

One Study Guide

One by Richard Bach

(c)2015 BookRags, Inc. All rights reserved.



Contents

One Study Guide.....	1
Contents.....	2
Plot Summary.....	3
Chapter 1-2.....	5
Chapters 3-4.....	7
Chapters 5-6.....	9
Chapter 7.....	10
Chapter 8.....	11
Chapter 9.....	13
Chapters 10-11.....	15
Chapter 12.....	17
Chapters 13-14.....	19
Chapter 15.....	21
Chapter 16-17.....	23
Chapter 18.....	25
Chapter 19-20.....	26
Chapter 21-22.....	28
Chapter 23-24.....	30
Characters.....	31
Objects/Places.....	34
Themes.....	36
Style.....	38
Quotes.....	40
Topics for Discussion.....	42

Plot Summary

One, by Richard Bach, is an interesting book that illustrates the importance of choice in the determination of the path that an individual's life follows. Reality is determined by choices and individuals create their own reality by the choices they make. The individual is responsible for his own choices and different choices lead to different life paths.

The book is the story of the fascinating journey that Richard and Leslie, the main characters, take. While piloting their own seaplane, the Growly, to a conference in Santa Monica, California, they have an experience while flying over Los Angeles that places them in the alternate world of spacetime. Here, the different patterns on the water represent the different or alternate lives. The two fly from place to place exploring different aspects of themselves and human nature and find that they control their own destiny through the choices they make. The individual is free to choose his own destiny or life path through the choices they make. They visit the foundry where ideas are made and see how an individual's ideas shape their life. They explore the issues that they are concerned with and are forced to confront their deepest fears, that of being separated from each other. They learn from each experience.

The book illustrates Bach's attempt to understand human nature. He sees life as a learning experience in which the individual controls his own destiny by the choices and decisions that he makes. War can be eliminated through choice. The destruction of the planet can be avoided through choice, the choices of individuals determines the outcome. Individuals can avoid war and destruction by choosing peace and love.

The book contains many philosophical discussions that will make the reader think. It is impossible for the reader to read the book and not apply some of the concepts and philosophies to his own life. Not only will the reader examine some of his own choices, but he will also pay more attention to the choices that he makes in the future, realizing their importance on his lifestyle and destiny.

One is a book that will be enjoyed by many readers as they follow the adventures of Richard and Leslie through spacetime. In many ways, it is like a fairy tale for adults. The reading is light and easy but the concepts will make the reader think, even though he may not agree with Bach's philosophy.

The book is well worth the time spent reading it. Even if the reader forgets the story, he will not forget the concepts presented in the book. The novel is recommended reading for all ages.

One is a book that will make the reader think about his own life. How would life be different if the person had made different choices. Unlike Richard and Leslie, the reader does not get to meet alternate versions of himself and see what life he would have if he had made different choices. The book will make the reader think about his own lifestyle and how it is the result of the choices that he himself has made. It will help the reader

see how important choices and decision making are and to examine his own motivations and decisions. How would his life differ if he had made different choices.



Chapter 1-2

Chapter 1-2 Summary

One, by Richard Bach, is an interesting book that illustrates the importance of choice in the determination of the path that an individual's life follows. Reality is determined by choices and individuals create their own reality by the choices they make. The individual is responsible for his own choices and different choices lead to different life paths.

Richard is an airline pilot when he first met his wife twenty years ago. They felt that they were the savior of the world and that they were learning how the world works. He and his wife now write together. Richard gave up his many women for Leslie. The alternate Richard, who was the subject of *The Bridge Across Forever*, had not made the same choice. He had fled to New Zealand from his Laura and now had homes in Auckland, Madrid and Singapore. The man is now a multimillionaire.

In Chapter Two, Richard is a pilot and flying a plane with Leslie aboard. Leslie was now also a pilot. They have now been married for eleven years and the two are flying to a meeting of scientific researchers in Santa Monica. Richard contacts Los Angeles control for flight instructions and bends down to change the squawk box frequency when he hears a hum and sees a yellow flash, provoking Leslie to scream. Los Angeles has disappeared and they are flying over the ocean. They don't know what has happened. The compass is spinning in its case and their instruments are not working but the plane is flying time.

They try to call Los Angeles Approach but there is no answer. The radio is working because they can hear static. Leslie comments that the plane doesn't seem to use much fuel and Richard says that the float is probably stuck. Richard estimates that they have about two hours flying time remaining.

Leslie asks Richard if he thinks they are dead. He hadn't thought of that but wonders, and he lowers the seaplane. If it was death, it wasn't the way the books described it, but neither of them felt dead. They think back over what happened and wonder if there was a nuclear attack. Leslie says that it isn't fair. Their lives were just beginning to be good. They had worked out all of their problems. Richard tells her that if they are dead, then they died together.

Richard selects a spot on the ocean water and begins to descend the seaplane, named *The Growly*. Then the water and plane disappear and there are buildings and tiled roofs. They now find themselves in a building that Leslie feels they have been in before. An elevator door opens and a man and woman step out. Leslie and Richard recognize them as the people they were sixteen years ago.



Chapter 1-2 Analysis

Richard had a choice to make - to continue his life with a variety of different women or to settle down with Leslie. He had never regretted his decision to marry Leslie even though the character in one of his books had made the opposite choice and fled from the woman he loved.

The two have a strange experience while flying to a scientific conference in Santa Monica and they don't know if they are dead or alive. If they are dead, the experience was not the way any of the books had described it. Richard keeps telling Leslie that whatever it is, they are together. She says that it isn't fair - they have just overcome all of their problems and are reaching a point where life is good.

Whatever the experience is, they don't understand it or know what happened. They find themselves in a building where they meet themselves from sixteen years earlier. Both have been happy with their lives and the choices they have made. Richard does not regret that he gave up his many women for Leslie; but what if they had made different choices?



Chapters 3-4

Chapters 3-4 Summary

Richard and Leslie watch as the young Leslie and Richard leave the elevator. Leslie calls her younger version and Richard follows the younger Richard. Richard tries to explain the situation and tells the young man that he is the person the young man will become. He answers questions from his childhood and tells the young man that the woman in the elevator is the most important person in his life and he doesn't even know it.

Richard finds his wife and they bring the young Leslie to the young Richard's hotel room and introduce her as his future wife. Leslie explains that they know the past and future of the two younger people. The younger Leslie wants to know if she and the young Richard have any choice or if it is all destiny and Leslie says they have to make their own best decisions. The elder Bachs don't want the young people to make the same mistakes that they made.

The young Leslie says that the one thing they have learned is that they will live another sixteen years. The room begins to shake for the Bachs, but not for the younger ones. Leslie is afraid of an earthquake. Then the hotel room disappears and they are back in the seaplane. Chapter Four begins as they hear a voice behind them and find that they have a passenger about who started the Growly's ascent. The woman's name is Pye. She represents Richard and Leslie in an alternate time dimension and tells them that they are not dead. Pye explains that there was some interaction between their high frequency radio equipment and cosmic rays. The plane is using no fuel because of the dimension they are in.

