

0 The Statue that didn't look right

1. Examples
 1. Fake kouros that passed scientific tests, but experts took one glance and thought it was fake. First impressions included "glass separating," "fresh," and "intuitive repulsion."
 2. Gamblers in an experiment subconsciously figured out which decks were better forty draws (as measured by sweaty palms, etc.) before they consciously put their fingers on it.
 3. Nalini Ambady: students who watch 2 seconds of videotape of a professor come to about the same judgment as those who sit in on the class for the whole semester.
1. Thesis: We switch between two ways of thinking, slow (using a lot of information, careful deduction) and fast.
 1. We trust conscious (slow) decision-making more, but **decisions made very quickly can be every bit as good** as decisions made cautiously and deliberately.
 2. But **sometimes our instincts betray us**, especially when we already have emotional attachments or expectations.
 3. Our snap judgments and first impressions can be educated and controlled; it is not a gift given magically to a fortunate few, but **an ability we can all cultivate**.

1 The theory of thin slices: how a little bit of knowledge goes a long way

1. John Gottman gathers data from arguments between couples to predict whether they will divorce within 15 years.
 1. He hooks up sensors to their fingers and ears, how much they jiggle their chairs, and video-record the conversations.
 2. He developed SPAFF to encode all the emotions a couple has during a conversation, ending up with ~900 numbers/person in 15 minutes. Given an hour of talking, he can predict divorce with 95% accuracy.
 3. This is called **thin-slicing**, the ability of our unconscious to find patterns in situations and behavior based on narrow slices of experience.
 4. Marriage counselors guessed right only 53.8% of the time. Gottman has learned to filter out irrelevant data. What's most important is the Four Horsemen: **defensiveness, stonewalling, criticism, and especially contempt**.
 5. But when educated about the emotions and allowed multiple viewings, observers achieved 80% accuracy.
1. Every Morse code operator has a unique signature ("fist"); the British spies could track enemy movements during WWII simply using the intercepted telegrams. They could tell immediately who the telegram was sent by after listening for a few seconds.
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1. **We can understand a person's personality** (as measured by the Big 5 inventory, extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability, and openness to new experiences) **about as well from being in a person's room for 15 minutes as we can talking to regularly seeing**

them for a long time. Looking at the room gives a better picture of conscientiousness, stability, and openness, and a slightly worse picture of the other two.

1. [You learn more about a person from the private rather than the public life?]
2. A person's bedroom gives 3 clues: **identity claims, behavior residue, and thoughts and feeling regulators.**
3. We aren't objective about ourselves (cf. the marriage experiment), hence the carefully designed Big Five inventory.
1. People don't sue doctors they like; they don't sue because they've been harmed; **they sue because they've been harmed and they have a negative impression of their doctor.**
 1. Doctors who haven't been sued spent >3 minutes longer with patients, make orienting comments, engage in active listening, and were more likely to laugh. *They didn't provide more information.*
 2. Nalini Ambady content-filtered the slices to retain only intonation and pitch but not words, did a Gottman-style analysis, and was able to make accurate predictions. Dominant surgeons were sued more than concerned surgeons.
 3. [Gladwell says at the end to listen to the feeling you get when you talk to your doctor--but this is a non-sequitur, because he denied a correlation between doctors getting sued and how well they actually perform.]
1. Different professions have words to describe the gift of reading deeply into narrow slivers.
 1. If we couldn't thin-slice, movies would not be funny and dramatic, basketball would be chaotic, bird-watchers would be helpless.

Profession	Word
Basketball	Court sense
Military	Coup d'oeil
Bird-watching	Giss

2 The Locked Door: The secret life of snap decisions

- While John Gottman and other established psychologists can logically explain how their research works and how they know what they do about the human mind,
 - most of us cannot explain how our subconscious mind works.
1. Our intuition tells us that something is not quite right or tells us that we can trust someone, but we cannot articulate why we think the way we do.
 1. Vic Braden, one of the world's top tennis coaches, discovered that he could predict with impressive accuracy when a tennis player was going to double fault (serve two bad serves in a row), but couldn't figure out how.
 1. We are easily primed without consciously knowing or being able to influence it.
 1. John Bargh's scrambled-sentences test.

