

**Blink** (The Power of Thinking Without Thinking) by **Malcolm Gladwell (Author of The Tipping Point)** Published January 2005

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Much like The Tipping Point this was an interesting, thought provoking and easy to read book. I would recommend it to anyone. Using numerous real-life examples from research, everyday life and history, we learn that making decisions happens instantaneously and often those split-second choices are the best ones. The author's description of Blink an "intellectual adventure story" is an accurate one. Think about—what if you decided who to hire based solely on your first impression?

*Major Theses:*

- We make decisions quickly, often unconsciously, but measurable physiologically, before we even conceive and express it. This is known as the adaptive unconscious—the ability to take information and form an action plan or opinion within two seconds. This is not a gift for a few, but an ability that resides in everyone.
- Our conscious is able to find patterns in situation and behavior based on narrow slices of experience—a phenomenon known as "thin-slicing". By taking a "thin-slice" of interactions between couples, a scientist was able to predict with 95% accuracy whether the couples would still be together in 15 years. What happens when "thin-slicing" doesn't work? What if we make quick decisions based on first impressions that may be affected by visual clues?
- Individuals who have been "primed"—influenced by subtle triggers—will behave differently without realizing the cause. Is it manipulation or motivation to provide opportunities for easy success for individuals prior to taking an assessment knowing that it will statistically improve their test scores?
- Using spontaneity in a structured approach may be more appropriate than lengthy analysis—even in life and death situations, such as war, hospital emergency rooms or diagnosing a patient.
- First impressions can lead us astray. How do we distinguish between impressions based on fear, lack of knowledge or confusion and those based on our real thoughts and feelings? Can we ever block our unconscious reactions and be completely self-aware and "objective" in making initial assessments. What happens when snap judgments lead to taking action that results in harm to others or oneself? Slowing down, even minimally, our first response can improve our ability to make an appropriate decision.

*Implications*

Malcolm Gladwell challenges us to think about snap judgments and rapid cognition in a new light. We've always been told to take time to carefully evaluate all the facts before making a decision, but through stories and examples, we learn that not only is this not necessarily a good practice. We are challenged to think about our biases (we all have them) and how those affect our decisions, our impressions and our behavior. Most importantly, it allows you to open your mind to appreciating the power of blinking.