Pye explains that they are in a dimension of consciousness where there is no part of future. There is only the present. They are in a place where they have infinite choices and the patterns in the water below represent the paths their lives have taken. Pye explains that this is Leslie's way of exploring who she is by using the metaphor of the paths on the sea floor. They can fly around to different places to see different points in time. However, Pye explains, it isn't predetermined. They make their own choices.

Richard wants to return to their own lives but Leslie doesn't. She wants to do more exploring and Richard finally agrees.

Chapters 3-4 Analysis

Both Leslie and Richard confront their younger versions and talk with them. These younger versions are their alternate forms. They are trying to get the two together so they don't waste the years that the Bachs did. They know they are meant for each other. Neither knows if they are dead or alive but finds they can move through doors and walls and that they aren't seen by the maid, only by the young Richard and Leslie.



The young Leslie raises the issue of destiny: Do they have any choices or is it all predetermined? Leslie tells them to make their own decisions. It is all so clear to Leslie and Richard and they can't understand why the younger versions don't leap into each other's arms understanding that they are soul mates. They feel that they are offering them a big opportunity to improve their lives, since they are the people the young Richard and Leslie will become.

Back in the Growly, Pye explains that Richard and Leslie are in spacetime where there is no past or future. They are exploring their own lives. Leslie develops the metaphor of the shapes on the ocean floor representing the paths their lives have taken. The higher up they are in the plane, the greater their perspective. They can fly around to different places to see different times in their lives.

Leslie is braver than Richard. She wants to remain in spacetime and explore. Her husband finally agrees, even though he is nervous about it. Predetermination and destiny are now what spacetime is about. It is about choices that people make. This is what constitutes destiny.



Chapters 5-6

Chapters 5-6 Summary

Pye tells Leslie that there is no chart or map that they can use. The only thing they can use is their intuition. They just have to find the level within themselves that knows everything. Leslie closes her eyes and gives it a try, and then tells Richard to turn right and then to descend. He continues to navigate following her instructions until they land. They end up in an old stone house where a girl is playing the piano. A woman appears who is Leslie's mother. She doesn't hear Leslie. The girl wants to be a pianist but her mother says that there is no future in it. She sent her daughter's picture to New York where she was accepted by a modeling agency but the girl doesn't want to go to New York. The girl sees Leslie and begins to talk to her. When the girl finds out that Leslie is who she will become, she begins to cry.

In Chapter Six, Leslie tells the girl how lucky she is because she found what she loves - music. She tells the girl to make her own decisions about her music and her life. The girl says that she wants to be like Leslie but Leslie tells her that her life was not always happy. There were some very hard times. Leslie says that she took the modeling job and gave up the piano. She was an immediate success and went to Hollywood but she wasn't happy in the business she was successful in. Leslie undermined her own career by getting sick or turning down good parts. She threw away her chance for happiness when she put her music aside.

Leslie tells the girl to decide what she wants to do and then to work in that direction. She asks her what she wants and listens to her answers. There will be someone to love in the future and his name is Richard. Leslie introduces her husband. Leslie says the girl will meet the right Richard at some point in the future and not to worry about it now. As they talk, everything begins to tremble, and their discussion comes to an end.

Chapters 5-6 Analysis

Leslie is all for exploring spacetime. She is dismayed to find there are no charts to follow. Pye tells her to find the level within herself and follow her intuition. She does this and gives navigation instructions to Richard and the two travel to the house of Leslie's childhood. Here they see Leslie as a child, practicing her piano. Leslie talks to the child telling her she must make her own decisions about her music. She has found something she loves at a young age and the choice is hers as to what she wants to do with her life. Leslie tells the girl to decide what she wants and to pursue it, almost as if she is sorry she didn't do so when she was that age. Leslie gave up her music to take the modeling contract and then went on to Hollywood where she was never happy until she met Richard.



Chapter 7

Chapter 7 Summary

Back in the plane, Pye yields the controls. Leslie comments on the hard life of the girl and Pye remarks that she made her own choices and received the rewards and they are all a part of what makes Leslie Leslie. Pye asks if Leslie would like to try again and Leslie begins to give her directions. When they land, Leslie finds herself on an airbase. They are at Williams Air Force Base in Arizona.

An Air Police jeep drives through them, since the driver can't see them, but a young man in a flight suit does. The young man is a young Second Lieutenant Richard D. Bach and Richard introduces himself. Richard tells the young man, who just graduated from flight school, to leave the Air Force. The young Richard says that he would have thought that the person thirty years in the future would look back at him and be proud. The elder Richard tells him that he is proud.

They talk about why Richard joined the Air Force. He could fly before joining but wanted to fly the high performance machines. Richard tells the young man that he will find that he is personally responsible for every human that the machine kills. The military leads them on and the pilot then is stuck with the feelings from killing the people. It sinks in to the young man that he will be responsible for the killings and he asks how many people he will kill. It isn't the President who is responsible for dropping the bombs because the President can't fly the plane.

Leslie asks to be introduced and Richard introduces her as his wife-to-be. She tells him he and the young Leslie will meet at some in time. It is time for them to return to the Growly.

Chapter 7 Analysis

In this chapter, it is Richard's turn to visit his younger self, who is stationed at Williams Air Force Base and has just completed flight school. Richard wants to stop the young man from making the same mistakes that he did. He tries to talk the younger Richard into quitting the Air Force. He knows that it is the pilot that lives with the guilt from the people that are killed by the plane. It is the President and the generals that give the orders, but the pilot that actually drops the bombs and kills the people. It is the pilot that is responsible and the pilot that lives with those feelings of guilt.

Richard and Leslie don't know if they have had any effect on the young pilot. He will probably make the same mistakes Richard did, following orders and killing people.



Chapter 8

Chapter 8 Summary

Leslie is at the controls of the seaplane and asks Pye why they landed at the places where Richard was with his fighter plane and Leslie was at the piano. Pye lets her figure it out. Those were both situations where they had to make important choices. Pye basically tells Leslie that they are responsible for those choices.

Richard comments that he's the one with the interest in things like ESP and out-of-body experiences but that it is Leslie that has the gift of intuition. He asks Pye where ideas come from and she gives him navigation instructions, which he follows and lands in a flame-filled place. A woman comes to them and gives them hard hats. She tells them to call her Tink.

Tink gives them a tour of the place where they are at, explaining how the ingots are made. The ingots are made of some kind of glass. Tink takes them to the clean room where the ingots are inspected and tested. They look through an eyepiece and find that the ingots are like a spiderweb. Leslie begins to read some of the saying from the crystal. These are ideas and Leslie is amazed that ideas come from a foundry and is fascinated by what she is learning and experiencing. She tells Richard to look in the eyepiece and he is just as fascinated as she was.