2. Students who were asked to think about being a professor vs. think about soccer hooligans got 55.6 vs. 42.6% of Trivial Pursuit questions right. Claudia Steele and Joshua Aronson: When African-American students had to identify their race on a pretest questionnaire, they scored half as well.
3. So why were we programmed to be like this? Consider the sentences test. Your unconscious was simply telling your body: I've picked up some clues that we're in an environment that is really concerned about old age--and let's behave accordingly.
 1. People with damage to their ventromedial area can't make decisions.
1. We can't evaluate our own behavior objectively. In fact, asking them to explain may disrupt the decision mechanism. **The storytelling problem: we're too quick to come up with explanations for things we don't really have an explanation for.**
 1. The correlation between questions lie "how strongly did you cooperate?" and how much people did cooperate was 0.
 2. If we make people fill out a questionnaire asking what they look for in a partner, after a date they change their responses to match the person they liked.
 3. No tennis player is consistent in knowing and explaining what he does. For example, they don't use their wrists to roll the racket over the ball when hitting a forehand.
 4. Norman Maier asked people to find ways to tie the ends of 2 ropes together (originally hanging apart). When Maier brushed one of the ropes they came up with the idea of swinging, but didn't know how they got it. "This is the price for the benefits of the locked door."

3 The Warden Harding Error

1. Appearance or irrelevant features often cause humans to use thin slicing negatively
 1. Hardy looked like a president so got the job, but he was a terrible president.
 2. Initial Association Tests (IATs), which test individuals' association of males and females with careers and home, and Harvard's Race IAT, a computerized test that tests association of blacks/whites with good/bad. Most people more easily group black/bad white/good together. This means we can subconsciously act differently towards whites and blacks, and those small differences have a butterfly effect.
 1. To reverse the results: get a positive association with blacks, ex. in the Olympics.
 3. Most CEO's are tall. "An inch of height is worth \$789/year in salary."
1. We have to learn to *not* pay attention to irrelevant features.
 1. Bob Golomb, a car dealer, is successful by putting on his best face for every customer, and never prejudging their ability to pay. (That's the worst thing to do: there are farmers and high school students who can pay.)
 1. "Take care of the customer."
 2. Experiment (Ian Ayres): All other things equal, how much does skin color or gender affect the price a salesman in a dealership offers? Salesmen made a blanket decision that women and blacks are lay-downs (people who pay sticker price).

Person	White man	White woman	Black woman	Black men
Price above invoice	\$725	\$935	\$1195	\$1687

Bargaining				\$1551
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4 Paul van Riper's Big Victory: Creating Structure for Spontaneity

- Van Rider won the Millennium Challenge military game because he created an environment where rapid cognition was possible--he didn't overanalyze information once the battle started. Communication was limited. (cf. Xiang Yu)
- In improv, characters have to accept everything that happens to them. Don't suppress action. Bad improvisers block action with a high degree of skill. Good improvisers develop action.
- Insight puzzles are harder if you have to explain yourself. (?)
- A fireman called his men to get out of a building seconds before it exploded. He couldn't explain why--he had been interpreting the fire subconsciously (the fire shouldn't have been so hot, it didn't respond to water, it was quiet)
- Brendan Reilly, Cook County Hospital: doctors were terrible on estimating whether a patient was having a heart attack based on ECG readings and medical history, and disagreed wildly. Solution: Lee Goldman worked with mathematicians and found only 3 factors were important. Is the pain unstable angina, is there fluid in lungs, is the systolic bp <100? Nothing else mattered! Accuracy improved from 75-89 to 95%. **We do better by ignoring irrelevant info.** More info makes people falsely confident, but accuracy didn't increase.
- Jams (Sheena Iyengar)

