



Alain de Botton

A popular philosopher who strives to engage with everyday life in original and surprising ways

De Botton has taken the erudite discipline of philosophy and consistently applied it to everyday questions at the heart of our society: How do we co-exist with other people? How do we deal with our anxieties? How do we live well? His discussions on topics like love and pornography have led people to call him a popular philosopher, a label which he does not reject.

Alain's biography

Alain de Botton's Background

Born in Zurich, Switzerland in 1969 he attended the Dragon School in Oxford and then Harrow before studying history at Cambridge where he was awarded a double first. He has an MA in Philosophy from the University of London and began studying for a PhD but abandoned this to write books.

After writing several novels he began to develop his unique style of popular philosophy with "How Proust Can Change Your Life (1997)". His analysis of the famous Proust work "Remembrance of Things Past" took the form, somewhat ironically, of a self-help book and proved to be a bestseller in both the UK and the USA. This was followed by "The Consolations of Philosophy (2000)", "The Art of Travel (2002)" and "Status Anxiety" (2004) which explored the ideas of success, failure and what others think of us, all building on his unique ability to demand serious answers from mundane questions.

In 2006 he published the "Architecture of Happiness" which led to the establishment of Living Architecture, a movement which encourages architects to create buildings which can be rented by the public giving ordinary people the chance to experience the [transforming](#) effects of really good design first hand.

In 2009 the spotlight was turned on the world of work with "The Pleasures and Sorrow of Work" in which de Botton looked at what people get up to by day and night in the varied worlds of biscuit manufacture and rocket science to name but two.

Later in 2009 he swapped his writing desk for a seat in Terminal 5 where he became Heathrow airports first ever writer-in-residence resulting in "A Week at the Airport".

In between books de Botton helped to found The School of Life, a bookshop and salon in London which seeks to expand on his idea that we should seek intellectual answers to everyday questions and use them to lead good and useful lives.

“Religion for Atheists” was published in January 2012 and argues that while the supernatural claims of religion are most certainly false, it still has some important messages for the secular world.

Despite his gentle wit and unfailingly polite demeanour de Botton is no stranger to controversy and has announced that he wants to start a website called Better Porn.

Alain de Botton is an eloquent and witty [speaker](#) with a deep knowledge of philosophy combined with the observational skills of a novelist. Sometimes controversial he finds fascination in all aspects of life and believes in learning how to live both wisely and well.

Current / Past Roles & Positions

- Honorary Fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects
- Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature

Awards, Accolades, Achievements & Honours

- Applies intellectual rigour to everyday subjects like work and love
- Latest book looks at established religion and what the non-believer can take from it
- Helped found The School of Life – in London
- Passionate about architecture for the people
- First ever Writer-in-residence at Heathrow airport

Speaking Style

Educational; informal; philosophical; thought-provoking

Alain's talks

- **A kinder, gentler philosophy of success**
- **Philosophy of everyday life**
- **The joys and perils of the modern workplace**

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