Atkin, the tester of the ingots, is happy to talk to them about his work. In response to a question from Tink, Richard says that the ideas come to people in their sleep or when they are just waking up. Good ideas occur when people least expect them. Tink begins to cry. She is the idea fairy. Richard finds that the idea and title for his book *Jonathon Livingston Seagull* came from Tink.

They are now ready to leave the foundry. Leslie has learned to reach for the throttle of the seaplane through her mind. In the plane, Pye announces that she will be leaving them for awhile. They can now get around on their own and should continue their exploration. Pye will meet them again later.

Chapter 8 Analysis

Leslie is the one with the gift of intuition even though it is Richard who has the interest in things like ESP and out-of-body experiences. She respects Richard's mind but feels that she is the practical one. Leslie always felt threatened by her sense of perception and tried to block it because of the fear.

They are both amazed that ideas are made in a foundry. As Richard looks through the eyepiece, he feels that it is something he has seen before behind his own closed eyes. Richard points out that people develop their best ideas when they least expect to, like when they are just waking up or in the shower. People manage to remember their ideas.

Tink is touched by Richard's comment because she is the idea fairy and feels that he appreciates her.

Richard and Leslie understand that Tink is a dimension of themselves. A part of each person is continually working on ideas. Both come away from the foundry happy with the experience and with what they have learned.



Chapter 9

Chapter 9 Summary

Leslie and Richard find that it doesn't feel the same without Pye. They are now navigating on their own. The sea below them also appears different. Leslie tries to pick a place where they can visit but finds she draws a blank. Richard tries and gives Leslie the directions. They appear in a place with a tent in the desert somewhere. There are campfires all around the area. The tent is guarded by two guards who can't see them. Richard is very nervous and wants to leave but Leslie doesn't want to. She feels that they are there for a reason and slips into the tent. Richard hears a scream and rushes in. The man trying to attack Leslie went through her. He kept trying to attack both of them.

Richard finally gets the man to stop attacking him and finds that his name is At-Elah, or Attila the Hun. Attila calls for a guard who tells him that there is no one else in the tent. He kills the guard. Richard demands to know why Attila killed the guard and Attila says because the guard could not see what he could see. Richard goes on to demand to know why Attila is so vicious and causes so much destruction and death. Attila claims he is doing God's work. Richard says that he makes that claim to secure his base of power.

Leslie interrupts and says he does not associate with the right people and that he should put his mind to good use. He tells her to be quiet, but she continues and tells him that he could be loved and respected by people who honor love instead of feared by those who honor fear. It's hard to tell At-Elah that he is a frightened man, and he finally admits that he is because he is alone in an insane world.

Richard leaves the tent to find Leslie. He says that he is ready to leave. Richard tries to mentally reach for the throttle but finds that he can't, while the ghost of the murdered guard is reaching for Leslie. As Richard begins to fight with him, they are returned to the seaplane. As they are taking off, Richard lowers the plane and touches the water, which lands them in a different place.

Chapter 9 Analysis

Both Richard and Leslie are a little nervous without Pye. They now wish they had asked her more questions and wonder how she could think that they could travel around on their own, but they decide to continue on.

They find themselves outside a tent in the desert. Richard is very nervous and has second thoughts and wants to leave, but Leslie doesn't. She says they are there for a reason and he should be curious about what it is. There has to be something there that they can learn. They find Attila the Hun inside the tent and Richard demands to know

why the man is so vicious and wipes out civilizations. Attila says he does so in the name of God. Richard finally gets the man to admit that he is frightened.

Before they leave, Richard and Leslie learn that there are dangers involved in spacetime. They find that the ghost of the murdered guard can touch and hurt them. They escaped just in time. Richard is also surprised to find some of himself in Attila the Hun. They figure that maybe Attila is a part of all people who were fighters or had murderous thoughts. Maybe each lifetime gives people a chance to improve.



Chapters 10-11

Chapters 10-11 Summary

Richard and Leslie land in a mountainous area which Richard thinks is Switzerland. Leslie says that they are in France. They come across a man who they think is praying. There is a light around the man. Richard feels that this is something he has experienced before and is what he calls love. Then the light disappeared leaving behind a sheaf of golden paper.

Leslie picks up the sheaf of paper and begins to read it. It is scripture written for the inner being. The old man introduces himself as Jean-Paul Le Clerc and says that Richard and Leslie are angels. He was told they would come when the pages appeared. Le Clerc says the wisdom of the pages must be named and given to the world. When they give it a name, that will make it a religion and that will be the end of the Light of Love. Richard says he wants to give the pages to the world. They agree that there must be no editing or changes. Someone must be the Keeper of the Pages and protect them from those who profit from fear and slavery.

The old man says that this will be the beginning of war because the pages threaten every nation whose rule is based on fear. Richard begins to understand what the old man is telling them. Many people will die from the words on the pages. Le Clerc begins to burn the pages, but Richard pulls them away. Finally, Leslie burns them and Le Clerc walks away saying they have saved the world from another religion.

Chapter Eleven begins with Richard and Leslie flying around wishing that others could have the same experience that they are having. Their next adventure takes place in Russia where nobody sees them in the crowded street, except for one couple, Tatiana and Ivan Kirilov. They invite Richard and Leslie to their home.

The four talk, comparing their governments and whether the people of both countries want to destroy each other. They use the metaphor of two houses, both filled with missiles and guns pointed at each other. Do they solve the problem by removing weapons or adding more weapons? Each can kill the other many times over. Neither side will start a war because both will be destroyed. They begin to joke around calling submarines floating condos and looking at the space program in terms of consumerism.

The four decide that Russians and Americans are alike. They decide that they can learn from one another. Their discussion continued into the early hours of the morning. They hear defense sirens outside. The Russians grab their overnight cases and run, leaving the Americans. Ivan returns and tells them to run. Richard and Leslie return to the Growly, leaving Moscow in the throes of an attack.



Chapters 10-11 Analysis

The old man with the brilliance of the light is what Richard describes as love, and the pages left behind are based on love. Richard thinks they should be made available to all people and has a problem comprehending what LeClerc is telling him. Everyone, including rulers of nations, who profit from fear and slavery, will be threatened by the pages. The result will be war and destruction. They burn the pages to save the world from another new religion. They begin to understand what Pye was telling them and begin to feel that they are one with everything and everyone.

In Moscow, Richard and Leslie discuss the cold war situation with Russians Ivan and Tatiana Kirilov. They compare and contrast the two countries and decide that the people are the same. They don't really want war because both sides would be destroyed in any war. The four feel that it would be best if people could learn from one another. They conclude this as the air raid sirens sound.



Chapter 12

Chapter 12 Summary

Leslie is crying about the Kirilovs, thinking of bombs hitting Moscow. Both she and Richard are enraged about Moscow. Richard hears a voice giving him directions, which he follows. They end up in the cockpit of a fighter plane engaged in a dogfight. The pilot is intent on a kill as Richard identifies the markings of Red China on the plane. At first Richard thinks that her alternate Richard Leslie. She takes out the other planes and then her plane is hit.

