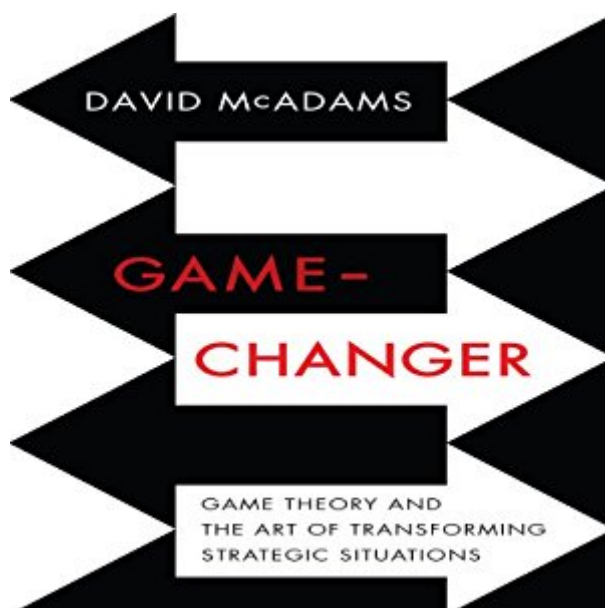


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# Game-Changer: Game Theory And The Art Of Transforming Strategic Situations



## Synopsis

The aim of David McAdams's *Game-Changer* is nothing less than to empower you with this wisdom - not just to win in every strategic situation (or "game") you face but to change those games and the ecosystems in which they reside to transform your life and our lives together for the better.

*Game-Changer* develops six basic ways to change games-commitment, regulation, cartelization, retaliation, trust, and relationships-enlivened by countless colorful characters and unforgettable examples from the worlds of business, medicine, finance, military history, crime, sports, and more. The book then digs into several real-world strategic challenges, such as how to keep prices low on the Internet, how to restore the public's lost trust in for-charity telemarketers, and even how to save mankind from looming and seemingly unstoppable drug-resistant disease. In each case, McAdams uses the game-theory approach developed in the book to identify the strategic crux of the problem and then leverages that "game-awareness" to brainstorm ways to change the game to solve or at least mitigate the underlying problem. So get ready for a fascinating journey. You'll emerge a deeper strategic thinker, poised to change and win all the games you play. In doing so, you can also make the world a better place. "Just one *Game-Changer* [is] enough to seed and transform an entire organization into a more productive, happier, and altogether better place," McAdams writes. Just imagine what we can do together.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"The wise win before they fight, while the ignorant fight to win." It always amazes me the level of political maneuvering that takes place in congregations and the church. Sometimes people will do

certain actions for political gain instead of pure motives. Sometimes people create situations that cause all parties to lose because people cannot learn to get along. In my desire to read widely, and to learn widely, as I believe wisdom comes from a variety of sources, I wanted to read this book, it is mostly about business relationships, but the idea of game theory, though often hidden, or unexpressed takes place within our congregations. The book has interesting chapters on motivation, like the time Cortez sunk his ship before a battle. There was no going back, so you better win the war. The book is built around the idea of the prisoners dilemma. It is the case about confessing, lying, or selling out the other person. It deals with the Nash equilibrium. The book will open your eyes to some of the games that people play knowingly or unknowingly. There is advice in dealing with the various times that these games are played. There is strategy using the "Tit for Tat" method, and the book will talk about the American mafia. After the book is read, you might not understand everything, and sometimes the book had so many stories that you get confused in the details. It is interesting, but not a book that is written to provide lasting change. Sometimes it will not really deal with the church world, but it will make you wiser in the area of political games in church work.

I enjoyed this book immensely. I will admit that I know a little about game theory, but I have yet to apply it. With my prior knowledge of game theory not taken into consideration, I felt this book was a easy to understand. However the book focuses only on the most common game in game theory, the prisoners dilemma. This appears to be the most common game that people play. The book offers a detailed look into the inner workings of the PD, so no prior game theory knowledge is really even necessary.

Great book.

Very fascinating ideas and fun stories. Easy to read as well. Highly recommended.

