their conditions, the women's ability to care for their children is impaired, and entire societies remain inescapably deprived for generations. Melinda explains that as she interacted with leaders and organizations in these countries, she realized the importance of focusing on the root causes of the problems, rather than the symptoms. She presents clear evidence that all of the issues improve as women gain access to family planning, have opportunities for education, are not forced into child marriages, and work together to make their voices heard.

From personal experience as a woman in a male-dominated business world, Melinda Gates has learned to make her voice heard and work as an equal partner with her husband. It was not always easy—she had tough conversations and struggled to overcome personal reservations—but she has established herself as an equal partner with Bill and a strong voice in their organization. The point is not for women "to replace men at the top of the hierarchy, but to become partners with men in ending hierarchy." Whether in a marriage relationship, business, or entire society, organizations improve when men and women are on equal ground.

Changes are happening. Societies around the world are improving as women come together to challenge the patterns that have been cemented into cultures for centuries. The work that the Gates do has impacted perceptions of women all over the world, and many other organizations are joining this movement to empower women. *The Moment of Lift* will help you understand the unfortunate realities that many women face. It will help you recognize what you can change in your

own attitudes. And most importantly, it will help you see that “if you want to lift up humanity, empower women. It is the most comprehensive, pervasive, high-leverage investment you can make in human beings.” 🏆



## Naked Economics

By Charles Wheelan  
Book Review by Ryan Quade

Charles Wheelan—professor, author, grassroots activist—harnesses the powerful concepts of economic theory to help you solve real problems. Wheelan doesn’t care about the math and the charts—he just wants you to understand the magic. *Naked Economics* is the book for the rest of us, helping the non-economist to rationally analyze everything from McDonalds to congestion to political systems.

Wheelan is a master storyteller and master economist (a rare combination), which is why media groups ranging from NPR to *The Economist* hire him to explain complex issues to the masses. True, former economics students might shudder to read long-forgotten terms like luxury goods, market equilibrium, and productivity growth, but, unlike your professor, Wheelan won’t give you an exam on these concepts. He uses them to

explain real problems that countries, firms, and individuals face every day.

Take insurance – from the Obamacare debates of 2009 to the “Medicare for All” platforms of 2020, we have all heard explanations about why healthcare costs are high and how people struggle to pay for them. Most of the explanations are confusing, but Wheelan brings in the economic concepts of information, incentives, and inelastic demand to simplify the problem. After eight pages of marvelously readable commentary, he sums it up in the following: “(1) We know who is sick; (2) increasingly we know who will become sick; (3) sick people can be extremely expensive; and (4) private insurance doesn’t work well under these circumstances.”

Your typical economics book is probably jam-packed with technical language, graphs, and theory, but Wheelan takes the road less traveled. Each page in *Naked Economics* has a story. Every concept is layered with realistic application. The book reads like an edition of *The New York Times*—real problems, real stories, and expert explanations of what is going on. In fact, the book’s chapters are a lot like Legos: a story explains a concept which builds upon a current affairs issue, which builds upon another concept. By the end of the chapter, you understand key economic principles like financial markets or international trade. More importantly, you know how those principles explain the complexities of life.

Have you ever wondered how China could devalue the U.S. dollar overnight? Or why the government pays a ridiculous amount of money for new technology? Or even what the Federal Reserve does and why that matters? *Naked Economics* gives you clear explanations of these complexities and more. The book shows you how today’s global economy operates, from corporate board rooms to family living rooms. And it does so with a dazzling array of experts. With quotes from Nobel prize winners, Washington think tanks, and world leaders, *Naked Economics* is not just the opinion of one economist: it pulls from the best and brightest in the economics community.

Does Wheelan take stances? Rarely. But that’s not the point. As he states in his conclusion on insurance, “The tough part is philosophical/ideological.” Economics teaches you how to understand the solutions. Philosophy tells you what solution to pick. If you’re looking for someone to tell you what to believe, don’t read this book. If you’re looking for ways to sort through the world’s complex problems, then put *Naked Economics* on your GoodReads “To Read” shelf. 🏆