The dogfight is a training exercise and the pilot, Linda, lands at Shanghai. The pilot is Linda Albright and the exercise is a part of the flight competition. Linda is surrounded by press and camera crews as soon as she is out of the plane. Linda says she doesn't like the interviews but must do them. She makes the obligatory comments and then the cameras switch to another aerial fight. Linda returns to her penthouse suite at the hotel.

Leslie asks Linda how the games began and Linda tells her the history of the competitions. The Air Games seem to have replaced war even though the competitors can die in air accidents during the competitions. Linda says that there are no more wars because everyone realized that the next war would be the end of everyone. The Air Games began from a Japanese commercial and then became a popular spectator sport. There was a tax revolt that resulted in the military being funded by voluntary contributions. The military is now active in building space colonies. War has been replaced by the competitions and they are watched by millions around the world.

As they are talking, a man enters. Both Leslie and Richard know the man is an alternate Richard. He is a pilot involved in Air Games. Linda introduces him as Krzysztof Sobieski, her husband.

The four talk about the situation in their world. The world of Air Games is one of prosperity and peace, not a world built around war that the Bachs live in. The world of Air Games builds weapons that are blank because they are only used in the games. The games are big business.

Linda and Krysz have to meet with their teams and plan their strategy for the next day, so Richard and Leslie decide to leave.

Chapter 12 Analysis

Both Leslie and Richard are very upset about the bombs in Moscow. After the Moscow experience they find themselves in a fighter cockpit engaged in a dogfight. Richard identifies the planes as a Red Chinese fighter and is upset because he feels that he is the pilot and is involved in killing again. He wonders how many times he is going to make the same mistake and have to live with the consequences.

They find themselves in the world of Air Games. The Air Games have replaced war in the world now, with nations competing against one another. The military is now funded by taxpayer contributions and involved in establishing space stations and taking part in the games. The world lives in peace and prosperity with the games being big business. Blank weapons are produced by industry. Even though this seems to be the kind of world that the Bach's are looking for, they feel uneasy in it and are surprised by it. They find it hard to comprehend.



Chapters 13-14

Chapters 13-14 Summary

Leslie and Richard are back in the seaplane talking about their experience with Kryl and Linda. They are excited about a world without war and decide to continue their explorations. They land in a meadow near a forest and feel they are in a place without a civilization. An injured leopard drags itself out of the forest. They wonder what they can do to help it. A woman appears and runs toward the injured animal. She tells the injured animal, who she calls Tyen, that it is not his time to die. The injured animal is healed and she sends it off.

Richard and Leslie talk to the woman who says her name is Mashara. She says that she is then in her own dimension. Richard and Leslie want to know where they are. She takes them to a stone house. There were only benches and a table in it. Mashara explains that she lives in a parallel spacetime since the planet had been destroyed. The planet has recovered according to Mashara, but the people haven't. The planet was given to Mashara whose job it was to rescue the planet. She tells them the story of how the planet was destroyed and how she was created to help rescue the planet. Mashara says that she is a super computer and then asks Leslie how she would feel if Mashara died. She feigns death and Leslie runs to her to help revive her. Mashara tells them that they must leave so they return to the Growly.

Chapter Fourteen begins with Richard and Leslie thinking of Mashara and deciding to continue their explorations. They find themselves on Lake Healy when they land. They think that they are out of the spacetime patterns and feel disappointed. They spot another seaplane and head toward it. Nobody is in the plane and they find it is an exact duplicate of the Growly and the only footprints in the area are theirs. They are puzzled and discussing the situation when Pye appears. They are both happy to see her and tell her of their experiences and how horrified they are over what happened in Moscow. Pye explains that Richard and Leslie are everyone that they have met. They have learned from all of their experiences and are one with all of the people that they have met and visited places and people that dealt with their concerns and fears. People create their own reality.

Leslie asks how they can bring love to their world. Pye answers by using two cities, Threat City and Peace, as examples. People make their choice of which they want to live in. Leslie wants to know how they will be able to continue learning without the seaplane trips through spacetime and Pye tells them they will do it through their imagination. She tells them to always remember that love is the only reality. Pye says goodbye to them. They decide that they want to go home and think over their experiences and have to figure how to do so.



Chapters 13-14 Analysis

Richard and Leslie come away from their encounter with the Air Games world full of hope at the prospect of a peaceful and prosperous world without war. They decide to see if there are more worlds with alternatives.

The next place they land is on the planet after its destruction. It seems peaceful without any civilization. They meet Mashara who is a super computer who was created to rescue the planet. By the time the humans realized what was happening to the planet, it was too late. The planet is recovering, but the people and civilization are gone. Leslie says that they will think of Mashara every time they plant flowers or trees. They will do it for Mashara.

Pye appears again at Lake Healy and both of the Bachs are happy to see her. They tell her of their experiences and how they wish she was there. She says that it was best for her not to be there or they couldn't have learned and made their own decisions. Both Richard and Leslie are concerned with issues of war and peace and they landed in places that dealt with those issues so they could learn from them. They learn that the outcomes are always the results of their own choices and decisions.

When Pye leaves them, they decide they would like to return to their homes to think over their experiences but they have to learn how to. They are becoming more confident in their ability to learn how to navigate in spacetime.



Chapter 15

Chapter 15 Summary

Airborne again in the Growly, the Bachs find it difficult to read the sea patterns. Leslie suggests that they just follow their intuition. Richard says that he thinks that intuition is too general to take them back to the place where they first entered spacetime. There were no land marks to guide them but they knew that the farther they flew, the greater were the changes in themselves. They now wonder how to fly back.

As they fly, they begin to recognize the patterns and colors where they had landed earlier. They remember that the water had paths of silver and gold where they first entered spacetime. This is what they are looking for. Finally, they decide to use intuition again and Leslie begins to give Richard instructions.

They end up in a barroom. Richard hates barrooms and wants to leave, but Leslie doesn't. She walks to the bar and finds the couple in the room is them and they are reading the Bach's latest book. They sit in the next booth so they can listen to the conversation. The man, Dave, tells the woman, Lorraine, that he can do everything that is in the book. Dave is very cynical and tells Lorraine that half the things in the book aren't true. Richard is very uncomfortable listening to Dave and wants to leave. Lorraine tells Dave that she wanted him to read the book because she felt it could have been them. She says that maybe he should have continued with his writing and flying.

Dave says he quit flying because he couldn't afford the lessons. He had joined the Army instead of the Air Force and now wishes he had joined the Air Force and become a fighter pilot. Richard thinks that Dave made the right choice. Lorraine tells Dave that she is glad that they aren't the couple in the book. They have had a good life together and she says she loves Dave. He says that he loves her also. Lorraine says she will give Dave flying lessons as an anniversary gift and they talk about how fast life goes by. Things might have been different if they had listened when they were younger. People live a life of mediocrity unless they make the best choices.