5 Kenna's dilemma: the right - and wrong - way to ask people what they want

- Well known people in the music industry saw Kenna's potential straight away, but did terrible on listener rating tests.
- In blind taste tests, people preferred Pepsi-Coke 57-43%. Coca-Cola rolled out New Coke which scored higher, but it was a disaster. Why?
 - A CLT (central location test) and home use test may be opposite." In a sip test, consumers like sweeter, but not in actual use.
 - No one drinks Coke blind.
- Sensation transference (Louis Cheskin): we transfer impressions about packaging to the product; we don't distinguish between them.
 - Margarine didn't sell until it was colored yellow. Foil helped too.
 - Christian Brothers did better than E&J on blind tests but worse when packaging was there, so they improved the packaging.
 - The closer consumers get to the food, the more they are going to be conservative. Ex. Hector in Boyardee needs to look real, not like a cartoon. Things like a sprig of parsley, glass containers, round ice cream containers, etc. all help.
- It is hard to predict reactions to unfamiliar things. (see 750words)
 - Stumpf made the most ergonomically correct chair, Aeron. It looked terrible and according to surveys it would never sell (people misinterpreted their feelings), until it attracted the attention of cutting-edge elements of the design community. "What once was ugly has become beautiful."

- All in the Family would not have aired if they went by the surveys. It was not traditional: edgy, political, took on social issues. Mary Richards was young, single, and wanted to advance her career.
- With expertise, we can be not influenced by packaging
 - This means the right vocabulary. Ex. rework, ranking foods on color, color intensity, chroma, shine, lumpiness, bubbles, texture on lips, firmness, denseness, aromatics (eggy, mustardy), basic tastes (salty, sour, sweet), chemical (burn, pungent, astringent) on 15-point scale. Slippery, crispiness, etc. Degree-of-difference
 - Most people get a triangle test wrong. It requires being able to articulate the taste, to hold it in your head. **Doing something a lot doesn't make you an expert. Thinking about it does.**

6 Seven seconds in the Bronx: The delicate art of mind reading

Ken Boss, Sean Carroll, Edward McMellon, and Richard Murphy shot (41 times) and killed Amadou Diallo, who was innocent. Why?

1. Carroll decided he looked suspicious at first glance, and interpreted everything later on the basis of that suspicion.
- Most of us can pick up subtle emotional cues from each other's faces subconsciously.
 - Silvan Tomkins was a legendary psychologist who could predict how a horse would do based on its emotional relationship to the horses besides it, or predict the crime from the WANTED posters, or always be right on To Tell the Truth,... Ekman thought there was a **common set of rules to the facial expressions humans made**, and traveled all over the world to prove his point: everyone agreed what photographs meant. Tomkins could infer stuff about remote tribes just by looking at pictures (peaceful vs. violent and homosexual). Ekman realized he had to "unpack the face." They identified 43 action units.
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Facial_Action_Coding_System,
<http://face-and-emotion.com/dataface/facs/manual/TOC.html>,
http://face-and-emotion.com/dataface/facs/new_version.jsp
 - **An expression alone can create marked changes in the autonomic nervous system:** making sad/angry faces makes you feel worse! People who had a pen between their teeth found a cartoon much funnier (because they could laugh) than those with a pen between their lips.
 - Often, suppressed emotions leak out as involuntary responses (**micro expressions**). Faces reveal which emotions are genuine.
 - This isn't necessarily a bad thing [though the bad thing is that not everyone can read it]. "Imagine if there were a switch that all of us had, to turn off the expressions on our face at will. If babies had that switch, we wouldn't know what they were feeling. They'd be in trouble... the system evolved so that parents would be able to take care of kids. Or imagine if you were married to someone with a switch. It would be impossible. I don't think mating and friendships and closeness would occur if our faces didn't work that way."

