



Pushing the Limits of Transformation Suggested Reading and Discussion Questions

Who doesn't love a whole new start? The chance to reimagine and remake our home, our job, our neighborhood or ourselves. And what about those among us who can pick up any raw material and hammer it into a work of art? Humans stretch themselves all the time to transform what was into what could be. Get ready to discover what humans can accomplish by pushing the limits of transformation.

The Wright Brothers

David McCullough, Nonfiction. The #1 *New York Times* bestseller from David McCullough, two-time winner of the Pulitzer Prize - the dramatic story-behind-the-story about the courageous brothers who taught the world how to fly - Wilbur and Orville Wright.

Orville and Wilbur Wright were men of exceptional courage and determination, and of far-ranging intellectual interests and ceaseless curiosity. When they worked together, no problem seemed to be insurmountable. Wilbur was unquestionably a genius. Orville had such mechanical ingenuity as few had ever seen. That they had no more than a public high school education and little money never stopped them in their mission to take to the air. Nothing did, not even the self-evident reality that every time they took off, they risked being killed. - *amazon.com*

- Why was the story of the Wright brothers' achievement so unlikely? Think about the hardships, knowledge deficits, and other obstacles they had to overcome in order to get their invention off the ground, so to speak.
- The Wright family circle—especially Sister Katharine and Bishop Milton Wright - influenced Orville and Wilbur and their achievement. Upbringing and genetics both play roles in individual accomplishment. To what extent are all of us shaped by our family environment? How much of our accomplishments are fully our own?
- What goes into creating genius like the Wright brothers exhibited, aside from sheer intelligence? Consider traits such as perseverance, focus, and energy. What else? What about the role of imagination?
- In 1908, when the Wrights finally showed their plane to the press, one reporter wrote: "this spectacle of men flying was so startling, so bewildering to the senses...that we all stood like so many marble men." Imagine yourself in that situation: how might you have reacted? Can you think of a future technological advancement that might astonish you the same way?