Interesting book on applications of game theory. The book is not highly technical. The author writes about a handful of situations that he can map into a Prisoner's Dilemma, then offers his views on "solutions." I was nonplussed at his total misreading of the role Reagan's Strategic Defense initiative played in the Cold War endgame. As the title and cover blurbs might lead you to believe, the author has no problems with using the heavy hand of authority, whether big government or cartel, to "adjust" the rules in almost any situation to bring about his preferred outcome. In fact the book

reminds me a great deal of "Nudge" by Thaler and Sunstein. The chapter on antibiotic effectiveness was very interesting, and contains a some great food for thought. If this is a topic of interest to you, I recommend you read at least that chapter. I read the Kindle version. The diagrams are a bit of a pain to consult, and if I hadn't already done a lot of study on game theory, and pretty well known the game matrices already, I would have been frustrated. In summary, the book is an interesting effort to apply game theory to current culture, and is a pleasant read.

Intriguing.

Calling this a book on game theory feels quite misleading, in my opinion. At best, I would recommend this book to a high school senior in AP Economics, or else a freshman business school student, really anyone who is critically examining the world of business competition for the first time. The premise of the book is that these dozens of cases are an example of a prisoner's dilemma, and each chapter is supposed to be a concept on how to escape the dilemma, with the second half being a set of case studies that "more-deeply". Often times, the most interesting piece of the case has yet to play out, and instead of applying a critical analysis of the possible outcomes, the author simply leaves it along the lines of "we'll wait and see" or "will require further investigation". The entirety of the game theory material included in the book can be distilled to just a few pages, and if you're already familiar with prisoner's dilemma, the remaining theory could fit on a single page. The rest of the book is merely short write-ups of basic competition with about the depth one would find in the Wall Street Journal or BusinessWeek. The "examples" often feel poorly related to the individual concepts in each chapter, or else stray so far in the narrative as to make it difficult to remember the point, and sometimes to the point of not appearing to be accurate at all. I understand that in teaching materials it's necessary to generalize and make assumptions in absence of perfect comparisons, however this book does little to intuitively frame the key concept in each chapter and apply any sort of structured analysis to the thinly-detailed cases, making it all the less credible when the author makes huge leaps of logic in the "analysis". Instead, it reads like a well-written commentary on one very narrow view of competition. As an investment analyst, I understand that I may be approaching this book with a leg-up on its target audience and therefor be overly-critical, however I have no formal education in game theory, and so the rating reflects this book's failure to teach any more game theory than could learn from a ten minute YouTube video. This book will be an interesting read for the absolute beginner, and I will in fact be recommending it to my old Intro to Business Management professor, however if you've already taken any collegiate level business

management/strategy courses, or worse, an introductory game theory course (or even just some free online videos), you already know more than what this book is able to teach you. Update: To clarify further, part of why I find the book disappointing is that the author is clearly very knowledgeable, but in an attempt to make the book as accessible as possible to every audience, it alienates readers already familiar with reading the news about a corporate merger or Chinese-Japanese posturing in the South Pacific imagining what each player will do next to gain the upper hand. I hoped that this book would allow me to carry on this daily activity of critical analysis, but with an extra set of tools through which to make predictions. Unfortunately, the "escapes" from prisoners dilemma were only loosely applied and the theoretical basis thinly explained, making them difficult to use in a structured analysis elsewhere. I understand to some extent the effort to be "non-technical", however it makes it much more difficult to apply the theory included without the book also including a more formal structure to the case analysis. I would hope a second edition would shorten the many examples to help keep the reader from losing site of the purpose of each example, which would then allow the author to include more examples (preferably including additional political science and geopolitics). Then for the actual case studies, instead of telling the story start to finish like a newspaper article, before attempting to relate it all back to the subject in a closing paragraph, give an opening paragraph describing the situation and competitive environment, then break down the players, and invite the reader to identify the motivations, the payoffs, etc. then apply the theoretical framework for "escaping" the dilemma, then close with a summary of how it actually played out in history, if it has at all, and if not, provide a more detailed look at the possible scenarios.

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