Richard and Lorraine decide that they are lucky to have each other and now wish they had spent more time enjoying what they have. After listening to Dave and Lorraine, they are happy with their life together. They want to take a long vacation and rethink their lives.

Dave and Lorraine begin to list the things they really want to do on a napkin. They want to make the next six months the best six months of their lives.

Chapter 15 Analysis

The Bachs have to figure out how to return to Los Angeles and their own time. They do so by thinking back over their experiences. The further they had flown, the further away



they went in time. They rationalize that they can fly back to the spot where they first entered space time.

When they land, they find themselves in a bar with a couple, Dave and Lorraine, who are alternate versions of themselves. Dave didn't make the same choices that Richard did. He gave up writing and flying. Richard and Leslie listen as Dave and Lorraine talk and realize how much they love and value each other. Both couples feel that they are happy for what they have and that they will do things in the future to really enjoy their time together.



Chapter 16-17

Chapter 16-17 Summary

Richard and Leslie are back in the Growly again looking for any pattern that might get them home. They wonder if they will spend the rest of their days trying to find the way. Richard tries to navigate this time and they find themselves in a hotel room looking at an alternate Richard in another room. Leslie urges Richard to go and talk to the man. Richard does and finds that the man is so depressed because the alternate Leslie, his wife, threw him out of the house. Richard tries to comprehend. He and Leslie have had bad times in the past but have always survived as a couple.

The man begins to talk about all of the little things that caused the problems in his marriage. He is very bitter because the alternate Leslie has time for nothing but work and the alternate Richard can't keep up with her. He escapes by flying his plane. Richard realizes that he almost followed the same path that his alternate version did and starts to ask the man how he feels and behaves. The alternate Richard still wants to try to make his marriage successful. Richard says he can make the necessary changes if he tries. The alternate is willing try to change himself since he has come to realize that he is the problem in the marriage. He calls the alternate Leslie and makes plans to meet with her.

Chapter Seventeen opens with Richard returning to the room where Leslie is waiting. They both hope that the alternate couple will decide to stay together. They talk about their own lives and decide that love is not unconditional because unconditional love is basically the same thing as indifference. They decide to leave and are returned to the seaplane. As they are taking off, the engine backfires and the plane hits the water with a hard thud. The plane sinks underwater. He frees Leslie from her seat and they are rescued by a passing boat, but Leslie is dead.

Richard visits Leslie's grave three months after the crash. He feels that it requires courage on his part to stay alive. They had always planned to die together but had promised each other to keep living if they didn't. They both know that the survivor would have a hard time without the other. Richard is now sorry that he made that promise. He drives and lives dangerously and blames Pye for not telling him that one of them would die on their way home.

Richard remembers the words of the pages and realizes that Leslie is still with him. It was all just another landing in spacetime. He mentally pushes the throttle and is back in the Growly with Leslie.

Chapter 16-17 Analysis

Richard and Leslie are back in the Growly, still trying to find the way home. This time Richard tries navigating, and they find another alternate version of a Richard who has



separated from his wife and is very bitter and depressed. His Leslie only has time for work and has thrown him out. Richard talks to his alternate and he sees that the problems are his fault. He has to change and is willing to change. At Richard's prodding, his alternate version calls his Leslie and makes a date to see her.

The Bachs talk about whether love is conditional or unconditional. They decide that unconditional love is the same as indifference. Then the plane crashes and Leslie is killed. Richard is lost without her and then remembers the Pages of Light. He figures that she isn't dead and that she is still with him. He hears her voice say that he is right. Richard mentally pushes the throttle and is back in the cockpit with Leslie.

Richard and Leslie had always thought that they would die together but had promised each other that if they didn't, the survivor would not commit suicide. Richard is sorry that he made that promise but honors it, even though he is miserable without Leslie.



Chapter 18

Chapter 18 Summary

In this scenario, Richard leaves his alternate in the hotel room talking to the alternate Leslie. Richard hugs Leslie, and since he can't reach the throttle, she does. The plane begins to take off and the plane crashes. When Leslie comes to, Richard is pulling various items out of the plane, including Leslie. Leslie watches them rescue her and sees a warm loving light. She sees an old friend, Hy Feldman, and hugs him. He had died three years ago and had been like an older brother to her.

Hy wants Leslie to come with him because there is someone else waiting to see her, but she wants to go back to Richard. Hy tells Leslie that she is dead and that there is a reason for the crash. Richard has something to learn that he can't learn with Leslie. Leslie recognizes her dead brother Ronnie. She walks into the light with Hy and Ronnie. There is a valley surrounded by snow topped mountains with waterfalls that she recognizes as Yosemite. They set and talk.

Leslie asks her brother about his death. He says that it was a poor choice. He didn't kill himself, but he didn't try to live either. Ronnie watched her after he died and was happy for her and Richard. At the thought of Richard, Leslie panics and says she has to go back. Ronnie tells her that she can't and that Richard won't be able to see her except in dreams. She and Richard haven't finished what they've started together, and Hy tells her that that is true for most people. Leslie begins to wonder if this is another scenario in spacetime.

Leslie says she has to get back to Richard and hugs Hy and Ronnie. He will see them again at some time. Leslie finds Richard at her grave site still in the alternate world. He can't see or hear her but he remembers about focusing and pushes the throttle of the Growly. Leslie and Richard are back together in the cockpit of the seaplane.

Chapter 18 Analysis

This chapter begins with the crash from Leslie's perspective. She watches Richard and the rescue boat frantically trying to save her, then she meets her dead friend Hy Feldman and dead brother Ronnie. They tell her that she is dead and can't go back to Richard. However, it is all about choices and learning. Leslie eventually realizes that this is another scenario in spacetime. She isn't ready to leave Richard yet and chooses to go back to him, even though they tell her that he won't be able to see or hear her. Her decision was to finish what she and Richard had started together. She follows the patterns through spacetime and finds him crying at her grave site and urges him to push the throttle. Neither of them was ready to be separated and both made the decision to find the other which is how they ended up back in the cockpit of the Growly together.



Chapter 19-20

Chapter 19-20 Summary

Richard and Leslie are happy to be back together again. He tells her how meaningless life was without her. They both talk of their experiences and she tells him how she saw Ronnie and Hy. The time perception is different for both of them. It was three months from Richard's perspective and one and one half hours from Leslie's. Leslie describes where she was and how pleasant it was. She wouldn't have come back if it hadn't been for Richard. He says he would have reacted differently if he had known that she was safe. They both know that if it happens again, that they are both still there for each other, just like Ronnie and Hy are there.

They continue to discuss the situation and wonder if it is possible to get out of the alternate world. They try to figure how to get out and remember Pye telling them that the way out is spiritual with love and hope.

