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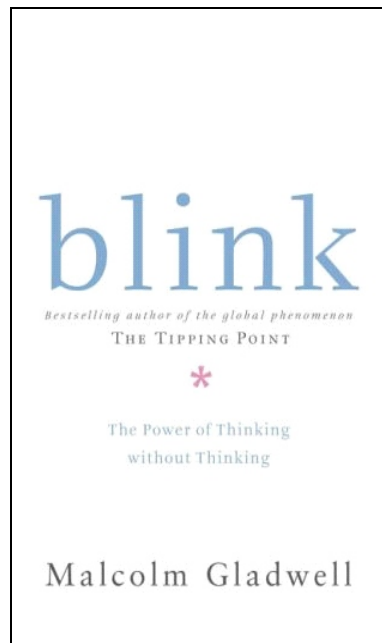
The Power of Thinking Without Really Thinking

By Malcolm Gladwell; Allen Lane, 2005

Have you ever met someone for the very first time and felt an instant connection? Have you ever been presented with an idea or a business concept that you instantly knew would fail? Are there instances when at a glance, you can immediately tell if something would work or not?

Author Malcolm Gladwell urges you to embrace the unconscious hints, decisions and impressions your brain is sending. Through this book, you will realize that first impressions and snap judgments can be educated and controlled - and when used correctly, can even help you in making the right decisions in life.

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About the Author/s:



Malcolm Gladwell has been a staff writer with The New Yorker magazine since 1996. His 1999 profile of Ron Popeil won a National Magazine Award, and in 2005 he was named one of Time Magazine's 100 Most Influential People. He is the author of two books, *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Make a Big Difference*, (2000) and *Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking* (2005), both of which were number one New York Times bestsellers.

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The Theory of Thin Slices: How a Little Bit of Knowledge Goes a Long Way

Thin slicing refers to the ability of the unconscious mind to find patterns in situations and behavior based on very thin slices of experiences. It is about the gut feeling you may have upon meeting someone, or that hunch you strongly feel when observing or learning something for the first time.

It is through thin slicing that Dr. John Gottman can accurately predict how a marriage will likely turn out merely by observing a few minutes of a couple's conversation or a few hours of their interaction.

According to Dr. Gottman, it is easy to spot a pattern in how a person talks or how a couple interacts. Although these small nuances are not explicit, they are there. And knowing how to look for them can give you hints on the outcome of a conversation, deal, friendship or partnership.

fact, some of these thoughts and decisions occur in your unconsciousness. When this happens, it takes some time for your "conscious brain" to realize the significance of the snap decisions.

It is important to remember that snap thoughts and feelings bubble up from the unconscious. These fleeting thoughts and decisions rely on the thinnest slices of experience and take place behind "locked doors". In other words, they take place beyond your consciousness and are often times difficult to explain.

You have to realize that you have two minds - the conscious and the unconscious. In the event that your conscious mind is blocked or stumped, your unconscious is scanning the room, shifting through possibilities and processing every possible clue. Your unconscious mind will then guide you, silently and surely, to the solution.

The Locked Door: The Secret Life of Snap Decisions

Snap thoughts and decisions happen so quickly that you are sometimes not aware of them. In

The Warren Harding Error: Why We Fall For Tall, Dark and Handsome Men

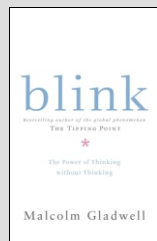
The Dark Side of Thin Slicing

Thin slicing can be a powerful tool if you look beyond the surface and process information correctly. Unfortunately, there is a dark side to quick cognition - The Warren Harding Error. It is important to remember that even if thin slicing does help in making correct decision, it can also lead a person astray.

The Implicit Association Test (IAT)

The Implicit Association Test (IAT) was developed by Anthony G. Greenwald, Mahzarin Banaji and Brian Nosek. The IAT measures a person's attitude on an unconscious level, or

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the immediate and automatic associations that occur even before a person has time to think.

