

Do you believe yourself to be intelligent, wise, and reasonable? You likely frequently underestimate your brain's capabilities regardless of how you see yourself.

Numerous self-help books advise us to "trust our instincts" and "trust our intuition" to make wise choices in life. You'll learn why this is lousy advice in these chapters. In many instances, it will be claimed, that you cannot trust your intuition. You cannot even rely on it to detect a gorilla crossing the room!

These chapters will also teach you

- how a police officer might have missed a vicious assault taking on just next to him;
- how it's feasible to fabricate a fake recollection about being seated close to Star Trek character Jean-Luc Picard; and
- What connection exists between high drowning rates and high ice cream sales?

Chapter 1 - Despite what we have been taught, we should not always trust our instincts.

Ever attempted to use your intuition to get through a crisis but found yourself in an even more perplexing mess? If so, you are not by yourself. Sometimes quick judgments might be incorrect. This is why:

These sayings are founded on the premise that our intuition - our capacity to perceive things instinctively - is an ideal approach to making decisions and judgments about circumstances and occurrences.

Self-help management and psychology publications have recently praised intuitive judgments above those based on analysis. Malcolm Gladwell, for instance, favors intuition above analysis in his chapter titled The Power of Thinking without Thinking. By describing how a Greek statue came on the art market and was later declared to be a fake by art experts who followed their instincts, he tries to illustrate this. In contrast, several examinations were unable to establish its falsity.

However, our intuition can be incorrect and has its limitations. There are several instances of forgery that goes unnoticed by trained intuition.

Thomas J. Wise, a book merchant, discovered and sold several manuscripts for unpublished works by well-known authors. Although both librarians and book collectors believed them to be authentic, the volumes were all discovered to be fake after being examined by two British dealers who took into consideration facts about the writers' personal life.

It is also beneficial to keep in mind that our language contains expressions that warn us of the limitations of our intuition. For instance, many of us advise others to "never judge a book by its cover" since we are aware that initial impressions are often inaccurate.

Chapter 2 - We think we see more and pay more attention than we do.

You would notice if someone was being assaulted on the street, right?

The very unsettling issue is that we may overlook just about anything while we're intently concentrating on something else, even if we're likely to notice anything strange.

The experiment known as the "Invisible Gorilla" was created by the authors to show how easily the apparent may pass us by. In the experiment, subjects were instructed to count the passes made by one team while watching a video of basketball players. However, something pretty peculiar occurs in the middle of the video: A gorilla-suited guy enters the court, beats his chest for nine seconds, then leaves. The participants would undoubtedly see such an odd scenario. No, actually. About half of the participants in the research were too preoccupied with counting the passes to spot the gorilla.

When a black police officer was beaten up next to the fence while he was trying to apprehend a criminal, Boston police officer Kenny Conley completely missed it because he was focused on the pursuit.

But we also fail to notice what we're not searching for, so it's not only that we miss things while we're preoccupied.

Imagine yourself searching a store for the things on your shopping list. You probably aren't registering many of the other items on the shelf while you're doing this. This isn't a major problem, of course, but may we be overlooking something significant and perhaps harmful? Yes. In truth, a motorbike is even simple to overlook.

Cars are involved in more than half of all motorcycle accidents, and 65 percent of these incidents happen as a consequence of a car turning left and the driver failing to see the motorbike. This is because they are expecting other automobiles rather than motorcycles.

Chapter 3 - Our memories are not as accurate and reliable as we believe.

A lot of us have firmly recalled a vivid childhood experience only to have a family member inform us that our memory is inaccurate. So why do we think our memories are so precise?

In a research conducted by the authors, 47% of participants thought that memories don't change, and 69% said that memories are like recordings that correctly capture reality, remain constant through time, and can be reviewed whenever one wants.

This isn't the case, though, as our memories can include more data than is truly available in the outside world. Students read 15 linked terms, including "slumber," "drowsy," and "tired," in one experiment. They were asked to recollect them ten minutes later. It's intriguing that despite not being on the list, participants said that the word "sleep" was there. Why?

All of the terms were connected to sleep in some manner, so participants just subconsciously added another phrase that matched the others. Our memory is more concerned with storing the meaning of items or occurrences than it is with preserving a precise order of them.

Additionally, not all memories originate from the places we believe they do. An amusing tale involving Ken, the writers' buddy, and actor Patrick Stewart in a restaurant used to be told. He remembered the star placing a baked Alaska order and signing a few autographs. He didn't simply make this up, for sure. But in reality, one of the authors was the one who experienced the incident, not him. The narrative had been presented to Ken in such detail that he thought it was his own, thus he wasn't purposefully lying.

Chapter 4 - Another way that our memories trick us is a phenomenon known as a failure of source memory.

Our confidence may be deceptive.

You most likely believe that you are intelligent, possibly even more so than the typical individual. This is only one example of how confidence may be deceptive.

Indeed, we frequently exaggerate our talents, giving us confidence when we don't deserve it.

In fact, according to national polls, 70% of Canadians and 69% of Americans agree that they are smarter than the typical person. This is strange because 50% should be average or below. So around 20% of people think highly of themselves!

When the authors spoke with chess players, they discovered a similar outcome. Despite having a specific rating, most chess players believed they were underestimated by at least 100 points. Why? People tend to overestimate their skills more when the skill level is low.

It finds out that the chess players overvalued their chess abilities more the lower their rating.

But our overconfidence isn't the only thing that may cloud reality; we can also misinterpret other people's confidence by thinking it represents their level of competence.