- Studying the autistic: Ami Klin, on an autistic man; "I could do anything" talking to him and not have the "sense of being scrutinized or monitored." He doesn't contextualize. To work with him, he has to problem-solve. When watching *Who's afraid of Virginia Woolf*,
 - Normal people follow the direction Nick is pointing, alight on the painting, swivel to George's face to get his response, then to Nick's face to see his reaction.
 - Peter looks at Nick's neck, doesn't respond to the pointing (searches the paintings to see which one he means). Peter doesn't look at eyes, he focuses on the light switch. "If you cannot mind-read, there's nothing special to be gained by looking at eyes and faces." Autistic people use the inferior temporal gyrus (normally used for object recognition) for facial recognition. They used people as objects.
- How can we better train people to act well under pressure?
 1. The optimal state of arousal (where stress improves performance) is 115-145 beats per minute. After that the brain shuts down. In many emergencies people have trouble dialing 911 because they freeze up.
 1. High-speed chases are banned because high speed pushes police officers into high arousal.
 2. Training for bodyguards: they get shot with a plastic capsule; they have to learn to act without their heart rate going up too much.
 2. White space (time to act) is important in life-or-death situations. We are temporarily autistic when we run out of time. When asked whether a picture was of a gun or wrench, people mistook it for a gun more when they had less time, and when primed with a black face. People had to be forced to wait a beat before identification.
 1. Thus, cops park behind the car, shine brights directly into the car, walks towards the car on the driver's side, stops and stands just behind, and shines the flashlight over the shoulder onto the lap--so that it's virtually impossible to pull a gun on the cop. *The only way the officer will draw the gun is if the driver engages in a drawn-out and utterly unambiguous sequence of actions.* In Dade County, Florida, Fyfe matched officers' behavior with proper training techniques. They only did the right thing in approach 15% of the time.
 2. Two officers are more likely to have complaints filed against them. When police officers are by themselves they slow things down (and wait for backup); when they are with someone else they speed things up.
 1. People can improve their mind-reading skills with practice: with 30 minutes of practice, people become adept at picking up micro-expressions.[is this a skill that should be more widely taught?]

Conclusion: listening with your eyes: the lessons of Blink

Since screens in auditions became commonplace, the number of women in top US orchestras increased fivefold. *What people thought was a pure and powerful first impression--listening to someone play--was hopelessly corrupted.* People can look like they sound better than they actually sound, because they are confident with good posture; or they can look belabored or awful but sound great. Women were adversely affected by people's expectations that they couldn't perform as well (especially on "manly" instruments). (Example. Abbie Conant) "The only true way to listen is with your ears and your heart." Lessons

1. We are careless with powers of rapid cognition; we don't appreciate the fragility of first impressions. We need to acknowledge this to make ourselves ignore confounding data.
1. By controlling the environment in which rapid cognition takes place, we can control it.
 1. Thomas Hoving: "If I was coming to see a work of art, I used to ask dealers to put a black cloth over it, and then whip it off when I walked in, and bam, so I could have total concentration on that particular thing."

<http://www.ethicaladvisor.com/pdf/books/20110621093846771.pdf>

<http://gladwell.com/blink/blink-reading-guide-chapter-one/>

<http://brandgenetics.com/blink-speed-summary-the-power-of-thinking-without-thinking/>

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blink_\(book\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blink_(book))

Other summaries

Malcolm Gladwell's *Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking* is his second work. It follows his bestselling *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference*. First published in 2005, *Blink* explores the connection between cutting-edge psychological and neurological research and human intuition. Whereas *The Tipping Point* establishes the effect of other humans and the outside world on people's decisions and social trends, Gladwell uses *Blink* to demonstrate how someone's inner self or subconscious effects his or her decisions.