Chapter Twenty begins with Richard and Leslie trying to follow Pye's words. The whole experience had been based on their choices and they now decided to try to follow love. They both held their hands on the controls of the plane and closed their eyes. When they opened them, they saw a figure eight pattern on the water, like Pye had drawn in the sand. The pattern vanishes as they land, and they are flying over Los Angeles again. Now they are passengers in the back seat watching Richard and Leslie set the transponder for Santa Monica. They panic, push the throttle, and the scene disappears. They are still ghosts. Both try to comprehend and want to find Pye.

The crash is the key, Leslie says. Richard suggests that they jump out of the plane as it is landing. They prepare to do so.

Chapter 19-20 Analysis

Richard and Leslie discuss their experiences after Leslie's death in the alternate world. They both learned from their experiences and discuss what happened and what they learned from it. They now know that if it happens again, that they will still be there for each other. Both decide that they want to leave the alternate world and go home. They remember the words of Pye, that the way home is spiritual with love and hope as the guide. Richard and Leslie must figure out what those worlds mean and how to use them.

When they follow the figure eight pattern, they find themselves as passengers in the Growly flying over Los Angeles, watching Richard and Leslie set the controls for Santa Monica. They panic, and push the throttle making the scene disappear. Flying again, they know they can't find Pye and must figure out what to do. They figure that the crash was the key and maybe they can escape by jumping out of the plane before it crashes. Leslie is scared, but they decide to try it.

They never once consider the possibility that they might both be dead.



Chapter 21-22

Chapter 21-22 Summary

As the plane nears the water, Richard and Leslie prepare to jump. When they jump, Richard finds that there is no water. They are falling through the air over Los Angeles and suddenly find themselves back in the Growly's cockpit, piloting the plane over Los Angeles. They figure that they have made it back from the alternate world. Richard contacts the flight controller and receives instructions. There is nothing about them having disappeared.

They continue to fly to Santa Monica, talking about what had happened and discuss whether everyone is some aspect of themselves. They land at Santa Monica, a little surprised that everything seems so normal. Their plane is serviced by a young man named Dave. Richard thinks of all they could tell him about his future.

In Chapter Twenty-Two, as they are driving to the hotel, Leslie asks if they should every reveal their experience to anyone. What would they say and how, Richard wants to know. They decide not to. How would they explain the alternate world? Richard mentions Einstein and talks about physics and how theoretically the idea of different dimensions is not new, but he also wonders if anyone would believe them and if it was a mutual dream.

On the way to a restaurant, they see a showroom of television sets, tuned to different channels. Leslie comments that it is like life with one selecting which channel one wants to watch on television. Richard adds that each set can only play one channel at a time. Leslie points at a set with a technology showing two channels playing at the same time, and Richard says that maybe it is possible to tune in to two lifetimes at the same time. They continue on to the restaurant.

Chapter 21-22 Analysis

Richard and Leslie successfully leave the alternate world and continue their flight to Santa Monica. The flight controller doesn't mention that they have been missing. At Santa Monica, their plane is serviced by Dave and Richard thinks of what they could tell him about his future, remembering Dave and Lorraine from the barroom. He asks where they have been, and they say that they have just been flying around. They really can't explain to him and don't even try.

They compare their experience and what they have learned to a showroom full of television sets, each set playing a different channel. One set can only play one channel, even though all the other channels are broadcasting simultaneously, just like the alternate lives. The individual selects which channel to watch, just as the individual selects which life to live. They basically conclude that choices and discussions



determine the individual's reality, just as channel selection determines what program the individual watches.



Chapter 23-24

Chapter 23-24 Summary

Leslie and Richard talk as they eat. Leslie says that everything is a metaphor and is there to teach them something. They talk about how the ocean consists of drops of water, some in the air, others under pressure, others vaporize, others condensing, etc. A city on their place mats, Los Angeles, is made of streets, with individuals deciding which streets to use and where to go. All trips exist already and people choose the ones they will take.

They look around at the people in the restaurant and at what they are doing. The older people are remembering their lifetimes while the younger ones are experiencing theirs. They decide that people are living mirrors of each other. Richard and Leslie still feel that they are the same people but they had seen what could happen in other life path.

In Chapter Twenty-Four, Richard and Leslie attend the conference. They are the last to arrive and are amazed to find that the speaker is Atkin. Another speaker on Artificial Intelligence is named Marsha. Richard and Leslie talk about the coincidence. Atkin gives his presentation on the structure of ideas as Richard and Leslie read the titles of the presentations. The titles are like the patterns that they followed in spacetime. Richard begins to wonder if anyone else has been to spacetime and had the experiences that he and Leslie had.

Both Richard and Leslie relate their experiences in spacetime to the subjects of the speeches and which character fits in with which topic. They decide to speak at the conference. Richard writes the word One as the title of their topic.

Chapter 23-24 Analysis

During dinner, Richard and Leslie talk about their experiences which has broadened their awareness of people and choices. They have seen what could have been if they made other choices.

At the conferences, Richard and Leslie are amazed at the people and the topics of the various presentations. They find Atkin discussing the structure of ideas and how they are like a crystal, just as the Bahs had seen at the foundry. There were so many topics that related to the experiences that they have in spacetime, that Richard wonders if other people had had the same kind of experience that he had Leslie had. As they listen to the presentations, they relate that they are one with everyone there and decide to give their own presentation, which they title One. They decide to talk about their experience because they are among people who will understand it and will not dismiss them as crazy. The conference attendees will understand the concept of alternate lives and how the path of one's life depends on the choices one makes



Characters

Richard Bach

Richard Bach is the author, narrator and main character of the novel. He is married to Leslie Parrish-Bach and both are pilots and writers. Richard and Leslie have a strange experience while flying that allows them to meet themselves when they were younger. Richard is at first leery of the situation but agrees to explore at his wife's urging.

Richard had been an Air Force pilot who flew fighters that were used to kill many people. He also has an interest in subject like ESP and out-of-body experiences and they are flying to a conference that is about related topics. The experience in spacetime is a learning experience for Richard that allows him to experience different life paths. He is drawn closer to his wife when she dies in an alternate life and he fights to bring her back. Richard learn how much he needs his wife then he experiences life without her.

Even though Leslie was more adventurous about exploring spacetime, Richard still learns much about himself and how he is is the result of the choices he has made. He sees what would have happened if he made other choices that would have resulted in different life paths. Even though he and Leslie had decided not to talk about their experiences or give a presentation at the conference, it is Richard who schedules their presentation with the title of One.

Leslie Parrish-Bach

Leslie is the wife of Richard. She had been an actress and afraid of flying when she met Richard. Now she is also a pilot. Their strange experience aboard their plane allows them to meet themselves when they are younger. She doesn't know if she and Richard are dead or alive but she wants the younger versions to avoid the mistakes they made.

