The Character of Physical Law (Modern Library)

Like any set of oral reflections, The Character of Physical Law has special value as a demonstration of the mind in action. The reader is particularly lucky in Richard Feynman - one of the most eminent and imaginative modern physicists.

In these Messenger Lectures, originally delivered at Cornell University and recorded for television by the BBC, Richard Feynman offers an overview of selected physical laws and gathers their common features into one broad principle of invariance. He maintains at the outset that the importance of a physical law is not "how clever we are to have found it out - but . . . how clever nature is to pay attention to it" and steers his discussions toward a final exposition of the elegance and simplicity of all scientific laws. Rather than an essay on the most significant achievements in modern science, The Character of Physical Law is a statement of what is most remarkable in nature. Feynman's enlightened approach, his wit, and his enthusiasm make this a memorable exposition of the scientist's craft. The law of gravitation is the author's principal example. Relating the details of its discovery and stressing its mathematical character, he uses it to demonstrate the essential interaction of mathematics and physics. He views mathematics as the key to any system of scientific laws, suggesting that if it were possible to fill out the structure of scientific theory completely, the result would be an integrated set of mathematical axioms. The principles of conservation, symmetry, and time irreversibility are then considered in relation to developments in classical and modern physics, and in his final lecture, Feynman develops his own analysis of the process and future of scientific discovery.
Richard Feynman was perhaps the most brilliant, iconoclastic, and influential physicist of modern times. The Character of Physical law, first published in 1965, contains the text of seven brilliant lectures, originally delivered to standing-room-only audiences at Cornell University, that demonstrate Feyman's unique ability to bring his subject to life to the non-physicist.Richard P. Feynman was born in 1918 in Far Rockaway, New York, and attended MIT at the age of 17. In 1939 he was one of the scientists who built the atomic bomb that would end World War II. He received the Nobel Prize for physics in 1965 and was a member of the Shuttle Commission in 1986. He died in 1988. The US Postal Service issued a commemorative stamp in Dr. Feynman's name in 2005.

James Gleick is our leading chronicler of science and technology, the bestselling author of Chaos: Making a New Science, Genius: The Life and Science of Richard Feynman, and The Information: A History, a Theory, a Flood. His books have been translated into 30 languages.
Other Books
The Information, From the bestselling author of the acclaimed Chaos and Genius comes a thoughtful and provocative exploration of the big ideas of the modern era: Information, communication, and information theory. Acclaimed science writer James Gleick presents an eye-opening vision of how our relationship to information has transformed the very nature of human consciousness. A fascinating intellectual journey through the history of communication and information, from the language of Africa's talking drums to the invention of written alphabets; from the electronic transmission of code to the origins of information theory, into the new information age and the current deluge of news, tweets, images, and blogs. Along the way, Gleick profiles key innovators, including Charles Babbage, Ada Lovelace, Samuel Morse, and Claude Shannon, and reveals how our

understanding of information is transforming not only how we look at the world, but how we live. A New York Times Notable Book A Los Angeles Times and Cleveland Plain Dealer Best Book of the Year Winner of the PEN/E. O. Wilson Literary Science Writing Award □ □ □ □ □ . Acclaimed science writer James Gleick presents an eye-opening vision of how our relationship to information has transformed the very nature of human consciousness."