According to the test results, unconscious attitudes may be totally different or incompatible with conscious values. This means that attitudes towards things like race or gender operates on two levels:

1. Conscious level - attitudes which are our stated values and which are used to direct behavior deliberately.
2. Unconscious level - the immediate, automatic associations that tumble out before you have time to think.

Clearly, this shows that aside from being a measurement of attitudes, the IAT can be a powerful predictor of how one can act on certain kinds of spontaneous situations.

The Warren Harding Error

Most people are prone to commit the Warren Harding Error. They see someone (or something) and somehow they allow their first impressions to hide or obscure pieces of information other than what is initially seen.

To lessen the chances of committing the Warren Harding Error, you have to fight against basing your actions and impressions solely on physical appearance. Always remember that first impressions are generated by your experiences and the environment. This means that you can change your first impressions by changing the experiences that comprise these impressions.

To take rapid cognition seriously, you must acknowledge the incredible power that first impressions have in your life. You must take active steps to manage and control these impressions.

Paul Van Riper's Bog Victory: Creating Structure for Spontaneity

A long time ago, Paul Van Riper, a retired Marine that served the Vietnam War, was approached by a group of senior Pentagon Officials to take part in the war game called Millennium Challenge '02.

The stated purpose of Millennium Challenge '02 was for the Pentagon to test a set of new and quite radical ideas on battle warfare. In the war games scenario, Van Riper was asked to play the rouge commander of the red team. The United States and its allies are always known as the blue team and the enemies as the red team.

The war game was not just a battle between two armies. The war game was a battle between two perfectly opposed military philosophies. The Blue team had their databases, matrixes, and methodologies for systematically understanding the intentions and capabilities of the enemy. The Red team, on the other hand, was led by a man who is known for making instant decisions and not playing by the rules.

On the day of the "war", the Blue team acted like clockwork using their matrixes and databases to attack the Red team and render them totally defenseless. The Blue Team acted with total confidence that their Operational Net Assessment matrixes were accurate in detecting Red's vulnerabilities and movements. But Van Riper's team caught them completely by surprise and did not behave like what the computer predicted.

At the end of the game, the Blue team lost half of their troops.

The Perils of Introspection

Van Riper's team won because it acted in a way that caught the other team by surprise. The team acted on instinct and improvisation and did not



waste time discussing and gathering information.

Instead, the team relied on the wisdom, the experience and the good judgment of everyone on the team. Van Riper allowed his underlings operate without having to explain themselves constantly, thereby enabling rapid cognition.

The Blue team, on the other hand, had long discussions. The Blue team was so focused on the mechanics and the processes that they never looked at the problem holistically.

When Less is More

Remember that sometimes extra information is not helpful at all. Sometimes too much information confuses rather than helps when finding a solution or making a decision.

Truly successful decision making relies on a balance between deliberate and instructive thinking. Deliberate thinking is a wonderful tool when you have the luxury of time and a clearly defined task.

In good decision making, as well as in making snap judgments, less is more. Overloading the decision makers with too much data and information makes decision-making harder and not easier.

Kenna's Dilemma: The Right - and Wrong Way to Ask People What They Want

The rock musician known as Kenna is an example of the sort of person who is constantly at odds with your expectations. This is reflected by his songs (which are hard to classify) and his career (which was difficult to launch).

People who truly know music love him. They hear one of his songs and in a blink of an eye, their instinct tells them that he is the kind of artist whom other people are going to like. But this is where the problem comes in. Whenever there is

an attempt to verify this instinct, such as a market survey or research, the results turn out to be disappointing.

What seems to be the problem?

Sensation Transference

Sensation Transference is a concept created by Louis Cheskin, one of the greatest figures in 20th century marketing. Cheskin was certain that when people provide assessments of something they might buy in a supermarket or a department store, they unconsciously transfer sensations or impressions they have about the packaging of the product or the product itself.

Cheskin believed that most don't make a distinction - on an unconscious level - between the package and the product. The product is the

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From 1987 to 1996, he was a reporter with the Washington Post, where he covered business, science, and then served as the newspaper's New York City bureau chief. He graduated from the University of Toronto, Trinity College, with a degree in history. He was born in England, grew up in rural Ontario, and now lives in New York City.