Leslie is the braver of the two, wanting to remain in spacetime to explore. She had been a promising pianist as a youngster and had wanted to pursue a career in music, but her mother arranged a modeling contract for her. Her success landed her in Hollywood within a year, but she was never happy. She has always had the psychic gift of intuition but was always frightened by it and tried to block it.

Leslie dies in one of the alternate lives but chooses to go back to Richard. Together they follow Pye's advice and find a way out of the alternate world.

Jean-Paul LeClerc

Jean-Paul LeClerc is the man in France who received the pages that were based on love and light. He knows that if they are given to the world, another religion will be



created and the result will be war and destruction. When they burn the pages, he feels that they have saved the world from another religion.

Linda Albright

Linda Albright is the pilot of the plane that is involved in the dogfight in Shanghai, China flight competition. Linda is one of the top pilots in the international competition. She is married to Krys Sobieski.

Pye

Pye is the passenger who appears on the Growly. She says that she is the Richard and Leslie of an alternative dimension called spacetime. Pye acts as their guide through spacetime.

Hy Feldman

Hy Feldman died three years before the Growly crash. He had been a close friend of Leslie's and is the first person she sees when she dies in the plane crash.

Mashara

Mashara is a super computer who was created to rescue the planet. She appears human and Richard and Leslie have a difficult time understanding that she is a computer.

Tink

Tink is Leslie and Richard's guide in the place where ideas are made. Tink is the idea fairy and runs the foundry.

Ivan Kirilov

Ivan Kirilov is married to Tatiana. He works in the Ministry of Aviation and is a member of the Communist Party in Moscow, where he lives.

Ronnie Parrish

Ronnie was Leslie's younger brother who died in an accident at seventeen. She sees him after the plane crash.



Krzysztof Obieski

Sobieski is the husband of Linda Albright. He is also a pilot involved in the Air Games

Lorraine

Lorraine is one of the alternate Leslie's that they meet in a barroom.

Dave

Dave is one of the alternate Richard's that they meet in the barroom.

Young Richard

The young Richard is the Richard Parrish of different stages in his life.

Atkin

Atkin is testing the ingot units at the place where ideas come from.

Young Leslie

The young Leslie is the Leslie Parrish at different stages in her life.

Tatiana Kirilov

Tatiana is the wife of Ivan Kirilov. They live in Moscow.

At-Elah

At-Elah is Attila the Hun, a warrior from historical times.



Objects/Places

The Growly

The Growly is the name of the seaplane that the Bachs are piloting.

Carmel

Carmel is a city on the California coast where Richard met Leslie in a Holiday Inn.

Upper Black Eddy

Upper Black Eddy is the site of Leslie's childhood house.

Arizona

Arizona is the southwestern state where Williams Air Force Base is located.

Foundry

The foundry is the place where ideas are made.

Deseret Tent

The tent in the desert is where Richard and Leslie meet Attila the Hun.

France

The mountains of France are where hard and Leslie meet Jean-Paul Le Clerc and receive and burn the pages.

Moscow

Moscow is the capitol of the Soviet Union.

Shanghai

Shanghai is a city in China where the Air Games are held.



Lake Healy

Lake Healy is a mountain lake which Richard used to practice landings.

Barroom

The barroom is where the Bach's listen to Dave and Lorraine discuss the Bach's book and their own lives.

Hotel Room

The hotel room is where Ric hard meets his alternate version who is separated from Leslie.

Yosemite

Yosemite is a national park in Wyoming where Leslie met with Hy and Ronnie in their alternate world.

Santa Monica

Santa Monica is a city in California where the conference is held.



Themes

Learning

One of the most important themes of the book is that of learning. Both Richard and Leslie view life and their experiences in spacetime as a learning experience. They explore themselves and what could have been in alternate lives as they travel through spacetime. At times when Richard wants to quit, Leslie wants to continue of to see what else they can learn. When they find themselves outside a tent in a desert, Leslie enters the tent because she knows that there is something to be learned there. Learning expands one's horizons and Leslie is the adventurous one that wants to continue the exploration in spacetime.

When Leslie is killed in the plane crash in one of the alternate lives, she asks why her husband was left alone. Her brother Ronnie tells her that there is something that Richard has to learn that he can't learn if she is with him. Pye, who acted as their guide at the beginning of their journey, tells them that she had to leave them to learn on their own. They wouldn't have learned the things that they did if they had Pye to lean on and guide them. They were forced to learn on their own, just as they had to learn how to interpret Pye's words to escape the alternate world.

The book indicates that the author, Richard Bach, also views life as a learning experience. People learn from their experiences and from the decisions they make. They basically create their own reality which is what Richard and Leslie learn in their spacetime journey.

Choices

Another major theme of the book is the importance of choice. People create their own reality by the decisions and choices that they make. The patterns in the water represented alternate life paths that are the result of different choices. This indicates the importance of choice in everyday life because those choices determine the path the individual's life takes. Richard and Leslie were able to see this by their travels in spacetime. They were able to see what their lives would have been like if they had made different choices.

Richard and Leslie made the decision to marry and stay together. They were able to see what their lives would be like if they separated or one of them died. In each case, they chose to somehow reunite their separated alternate selves. Leslie made the decision not to remain in the glorious place with Ronnie and Hy. Ronnie said he made a poor choice when he died. Leslie is determined not to make a poor choice and return to Richard.

The importance of choices and decision is emphasized throughout the book. It is pointed out that it is important to make the best choices and decisions that one can



because of the influence that they have on the life pattern that one's life follows. Each choice leads to a different life pattern which is what the metaphor of watching one channel at a time on television indicated. The viewer watches the channel that the viewer selects, just as the individual lives the life that they select through their choices.

Love and War

Love and the abhorrence of war are also prevalent themes of the book. Many of their early landings were based on their views of love and war. The encounter with Attila the Hun revealed that his actions were based on fear not love. They were in Moscow when the defense sirens sounded and saw the results. Their landing in Shanghai gave them the chance to see a world without war and how it functioned. Mashara, a super computer, was the solution to a world destroyed by the actions of man.

Throughout the book, light represents love. The beautiful pages came out of the light that surrounded Jean-Paul Le Clerc. However, if the pages were named there would be a religion based on them and this would lead to more war and destruction. When Leslie dies in an alternate life, it is love that drives her back to Richard. It is Richard's love of Leslie that compels him to try and find her.

Much of Richard's attitude comes from his past as a fighter pilot. As a result, he lives with the guilt of his past and hates war. The Bachs concerns about love and war dictated their experiences of their landings at the beginning of their experience in spacetime. Their love for each other and their fear of separated, dictated their experiences at the end of their time in the alternate world.



Style

Point of View

One by Richard BNach is written in the first person with the narrator being the author. The author is telling of his and his wife's experiences in the alternate world of space time. The experience is spacetime allows the couple to explore issues that are of concern to them and to the author, basically the issues of war and love and the importance of choice.

