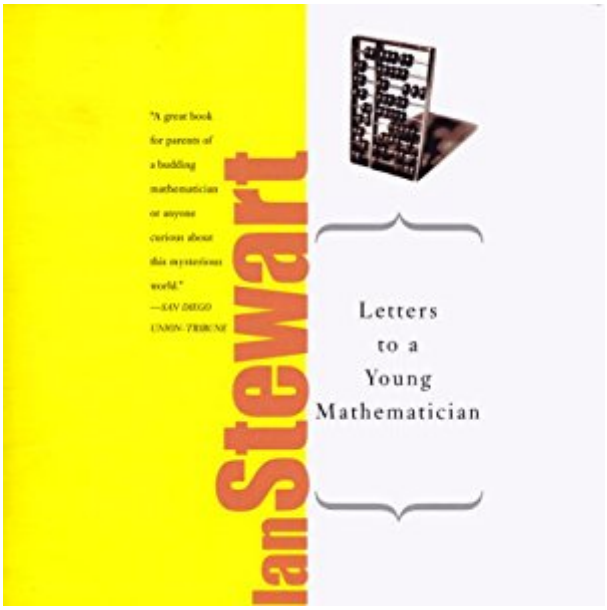
Letters To A Young Mathematician: Art Of Mentoring



Synopsis

Mathematician Ian Stewart tells listeners what he wishes he had known when he was a student. He takes up subjects ranging from the philosophical to the practical-what mathematics is and why it’s worth doing, the relationship between logic and proof, the role of beauty in mathematical thinking, the future of mathematics, how to deal with the peculiarities of the mathematical community, and many others.

Book Information

Audible Audio Edition
Listening Length: 5 hoursÃ Â andÃ Â 19 minutes
Program Type: Audiobook
Version: Unabridged
Publisher: Audible Studios
Audible.com Release Date: January 29, 2014
Language: English
ASIN: B00I47LLLS
Best Sellers Rank: #72 inÃ Â Books > Audible Audiobooks > Science > Mathematics #587 inÃ Â Books > Science & Math > Mathematics > Study & Teaching

Customer Reviews

This book is somewhat entertaining and a quick read, I was able to finish it in one Saturday afternoon sitting. As the first reviewer to give it 3 stars, I hope I can justify my rating.I am considering graduate school in mathematics and thought this book would help me understand that decision more. Unfortunately, the path of the Author’s "young mathematician" is a very specific and very traditional academic path. As such, the author spends more time explaining the specifics of that path and what happens during each stage (lower school, college, phd, professor, and tenured professor) rather than the decisions between each stage.Before I read the book, I knew I did not want to follow that path. I was hoping for greater insight to mathematical training and thought in other domains, but this book was lacking.I highly recommend this book for anyone considering a traditional pure mathematical education. However, the book is less useful for someone interested in math but not interested in the same path.

I will be honest, I chose this book by chance of taking an Adolescent Literacy class. The more I read Stewart’s descriptions of various math concepts I concluded that this literature piece is appropriate

for my secondary classroom. There are so many teachable moments in this book of 200 some pages; young minds, mathematicians or not, can learn so much from these "letters". Great piece!

This is a good book of advice to young mathematicians, it covers every aspect of a mathematician’s study, career path and aspirations. As a father of 3 teenage children, as well as a former french mathematics student (who makes a living in IT using some pathetic applied math occasionally), I am grateful for the wisdom given in this book which I can impart to my own children - should one day they tell me they want to pursue a career in mathematics. Math deserves the most gifted young students to pursue, contrary to the common ’wisdom’ (or ’Herd Mentality’) that Engineering, Accountancy, Law, Medicine, or Life Science which is ÃƒÂ -la-mode in my country now, are most promising careers.Math’s beauty is in par with the Nature’s beauty. And only those who are keen to explore would be revealed the secret of the Creator. I quoted 2006-Fields Medalist Prof Terence Tao’s personal favourite algebra equation: "Sum of Cubes will always be a Square" (1^3+2^3+3^3+... + N^3) = (1+2+3...+N)^2. The secret behind this beautiful equation is "3-dimension can be reduced to 2-dimension". Can N-dimension be reduced to (N-1) dimension in some similar way ? this is a fascinating congesture for promising mathematicians to explore and derive useful applications from it.

My 16-year-old is in college aspiring to be a mathematician. He’s working under a professor on some undergraduate research, and this book was recommended by that professor. I couldn’t have asked for a more inspiring book.

This is a delightful book about what it means to become and be a mathematician. It goes from giving advice to a student and then on to being a tenured professor and all the steps in between.The writing itself is clear and easy to read.I thought that many of the ideas expressed could easily apply certainly to any academic profession, but even to workers in a corporation, especially in the area of working collaboratively.I think anyone reading this book will come away enriched by the experience.

The book is a pleasure to read, the narrative is never dull or technical, and the discourse is of a universal appeal. You don’t need to have a keen personal interest in mathematics in order to enjoy reading the book and improve your understanding of the essence of mathematics, the importance of its applications, and its lure.I strongly recommend this book to whoever is interested in exploring realms of beauty outside the strict circles of fine arts and music.

Letters to a Young Mathematician portrays the life of a mathematician to a hypothetical young woman pursuing a career as a mathematician. The author draws on his own experience as a mathematician to regal his readers with stories from his life but also some useful insights into just what the life of a mathamatician entails. There is information about the use and misuse of computers in mathematics, a chapter on getting over fear of proofs and many others. I found the authors depiction of the career of a mathematician interesting. This book is very easy to read as it does not include much in the way of math. If you are hoping to become a mathematician this book is very useful, but if you are just hoping to learn some math look elsewhere.

It’s pretty interesting

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