Introduction: The Statue That Didn't Look Right

Gladwell's introduction to *Blink* presents the example of the J. Paul Getty Museum's purchase of a statue that turned out to be a forgery. The Getty was approached by an art dealer in 1983 who claimed to have a sixth century B.C. Greek statue for sale—a kouros. Although officials at the museum were somewhat suspicious initially, they decided to purchase the statue after a 14-month investigation. The investigation included using core samples from the statue to test its age, background checks into the documentation of the statue's former owners, and even tests by sculpture experts in Athens. In 1986, satisfied that the kouros was an original, the Getty put it on display. Unfortunately, once the sculpture went on display, experts began expressing doubts about its authenticity. First an Italian art historian, Federico Zeri, observed that the statue's fingernails "seemed wrong to him." He could not articulate why they looked wrong, but he had a bad feeling about the kouros. After several other art experts experienced similar doubts, the Getty initiated further investigation into the sculpture's origin and discovered that it possibly could be a reproduction. Parts of the sculpture fit into different time periods, and forensic research revealed that a good forgery could pass a core sample test if the statue were soaked in potato mold. The end result is that the statue remains on display, but its placard reads, "About 350 BC, or modern forgery." Throughout the rest of *Blink*, Gladwell refers back to this introductory example to explain why some of the experts knew upon first glance at the statue that something was wrong.

Chapter 1: The Theory of Thin Slices: How a Little Bit of Knowledge Goes a Long Way

Chapter 1 introduces the idea of "thin slicing"—taking minute details about someone or something and using that thin slice to develop a larger opinion of him, her, or it. The chapter focuses mostly on the research of psychologist John Gottman from the University of Washington. Gottman has established the reputation of being able to determine with a 90% accuracy rate whether a marriage will endure. He does so by observing the couple for 15 minutes or less. He has trained assistants in his Love Lab to quickly code facial expressions and tones to determine the underlying messages that spouses send to one another.

The couples, of course, send their messages of contempt, anger, disgust, defensiveness, or neutrality subconsciously; so Gottman and his assistants do not study the couples' words nearly as much as they do their reactions and gestures. Gottman's research is significant because it establishes the idea that humans do not need to know a great deal about someone else to determine that person's personality. Gladwell offers other examples of effective thin slicing in this chapter, such as strangers rather than friends being able to more accurately identify someone's personality based on a 15-minute look at his or her dorm room.

Chapter 2: The Locked Door: The Secret Life of Snap Decisions

While John Gottman and other established psychologists can logically explain how their research works and how they know what they do about the human mind, Chapter 2 explains why most of us cannot explain how our subconscious mind works. Gladwell notes that many humans are similar to the art experts in the book's introduction: our intuition tells us that something is not quite right or tells us that we can trust someone, but we cannot articulate why we think the way we do. The author offers the example of Vic Braden, one of the world's top tennis coaches, who discovered that he could predict with impressive accuracy when a tennis player was going to double fault (serve two bad serves in a row). Braden would watch matches and think to himself, "She's going to double fault," as the player began her serve. Interestingly enough, Braden was tortured by the fact that he could not identify how he was so accurately predicting the poor serves. He tried thinking about his thinking but was at a loss as to how to explain his hunches to others.

Similarly, Gladwell explores speed dating in this chapter and notes that most humans consciously describe the qualities that they are looking for in a partner but then end up choosing to date or being attracted to someone who does not possess any of the listed attributes. Again, when asked by the researchers who oversaw the speed dating research, participants could not consciously state why they were intuitively drawn to people who did not fit their lists.

Chapter 3: The Warren Harding Error: Why We Fall for Tall, Dark, and Handsome Men

Although Harding's name appears in the chapter's title, he is not its main focus. Gladwell simply uses him at the beginning to demonstrate that appearance or irrelevant features often cause humans to use thin slicing negatively. In Harding's case, even though he was not particularly intelligent or moral, he was able to get elected because "he looked Presidential." Harding served only two years in office (he died from a stroke), yet he has been noted by many historians as one of the worst presidents in American history. Gladwell uses this "first impression" example as a starting point for discussing gender and race biases. He includes several Initial Association Tests (IATs), which test individuals' association of males and females with careers and home, and then he discusses Harvard's Race IAT, a computerized test that requires participants to match photos of European Americans...