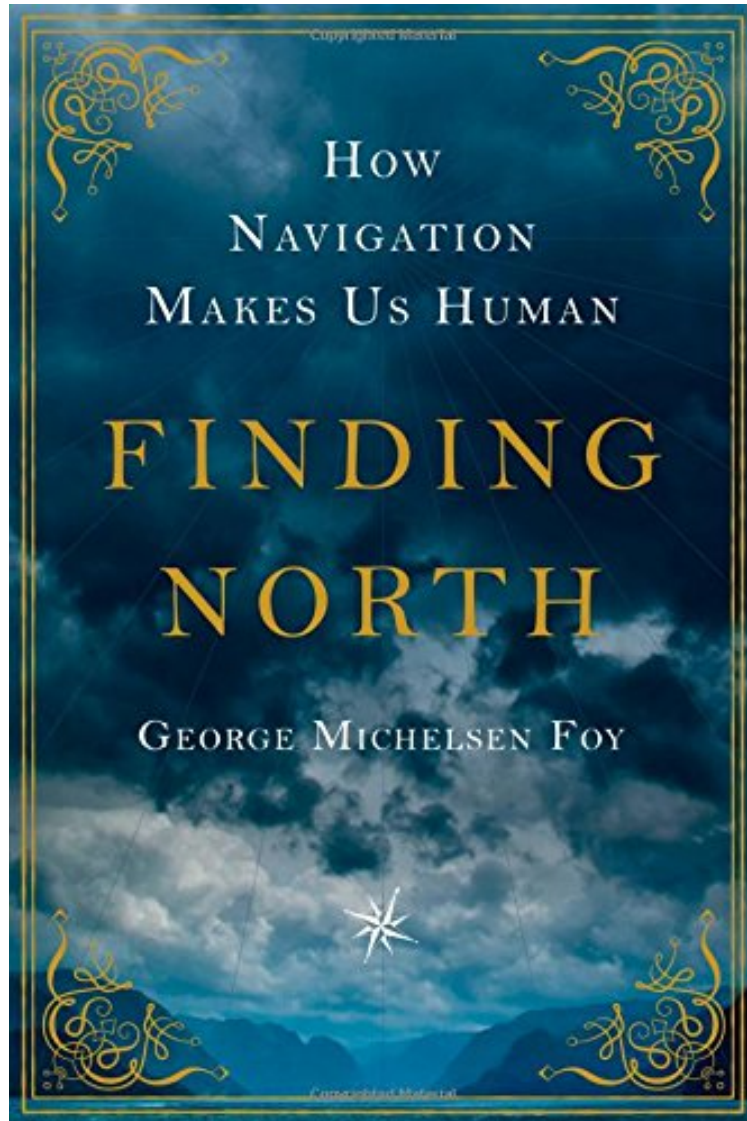


(Read now) Finding North: How Navigation Makes Us Human

## Finding North: How Navigation Makes Us Human

*George Michelsen Foy*

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**George Michelsen Foy : Finding North: How Navigation Makes Us Human** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Finding North: How Navigation Makes Us Human:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A Winner! By Giles Blunt If you haven't read his earlier Zero Decibels, you may not know that George Foy is one of the best writers plying the waters of nonfiction today. In Finding North he tackles a subject, navigation, that is of abiding interest but--in our hypercyber world--may soon slip

from view. His curiosity takes him to people who think about navigation 24/7, from brain scientists to drone pilots, to the kind of dirt-poor fisherman who can't afford a radio, let alone GPS. But this is above all a personal story, rich with telling anecdotes and funny asides, alive with memories of a lost brother, parents, and the haunting image of the great-grandfather he never knew--a master seaman who sailed out of a tiny Norwegian port one day and into the storm that took his life. Foy sets out to test his own (admittedly rusty) navigational skills with only the tools available to his ancestor--basically a sextant, a chart, and the stars. While self-deprecating about his own abilities, he captures the brilliance and audacity of our forefathers who took to the sea relying on little more than their skills of observation and deduction to get them home. This book is a total winner--a riveting, thoughtful tale told in elegant prose. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A beautiful book that is a pleasure to read for the ...By Lady MaxA beautiful book that is a pleasure to read for the grace of language. It's also intriguing and rich. There is so much to learn from Foy's own curiosity which leads him to research, discover and share such interesting facts, gathered and delivered with a gifted storyteller's way of making his experiences come alive. I love the way he effortlessly weaves the personal with the educational with the philosophical by way of the lyrical. I could "feel" the book on an emotional level even as I kept learning new things. It's an absorbing book - something to savor, enjoy and reflect on. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. In this wonderful book, Foy invites us along on a fascinating ...By CustomerBlasted by storm-tossed seas off the coast of Norway, Foy's great-grandfather went down with his ship. But what really happened? You won't be able to put the book down, as he takes you with him on a trip back to the old country, where he works to discover what really happened that fateful night. And, for all of us, what really happens as we try to make our way around our neighborhoods and our world? In this wonderful book, Foy invites us along on a fascinating exploration of navigation, examining modern practices and our innermost selves through the lenses of history, science, and psychology.

