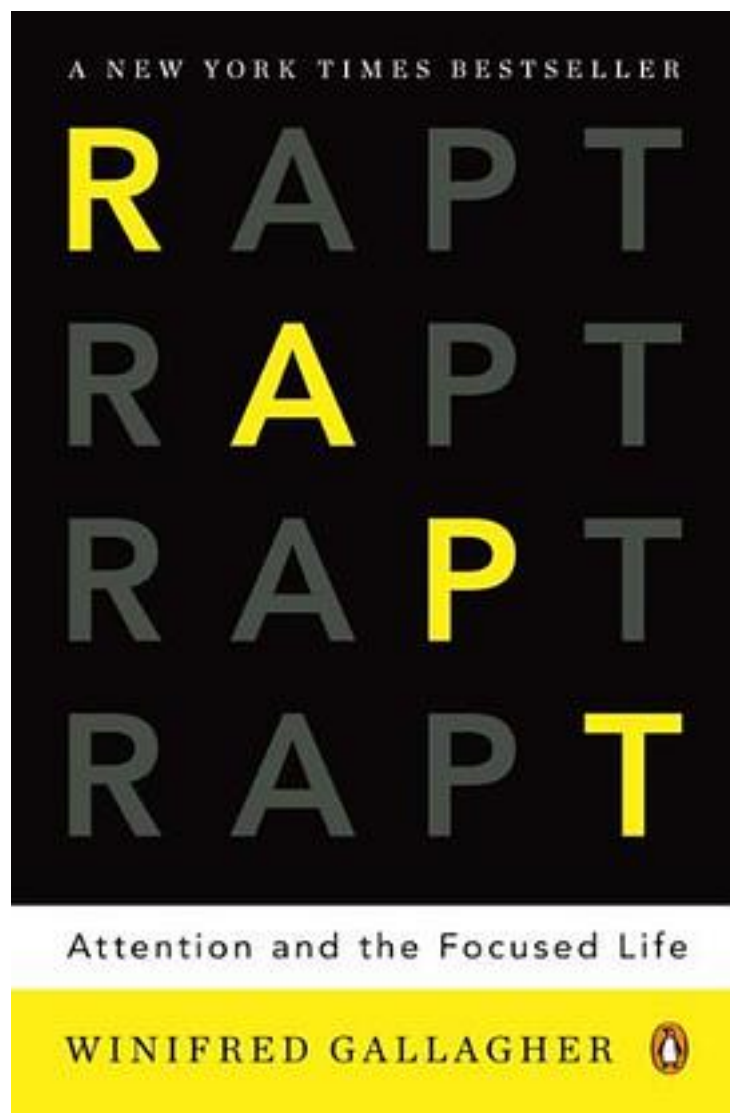


Rapt



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Winifred Gallagher revolutionizes our understanding of attention and the creation of the interested life

In *Rapt*, acclaimed behavioral science writer Winifred Gallagher makes the radical argument that the quality of your life largely depends on what you choose to pay attention to and how you choose to do it. Gallagher grapples with provocative questions—Can we train our focus? What’s different about the way creative people pay attention? Why do we often zero in on the wrong factors when making big decisions, like where to move?—driving us to reconsider what we think we know about attention.

Gallagher looks beyond sound bites on our proliferating BlackBerries and the increased incidence of ADD in children to the discoveries of neuroscience and psychology and the wisdom of home truths, profoundly altering and expanding the contemporary conversation on attention and its power. Science’s major contribution to the study of attention has been the discovery that its basic mechanism is an either/or process of selection. That we focus may be a biological necessity—research now proves we can process only a little information at a time, or about 173 billion bits over an average life—but the good news is that we have much more control over our focus than we think, which gives us a remarkable yet underappreciated capacity to influence our experience. As suggested by the expression “pay attention,” this cognitive currency is a finite resource that we must learn to spend wisely. In *Rapt*, Gallagher introduces us to a diverse cast of characters—artists and ranchers, birders and scientists—who have learned to do just that and whose stories are profound lessons in the art of living the interested life. No matter what your quotient of wealth, looks, brains, or fame, increasing your satisfaction means focusing more on what really interests you and less on what doesn’t. In asserting its groundbreaking thesis—the wise investment of your attention is the single most important thing you can do to improve your well-being—*Rapt* yields fresh insights into the nature of reality and what it means to be fully alive.

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