Participants in one research from the University of Rochester in 1986 saw a video of a doctor's visit. In both movies, the doctor recommended antibiotics, but in one, he did it with a lot of assurance, while in the other, he confirmed his diagnosis by checking online. The

majority of participants had more faith in the physician who issued the prescription without first researching the condition than they did in the physician who did so.

This demonstrates how we automatically assume someone is more competent than they are when we witness them performing with assurance.

Chapter 5 - We believe we know more than we do.

Do you understand how a toilet functions? Most likely, you don't. Even commonplace, ordinary things can escape our broad understanding.

Take a bicycle, for instance. Although most of us would say we understand how a bike functions, is this truly the case? In one experiment, British psychologist Rebecca Lawson asked people to estimate their familiarity with motorcycles before drawing one.

Although many people failed terribly, this job may appear more appropriate for an elementary school. Participants gave their level of knowledge a rating of 4.5 on a scale of one to seven, although some of them drew the chain as linking the two wheels, making it difficult to steer, or neglected to connect the pedals to the chain, making it impossible to spin the chain at all. The majority of us just comprehend how something works, not why it does it, and the more something is familiar to us, the more we think we understand it.

Also, if we are given a lot of knowledge about something, we mistakenly think we comprehend it.

For instance, participants chose to invest in mutual fund A or mutual fund B in one research by behavioral economist Richard Thaler. Participants in the trial, which mimicked 25 years, got updates on the performance of the funds every month, every year, or every five years. They had the choice to modify their investments at each of these points. It seems to reason that the more updates, the better. Wrong! Because they had a longer-term perspective on their investment, those who received updates every five years had returns that were more than twice as high. Those who received updates every month, on the other hand, changed their assets more often and as a result, missed out on long-term profits.

This demonstrates that having more knowledge doesn't always lead to improved comprehension and may make things more confusing.

Chapter 6 - We believe false connections and causes exist.

The saying "one thing leads to another" is one we hear frequently, but is it true? It doesn't, but since narratives and consequences are so deeply embedded in human civilization, we frequently think it does.

One widespread misconception that best illustrates this is the idea that youths who listen to sexually explicit song lyrics are more likely to engage in hazardous sexual conduct. This assertion is unsupported by scientific studies.

We have a propensity to find relationships even when none exist.

Humans use patterns to attempt to make sense of the world, yet frequently these patterns are false. For instance, psychologist Amos Tversky and Dr. Donald Redelmeier requested arthritis patients to record their pain levels each day to test the widely held theory that the weather affects arthritis pain. There was no connection between the stated pain levels and the weather they saw that day.

So they decided to do a second experiment on undergraduate students, asking them to look for any patterns in a set of pain levels that were randomly matched to meteorological data. It's interesting to see that 87 percent of them did discover correlations. Why? Because they focused on the information that confirmed their previous assumption that the relationship between weather and arthritis pain existed.

What other domains do we discover false connections in then?

We frequently assume that one item caused the other when two things occur at once. Think about the age-old paradox where high ice cream sales coincide with high drowning rates. What causes what other? No, but hot summers are to blame for both of them: ice cream is merely a nice way to cool down in hot weather, while drowning is a sad phenomenon that has a better potential of occurring when more people feel like swimming.

Chapter 7 - We think that potential is an illusion that can be awakened with ease.

You might be a renowned artist or as smart as Albert Einstein if you weren't always connected to Facebook, right? Well, maybe not.

In reality, we tend to believe that our brains are far more capable than they are. For example, we knowingly spread the myth that we only employ 10% of our brain's potential. Is this, however, the case?

Since it's impossible to estimate our whole brain capacity, if we only used 10% of it, the rest would wither and die, rendering us 90% brain dead. What use would such vast, mainly empty brain cases serve even if this were the case? Women should avoid giving birth because of the size of the baby's skull. The hazards associated with delivery defy evolutionary logic if those skulls contain 90 percent useless gray tissue. And yet, according to a poll the authors performed, 72% of people still believe that 90% of their brains are inactive!

We not only believe we have untapped potential, but we also believe it is within our reach.

One illustration of this is the so-called Mozart effect, which, according to physics professor Gordon Shaw, claims that since the structure of Mozart's music mirrors that of the human brain, listening to it makes us smarter.

In an experiment conducted by Shaw, some participants sat in quiet for 10 minutes while others listened to light music. They later tested their cognitive abilities to determine how they affected their IQ. Those who listened to Mozart had IQ scores that were eight to nine points higher. The Mozart effect, however, has not been confirmed by any of the researchers who have sought to repeat the experiment after that one.

Nevertheless, in the research the authors performed, more than 40% of participants thought that Mozart was an IQ booster.

The Invisible Gorilla: And Other Ways Our Intuitions Deceive Us by Christopher Chabris, Daniel Simons Book Review

We shouldn't always rely on our intuition and the cognitive processes that underlie it. The truth is that we overestimate our attentiveness and intelligence and think there is a lot more correlation in the universe than there is.

Be selective in your search.

You risk missing things that you would normally observe while you're concentrating on one item in particular. This can occasionally result in something lovely or humorous, but it can also be quite expensive, especially if you're driving.

The next time you go someplace, there's a good chance you won't spot any motorbikes, bicycles, or pedestrians since you've been conditioned to look out for other vehicles. Therefore, being more conscious of your surroundings and preparing for the unexpected truly pays off.

Even in business, concentrating too intently on one item may cause you to overlook the fantastic chances that are immediately available.

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