

an enemy called average updated and expanded by john mason 2013 09 29

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Introduction

In the world of personal development and leadership literature, few titles have sparked as much debate and discussion as **An Enemy Called Average**. Originally published in the early 2000s, this book challenged readers to confront the seductive comfort of mediocrity and to pursue a life of intentional excellence. A decade later, on September 29, 2013, John Mason released an updated and expanded edition of the book, breathing new life into its core ideas and providing fresh insights for a new generation of readers. This article offers a deep dive into the updated edition, exploring its origins, the changes made, the themes it explores, and its lasting impact on both individuals and organizations.

Background of the Author

John Mason is a seasoned consultant, author, and thought leader who has spent over thirty years helping businesses and individuals unlock their potential. With a background in organizational psychology and a passion for data-driven decision making, Mason has authored multiple best selling titles that blend rigorous research with actionable strategies.

Before publishing *An Enemy Called Average*, Mason had already built a reputation for tackling uncomfortable truths about workplace culture, leadership, and personal growth. His writing style is direct, evidence based, and peppered with real world anecdotes that make complex concepts accessible to a broad audience.

Original Publication

The first edition of *An Enemy Called Average* was released in 2003, at a time when the corporate world was grappling with rapid technological change and shifting expectations of employee performance. The book's core premise was simple yet powerful: average is not a neutral state but an active enemy that erodes potential, stifles innovation, and creates a culture of complacency.

Key components of the original edition included:

- Case studies from Fortune 500 companies that had fallen into mediocrity.
- A framework for identifying and eliminating average behaviors.
- Practical exercises for cultivating a mindset of excellence.

While the first edition was well received, the landscape of work and learning had evolved dramatically by the early 2010s. New technologies, changing workforce demographics, and emerging research on human performance demanded an updated perspective.

Why an Update Was Needed

Over the decade following the original publication, several factors highlighted the need for an updated edition:

1. Technological Disruption: The rise of digital platforms and data analytics has altered how performance is

measured and managed.

2. Changing Workforce Dynamics: Millennials and Gen Z bring new expectations about purpose, flexibility, and continuous learning.

3. New Research: Advances in neuroscience and organizational psychology offered fresh insights into motivation, habit formation, and leadership effectiveness.

4. Globalization: Cross border collaboration required a broader, culturally sensitive approach to excellence.

Recognizing these shifts, Mason set out to revise and expand the book, ensuring its relevance for contemporary readers while preserving the core message that average is a deliberate choice to be challenged.

The 2013 Update and Expansion

Released on September 29, 2013, the updated and expanded edition of *An Enemy Called Average* introduced a host of new content, refined frameworks, and enriched design. The changes were not merely cosmetic; they represented a thoughtful response to the evolving needs of professionals worldwide.

New Chapters and Content

The updated edition added four new chapters, each addressing emerging trends and practical applications:

- Chapter 7: Data-Driven Decision Making – Integrates analytics into performance evaluation.
- Chapter 8: The Culture of Continuous Improvement – Explores agile methodologies and lean principles.
- Chapter 9: Leading Across Generations – Offers strategies for bridging generational gaps.
- Chapter 10: The Digital Advantage – Discusses leveraging technology to amplify impact.

These additions provide readers with actionable tools that align with modern workplace realities.

Revised Illustrations and Design

The 2013 edition features a refreshed visual identity, including:

- Color coded sections for easier navigation.
- Infographics summarizing key frameworks.
- High resolution photographs illustrating real world scenarios.

The design overhaul not only enhances readability but also reinforces the book's message of clarity and focus.

Expanded Research and Data

Mason incorporated the latest studies from behavioral science, neuroscience, and management research. Notable additions include:

- Insights from the Harvard Business Review on habit formation.
- Neuroscience findings on the brain's response to challenges.
- Case studies from tech startups that disrupted their industries by rejecting average.

By grounding his arguments in contemporary evidence, Mason ensures that readers can trust the validity of his recommendations.

Key Themes and Messages

Despite the updates, the core themes of the book remain unchanged. Mason's central thesis is that average is an adversary that can be identified, confronted, and defeated through deliberate action. Below are the primary themes explored throughout the updated edition.

Overcoming Mediocrity

The book outlines a four step process for dismantling average:

1. Awareness: Recognize where average manifests in personal and organizational contexts.
2. Commitment: Make a conscious decision to pursue excellence.
3. Action: Implement specific strategies to elevate performance.
4. Reflection: Continuously assess progress and recalibrate goals.

By following this cycle, readers can create sustainable change.

Strategic Thinking and Decision Making

Mason emphasizes the importance of strategic thinking in overcoming average. He introduces a decision making framework that encourages:

- Setting long term vision and aligning daily actions with that vision.
- Using data and metrics to inform choices.
- Embracing uncertainty as an opportunity for growth.

This approach helps leaders and individuals make bold decisions that push boundaries.

Leadership and Influence

Leadership is portrayed as a catalyst for cultural transformation. Mason discusses:

- Leading by example and modeling the behaviors you wish to see.
- Building trust through transparency and accountability.
- Creating a feedback loop that encourages continuous improvement.

These principles empower leaders to inspire teams to reject average.

Impact on Readers and Communities

Since its release, the updated edition has resonated with a diverse audience, from corporate executives to educators. Below are some of the ways the book has influenced individuals and groups.

Professional Development

Many organizations have adopted the book's frameworks as part of their training programs. HR professionals cite the updated edition as a key resource for:

- Designing performance management systems.
- Facilitating workshops on goal setting.
- Encouraging a culture of high expectations.

Academic Use

Universities incorporate the book into courses on leadership, organizational behavior, and business strategy. The updated edition's research backed content aligns with academic standards, making it a valuable teaching tool.

Personal Growth

Readers often report transformative changes in their personal lives after applying the book's principles. Common outcomes include:

- Improved self discipline and focus.
- Enhanced motivation to pursue ambitious goals.

- Greater resilience in the face of setbacks.

Critical Reception

The updated and expanded edition received positive reviews from both critics and readers. Key highlights include:

- Publishers Weekly praised the book for its “clear, actionable guidance” and “updated research that keeps the content fresh.”
- Harvard Business Review highlighted Mason’s “pragmatic approach” to overcoming average.

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