Book Review

BLINK – THE POWER OF THINKING WITHOUT THINKING
By Malcolm Gladwell

Book Review Group 15

TEAM LEADER:
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MALCOM GLADWELL

Born 3rd Sept, 1963 in Hampshire United Kingdom

Non fiction writer, Journalist, Cultural Commentator, Intellectual Adventurer

A staff writer with The New Yorker magazine since 1996
NOTABLE WORKS

The Tipping Point

Blink: The Power of Thinking without Thinking

Outliers: The Story of Success

What the Dog Saw: and other adventures

How little things make a big difference
AUTHOR’S STYLE

- Unexpected implications of research in social science
- Extensive use of academic work
- Emphasis on works in sociology, psychology and socio psychology
PURPOSE OF THE BOOK

Real world examples on snap decisions based on instincts

Importance of understanding one’s instincts

Application of one’s instincts in taking quick decisions and removing our biases
What happens to research then?

Snap Decisions

Trust on one’s instincts

Good Decisions???
Blink’s Proposition...For a Different and Better World

Decisions made very quickly can be every bit as good as decisions made cautiously and deliberately.

Our instincts fail us for specific and consistent set of reasons. These reasons can be identified and understood.

The power of knowing, in first two seconds, is not a gift given magically to a fortunate few. It's an ability that we all can cultivate ourselves.
Learning to Blink

Art of Thin Slicing

• Ability of our subconscious to find patterns in situations and behavior based on very narrow slices of experience
• Careful attention for two seconds can tell us an awful lot
Thin Slicing Experiments

The Love Lab Experiment
Will marriage last for 15 years?

Nalini Ambady’s Experiment
Which doctors are sued by patients?
LOCKED DOOR OF OUR UNCONSCIOUSNESS

The way we think and act is lot more susceptible to outside influences

Our unconscious mind can be primed

People are ignorant about the things that affect their actions, yet they rarely feel ignorant
Experiments on Subconsciousness

Bargh Experiment

Priming of Subconsciousness?

Ted Williams

Best Baseball Player
Blinking may lead us astray 😞

Our first impressions are generated by our experiences and environment

Unconscious forms opinions from our experiences

Our unconscious attitudes may have elements of prejudice and discrimination

This influences our behavior in certain spontaneous situations

AND

we may not be aware about it !!!
The state of our subconscious...

IAT Test

Do we have biases?

Warren Harding Error

One of the worst President of American history
Blinking under decisive situations

Decision making relies on balance between deliberate and instinctive thinking.

Frugality of information matters in taking snap decisions.
Snap Decisions provides the edge...

Van Riper

The General who defeated the U.S.A. Army

Cook County’s Experiment

Heart Attack Algorithm
Importance of “Context”

Pepsi vs. Coke

- The New Coke

Kenna’s Album

- Market Research
Blinking can go wrong if...

Wrong context + Snap decisions = Disaster
Blink from mind blindness to mind reading

Mind reading failures lie at root of disagreements, misunderstanding and hurt feelings.

Face signals can be read to understand what is going on inside mind.

Under certain circumstances our mind becomes autistic.

Heart Rate between 115 and 145 beats per minute improves our performance.

Above 175 beats per minute, our cognitive processing breaks down and we become useless!}

When making split decisions, we are vulnerable to being guided by our stereotypes and prejudices.
What happens in 2 seconds ???

Wheeler Avenue Tragedy

Police encounter

FACS

Mind reading
Blink’s role to create an equitable society...

Abbie Conant episode

Classical music revolution

The bubbles coming out from our subconscious can contain elements of prejudice

We can control the environment in which rapid cognition takes place and then, we can control rapid cognition
STRENGTHS OF THE BOOK

• Ventures into a relatively new psychological concept called Adaptive Unconscious.
• Social agenda to correct our prejudices based on past experiences or biased subconscious.
• Introduces concept of “thin-slicing” for taking snap decisions.
• Sources data from varied and diverse fields to give more teeth to his findings.
CRITICAL ANALYSIS

- States the obvious
- Analysis is superficial and cherrypicks examples to suit his theory
- The book gets repetitive and seems to be hovering around only one theme
- Does not give concrete ways to develop or improve our snap judgments
Excellent book to peep into our subconscious thinking

Its applications can lead to creation of a more equitable society

We can become better human beings by becoming more aware about our behaviors

Introduces art of “thin slicing” which Civil Servants should extensively use to become better administrators
THANK YOU