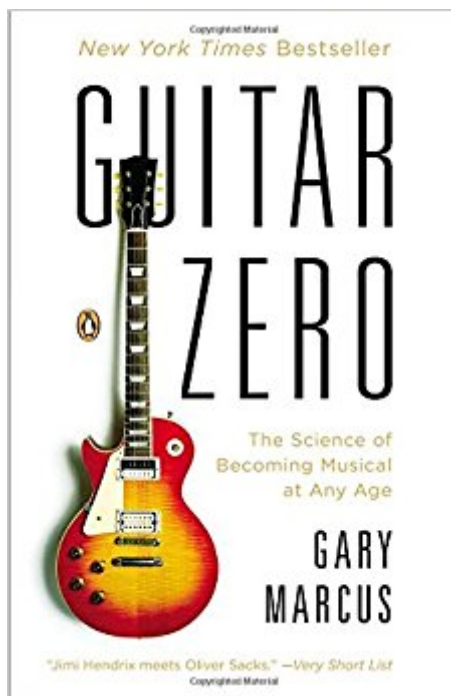




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# Guitar Zero: The Science Of Becoming Musical At Any Age



## Synopsis

Just about every human being knows how to listen to music, but what does it take to make music? Is musicality something we are born with? Or a skill that anyone can develop at any time? If you don't start piano at the age of six, is there any hope? Is skill learning best left to children or can anyone reinvent him-or herself at any time? For anyone who has ever set out to play a musical instrument or wished that they could Guitar Zero is an inspiring and fascinating look at the pursuit of music, the mechanics of the mind, and the surprising rewards that come from following one's dreams. Gary Marcus, whom Steven Pinker describes as "one of the deepest thinkers in cognitive science," debunks the popular theory that there is an innate musical instinct while challenging the idea that talent is only a myth. From deliberate and efficient practicing techniques to finding the right music teacher, Marcus translates his own experience as well as reflections from world-renowned musicians into practical advice for anyone hoping to become musical or learn any new skill.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Jimi Hendrix meets Oliver Sacks in this great new science book."

VeryShortList.com"Guitar Zero is a refreshing alternation between the nitty-gritty details of learning rock-guitar licks and Mr. Marcus's survey of the relevant scientific literature on learning and the brain . . . makes some delightful counterintuitive fine points. . . . For those who look forward, in 'retirement,' to honoring the lifelong yearnings they have neglected, Guitar Zero is good news."

• Norman Doidge, The Wall Street Journal "[Guitar Zero is] the sort of book where Steven Pinker (Dr. Marcus's mentor and collaborator) mixes with K. Anders Ericsson (the psychologist most associated with the '10,000 hours' theory of expertise) and Tom Morello (the lead guitarist from Rage Against the Machine)." • The New York Times "This book in the end is about more than a desire to shred like Eddie Van Halen. Marcus examines how our brains are affected by creativity • learning a musical instrument, for instance, or a new language • and how these experiences remain open to all of us, no matter our age." • Los Angeles Times "An entertaining and enlightening memoir, filled with insight about music, learning, and the human mind, by Gary Marcus, one of the deepest thinkers in cognitive science." • Steven Pinker, bestselling author of The Better Angels of Our Nature

Gary Marcus, described by the New York Times as "one of the country's best known cognitive psychologists," directs the Center for Language and Music at New York University, where he studies language, music, cognitive development, and evolution. His previous book, Kluge: The Haphazard Construction of the Human Mind, was a New York Times Editors' Choice pick.

Fun read. I started at a similar age level to the author. Great book if you are wondering if being middle aged is a barrier to playing guitar as well as you would like to. You can play as good as any one or all of your guitar heroes, you just have to put in the time. Age has some advantages and this book goes into the science and biology of learning at any age. Fascinating and a great motivator.

Having started to learn guitar two years ago at age 54, I'm always looking around to understand what to expect in terms of progress. When I came across this book it was an obvious read. I related to the personal learning experience down to the F and Bm chord references we struggle with and really learned from the author's interviews and history lessons. I was really disappointed when the book ended. Recommended for anyone wondering about how to deal with learning things often left for the young.

I read this after "This is Your Brain on Music" and found "Guitar Zero" to be much more readable. There is still some delving into the science of learning and music but at a more readable level for me. The story is inspiring. I started learning to play guitar when I was 10 years old and I quit after high school. I have recently picked it up again and started taking lessons. I am 35 now. This book

gives a perspective on my experience that is valuable. I would recommend this to anyone "older" who is considering learning a new instrument or music in general.

If the maximum number of stars is five then this book is worth at least ten. Don't be fooled by the title, you won't learn to play the guitar. You will, however, get the most honest, scientific, and positive description of teaching and learning and meet some of the most fascinating people in the world of music. If you are a teacher or educator, this is one of the most inspiring books about teaching you will ever read. Thankyou Gary Marcus.

In a review, the reader tries to create a sense of the book; the task is to boil down the essence of the work and to summarize and give opinion about the quality of the object in a very subjective manner. I am making a project of finding that essence in the most constrained manner possible. Here, I present you with a haiku review. I hope you like the review and take under consideration a purchase of the work. Gave me confidence that I can play too. Not very heavy on theory.

Too many new terms for me. I play guitar. Nice story about his experience with kids band. Last 35 percent of book is acknowledgements, definitions, and cites.

I recommend this read to anyone interested in learning to play music - especially as an adult. This book is clearly written by a true academic because his insight into the way the human mind interacts with music is detailed. I am not versed in psychology but this book is accessible and I think it's for two reasons. For one thing the writing is down to earth. Even when I know it's weighty concepts they are delivered in a digestible way. I don't feel talked down to. The other reason I think is the big difference - the author USED HIMSELF AS A TEST SUBJECT! He tried to move from a Guitar Hero video game failure to a functional guitar player (a real guitar, not a glorified joy stick). What a fun story he tells of his journey. He is very real about his emotions, his concerns, his failures and in my estimation his ultimate victory. Really cool to experience his journey through this book. As an adult who wishes to be more musical this gives me hope. As a side note, psychology students may get inspiration from this book. Like I noted, this author speaks from the benefit of being a professor. A student who is seeking inspiration for class required experiments, or perhaps a person seeking test their own skill boundaries, and of course people who just want to grow in his/her own understanding should consider this book at text as much as it is entertainment. I'm hard on books normally, but this one has a thumbs up from me.

I enjoy this book very much. I can relate to what the author went through because I picked up a guitar later in life, at age 20, after always being told that I wasn't musical and that I was tone deaf. I went through many of the same things that the author went through. I really cracked up when he talked about the difficulty of learning the F chord, and being confused by the duplication of notes on the guitar neck. (I went through all of that too). Currently I get paid money to play music, and I have recorded two CDs of my own material. If "Guitar Zero" had been available when I started my journey years ago it would have saved me a lot of time and headaches. I would recommend it to any beginner who needs to find the shortcuts. One area Marcus delves into is an area that I never thought about; the part of our brain that we use when playing music, and the fact that there really is no "musical" part of the brain. It's not something we need to know to be a good guitar player, but it's interesting.

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