To know more about the author, go to: http://www.bookbrowse.com/biographies/index.cfm?author_number=392



package and the product combined.

The “New Coke” Fiasco

The Coca-Cola Company came out with “New Coke” in the 1980s as a response to the Pepsi commercial known as “The Pepsi Challenge”. In this commercial, dedicated cola drinkers were asked to take a sip from two glasses, one marked Q and one marked M. The sip test revealed that most prefer the sweeter taste of Pepsi. When Coca-Cola conducted its own market research, they came up with the same results.

The Coca-Cola Company then launched a new and improved cola marketed as “New Coke”. Market research revealed that the taste was much preferred over the old Coke - but the new product failed. Coke drinkers protested and the company was plunged into a crisis and was forced to bring back the old formula.

Coca-Cola's error is that they placed too much emphasis on the sip tests without realizing that the entire principle of a blind taste test was ridiculous because in the real world, no one ever drinks Coca-cola blindfolded.

It is important to realize that when making a decision, people not only rely on sensory elements such as touch, taste, smell, and sound, but also sight, memory and the imagination. Thin slicing is done in context of an experience or observation that is reinforced in numerous activities and occasions.

Market Research

Executives and decision-makers like market research because it provides certainty. Market research is a score or a prediction that executives can point to if someone asks why he made that decision was made.

Unfortunately, few realize that in making the most important decisions, there can be no certainty. This is the reason why musician Kenna did badly when he was subjected to market research. His music was new and

different, and being new and different is always vulnerable to market research.

The Gift of Expertise

First impressions vary from one person to another and only people who are experts in their field are able to reliably account for their reactions. These experts can express their first impressions and gut feels more accurately and more extensively.

It does not mean that the reactions of people outside their areas of passion and experience (i.e. not experts in a particular field) are always wrong. It just means that reactions from non-experts are hard to explain and easily disrupted.

Through experience, you can become an expert at using your behavior and training to interpret and decode what lies behind snap judgments and first impressions.

Seven Seconds in the Bronx: The Delicate Art of Mind Reading

Facial expressions assist in making snap judgments and first impressions. If you failure to read and understand facial expressions and rely only on your judgment based on stereotypes, mistakes (fatal or otherwise) can be made.

Mind-reading failures happen to all. They are the cause of numerous arguments, disappointments, disagreements, misunderstandings and hurt feelings. These failures are so immediate and so mysterious that it is difficult to understand them.

The Theory of Mind Reading

The most common and important forms of rapid cognition are the judgments made and impressions from other individuals. When you talk to someone, you look at the person's face (especially the eyes) to judge sincerity. When you meet or talk to someone, you pick up subtle hand and face signals that tell you if the person likes you, and if he is being sincere or otherwise. Looking at a person's face during an interaction is a part of how one “thin slices” other people.



The face is an extremely rich source of information about impressions and is central to understanding on how mind reading works. The face shows signals of what is going on inside the mind of an individual. Emotions can be seen on the face. In fact, it is said that the face is not a secondary billboard in a person's internal feelings but an equal partner in the emotional process.

While many facial expressions can be made voluntarily, some are made involuntarily and are there for just a split-second. Whenever you experience a basic emotion, it is automatically expressed by the muscles on your face, whether voluntary or involuntary.

Practice Makes Perfect

Mind reading, just like the ability to make correct first impressions and snap judgments, is an ability that improves with practice. The ability to extract an enormous amount of meaningful information from the narrowest slice of experience can be done through constant practice, training and expertise.

To a beginner, an incident may have gone in a blur but this isn't so. Every movement - every blink - is made up of a series of distinct moving parts. Every one of those parts offers an opportunity for introspection, for intervention, for reform and for correction.

Taking the power of rapid cognition (i.e. snap judgment, first impression) seriously means that you have to acknowledge the subtle influences that can alter or undermine the products of the unconsciousness. By taking control of the environment in which rapid cognition takes place, you can control rapid cognition and prevent or lessen the mistakes made.

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