Navigation is the key human skill. It's something we do everywhere, whether feeling our way through a bedroom in the dark, or charting a ship's course. But how does navigation affect our brains, our memory, ourselves? Blending scientific research and memoir, and written in beautiful prose, *Finding North* starts with a quest by the author to understand this most basic of human skills---and why it's in mortal peril. In 1844, Foy's great-great grandfather, captain of a Norwegian cargo ship, perished at sea after getting lost in a snowstorm. Foy decides to unravel the mystery surrounding Halvor Michelsen's death---and the roots of his own obsession with navigation---by re-creating his ancestor's trip using only period instruments. Beforehand, he meets a colorful cast of characters to learn whether men really have better directional skills than women, how cells, eels, and spaceships navigate; and how tragedy results from GPS glitches. He interviews a cabby who has memorized every street in London, sails on a Haitian cargo sloop, and visits the site of a secret navigational cult in Greece. At the heart of Foy's story is this fact: navigation and the brain's memory centers are inextricably linked. As Foy unravels the secret behind Halvor's death, he also discovers why forsaking our navigation skills in favor of GPS may lead not only to Alzheimers and other diseases of memory, but to losing a key part of what makes us human.

"GPS's cultural and psychological significance is at the core of George Michelsen Foy's *Finding North*...[and] the questions he worries at are important ones." *The Wall Street Journal*"A well-told tale, one that makes you grateful for what we have to guide us today as well as the power of the great outdoors." *Travel + Leisure*"Foy's strongest moments happen when he taps into the internal map, through his own personal, sensory-based history with a particular place...[a] great storyteller." *Outside*"Deep waters and deep thoughts fill these pages. With skillful prose and insight, Foy's account of the different aspects of navigation packs a powerful punch." *Publishers Weekly*"[Foy's] exploration of loss leads to a consideration of the process by which we make our way to a stage of renewal and growth[a] fascinating look at past and present navigation. *Booklist*"Armchair sailors will enjoy the vicarious thrills of Foy's brief journeys, and even those with no intentions of abandoning their smartphones will find something to ponder in his speculations about the challenges of gadget-free navigation." *Kirkus s*"A fascinating and sobering look at how partaking of the fruit of easy GPS navigation may be changing ourselves in ways we don't fully realize." *Ocean Navigator*"I highly recommend this excellent book." *Bruce Albertson, The Ensign magazine**Finding North* takes readers on a journey around the world and deep into the nature of ?how humans find their way around. It's a voyage that is both personal and expansive, exploring how navigation works and its meaning in people's lives. Andrew Johnston, author of *Time and Navigation and Earth from Space*With engaging and personal prose, George Michelsen Foy explores the history, natural history, andmost criticallythe vital importance for us today of navigation. In an age when we too often rely on technology to tell us where we are and where we're going, Foy's compelling story asks at what cost? What do we lose when we allow our skills of navigationearned through centuries of finding our way in a wild and sometimes foreboding worldto fade? As we careen further into a century of global change, Foy shows how in a world of 'mystery and fear, and the near certainty of loss,' we will need these skills of navigation more than ever. Paul Bogard, author of *The End of Night*George Foy frames his story of the history and practice of navigation with a hazardous personal sea voyage in a ship that might not be in good enough repair to make the trip. It's a wonderful device which he also uses to

chart a difficult navigational path through his inner worldhis seafaring ancestors; the tragic loss of his brother; his family; and his fears. And all of this is delivered in sensible, warm, and intelligent prose. Voyagers of all kinds will cherish this book?. Paul Raeburn, author of *The Game Theorist's Guide to Parenting* and *Do Fathers Matter?* Anyone whos ever charted a course or dreamt of traveling to the stars will enjoy *Finding North*. *WindCheck Magazine* Foy takes us on an adventure Instead of forcing us into a trap of hate and obsession he leads us gently with good humor upon a passage lit by compassion. This is another lesson in navigation: To find our way we cannot succumb to monomania. Navigation incites and inspires us to take everything into account. And, as Foy demonstrates, this requires us to do the difficult thing whenever it resonates with the needle of our compass. At such times what is hard is not a chore. It is a vessel for joy. *Horizons of Significance* Informative [and] well written I recommend [*Finding North*] to anybody having a bit of interest in navigation, amateurs or professionals; it takes you to places you didnt expect and at the same time makes your recognize other subjects Well done! Dutch Mariner About the Author GEORGE MICHELSEN FOY is the author of *Zero Decibels: The Quest for Absolute Silence* and twelve critically acclaimed novels. He was a recipient of a National Endowment of the Arts fellowship in fiction and his articles, reviews, and stories have been published by *Rolling Stone*, the *Boston Globe*, *Harper's*, the *New York Times*, and *Men's Journal*, among others. He teaches creative writing at NYU and is married with two children. Foy divides his time between coastal Massachusetts and New York.