

**Unabomber survivor David  
Gelernter talks about his road to  
recovery**

1996

Mostly, I didn't learn anything new, but I had the satisfaction of having my hunches confirmed. I emerged, knowing that, as I had always suspected, the time that I spend with my wife and my children is all that really matters in the end. I emerged as a practicing Jew. (Admittedly, I had always been one).

By inclination, I am a writer and a painter. I got into computer science because of the Talmudic injunction that a person should learn a useful trade in order to support his family. Shoe-making was what the Rabbis had in mind ... but I have never shown any aptitude for shoes, so I don't regret my choice. The explosion smashed my right hand, and for several months, I was under the impression that I would never paint again. I bitterly regretted the work that I had never put down on canvas. But then I learned how to paint with my left hand, and I will never again neglect my duties as a painter.

By the same token, I had been planning a book about the 1939 World's Fair. It was to be such an abnormal book—part history, part novel—that I figured it would be years before I worked up enough courage to write the thing. But when I got home from the hospital, it was clear that I ought to just sit down and do it. To my surprise, it was a success. A number of people even bought copies.

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