Bach views life as a learning experience in which an individual's reality is dictated by the choices he or she makes and this is evident in the book. The author makes his views known through the characters and their experiences and discussions. The use of the first person emphasizes this point. Since Richard or Leslie, or both, are present in all scenes, the reader does not lose anything by the use of the first person because there are no scenarios without the presence of one or both of the main characters. The knowledge of the reader is not limited by the use of the first person because of this. If Richard or Leslie weren't in every scene, then there would be a loss of information on the part of the reader.

The point of view is appropriate for the kind of book that Bach has written. It allows the author to make his point that people make choices at each step in their life and this determines the path their lives take. Different choices lead to different life paths. This is indicated by the experiences and discussions of Richard and Leslie.

Setting

Most of the setting for the book is in the alternate world of spacetime with the Bachs traveling from place to place in their seaplane, the Growly. They enter spacetime where they are flying over Los Angeles. The Bachs see themselves meeting in Carmel. Leslie sees herself as a child in Upper Black Eddy where he made the decision to give up her music. Richard sees himself as a young fighter pilot in Arizona, eager to obey orders.

The visit the foundry and see how ideas are made. The foundry basically represents the human brain. They visit places in Europe where they find the desert tent of Attila the Hun. In France they meet Jean-Paul Le Clerc and the Pages of Light. They are in Moscow, Russia when a nuclear attack begins. Shanghai, China is the site of the Air Games and a prosperous and peaceful world without war.

Lake Healy, the Barroom, the Hotel Room and Yosemite are places in the alternate world where the Bachs explore their relationship with with one another and see what their lives would be like if they separated or if Leslie died.

The book ends with the Bach's back in the real world and attending a conference at Spring Hill in Santa Monica.



Language and Meaning

The book is easy to read and understand. It is written in clear and simple everyday language, for the most part, with the author constantly telling the reader the point that he is making. When a metaphor is used, Bach states that it is a metaphor and clearly explains the point he is making through the dialogue of Richard, Leslie or other characters. The metaphors used are very clear and distinct and emphasize the author's point, like the figure eight, the patterns in the water and the television sets. The reader should have few problems reading the book and grasping the meaning.

The book is quick and easy reading, even though there are places where the reader may want to pause and think about the points and how it relates to their own life. There are no foreign terms or jargon to slow the reader down. It helps a little if the reader knows what terms like quantum mechanics and out of body experiences are but Bach discusses the concepts enough so the reader can grasp what is being discussed. Even though the language used is simple, the reader needs to think about the meaning of the experiences and how the concept of choice relates to their own lives.

Structure

The structure of the book is simple with the book being divided into twenty four chapters. For the most part, each chapter describes a different experience or idea which Richard and Leslie can explore. Most begin or end in the cockpit of the Growly because this is how they travel around spacetime.

There is no Prologue, Preface or Epilogue that explains the author's purpose. These are basically given from the chapter titles, and not all of the chapters have titles. The chapters are relatively short, about twenty five pages and are easy reading. The reader must find his own way through the book, once it begins, just as Richard and Leslie must find their way through and out of spacetime. Unlike the main characters, the reader has the author as a guide, through Richard and Leslie.

Bach has chosen a structure that works well for the book. It is quick and easy reading that directs the reader's attention to the purpose of the book, how life paths are determined by the choices an individual makes.



Quotes

"No," she said. "Yes! There was a whine, did you hear it? Then a flash of yellow light, a ...a shock-wave going out all around use, and then it was gone, and so was everything else! Where are we?" (Chapter 2, pg. 14)

So with this. We were over our heads in our own past, startled we had fallen in doing the best we knew in the strange place. And the best we knew was to get these two together, save them from losing the years we had lost before we knew we were soulmates. (Chapter 3, pg. 30)

"The choices are yours, more than you suspect." Leslie glanced at me. "If you never let go of what matters to you, if it matters so much that you're willing to struggle this hard to have it. I promise you'll have a very successful life. A hard life, because excellence is not easy, but a good life." (Chapter 6, pg. 68)

"I'm you, Lieutenant. I'm yourself with a little more experience. I'm the one made all the mistakes that you're going to make, and somehow survived." (Chapter 7, pg. 86)

Both of these people can see us, I thought, so they must be an alternate us, aspects who chose different paths in the pattern. Still it was incredible. The idea fairy is us? Can different levels of ourselves be spending lifetimes making knowledge crystal clear, hoping we'll see it in our world? (Chapter 8, pg. 124)

"Richie, maybe this is what's important, what matters most. There must be a reason we're here, something we should learn. Aren't you curious to know what it is?" (Chapter 9, pg. 132)

"In any conflict," said Leslie, "we can defend ourselves, or we can learn. Defense has made the world unlivable. What would happen if we chose to learn instead? Instead of saying, you frighten me, what if we said you interest me?" (Chapter 11, pg. 180)

It's me, I thought. I'm a pilot again. God-damn military! How many times do I have to make the same mistake? Here I'm about to kill somebody and I'll regret it for the rest of my life.... (Chapter 12, pg. 189)

"Mine's a parallel spacetime from yours," said the woman, "but of course you know that. Different planet, different sun, different galaxy, different universe. Same. Now." (Chapter 13, pg. 225)

Some of our exploration had been joy, some had been horror, but our learning curves were going straight up, we'd seen things, felt things we couldn't have imagined if we'd lived a hundred lifetimes. (Chapter 14, pgs. 234-235)

As we crossed the edge of blues and golds, they spread before us to the end of sight. Somewhere out there was a precise few feet of water where we needed to touch down, the doorway to our own time. Where? (Chapter 15, pg. 261)



Returning to life wasn't impossible, wasn't even hard. Once through the wall that assumes we never dare the impossible. I saw the pattern in the tapestry, the way Pye had said. Thread by thread, step by step! I wasn't returning to life, I was returning to a focus of form, and that's a focus we change everyday. (Chapter 18, pg. 323)

In the pattern below there must be an alternate us, I thought, who failed to make the leap to find each other. I didn't speak the thought to Leslie to keep from breaking our hearts all over again. (Chapter 19, pg. 332)

"What if it's true?" said Leslie, " What if everybody everywhere is some aspect of who we are, and we're some aspect of them? How will that change the way we live?" (Chapter 21, pg. 346)

That gentle understanding stayed with us as we talked. It's not the knowing that comes and goes, I thought, it's our awareness that it's there. What we see is our own consciousness, and when that's lifted up, how our scenes do change! Everyone is this world - we're reflections, we're living mirrors of each other. (Chapter 23, pgs. 362-363)



Topics for Discussion

What is spacetime?

Explain how Richard and Leslie use their spacetime to explore themselves?

What is the purpose of the advice they give to the younger versions of themselves?

What is Bach's view of religion and its effect on the world?

How do Richard and Leslie feel about the military and war? What effect does this have on the places they visit?

What do Richard and Leslie learn about themselves from their experiences in spacetime?

How does the metaphor of the showroom full of television sets explain the concept of alternate lives and choice? Explain.