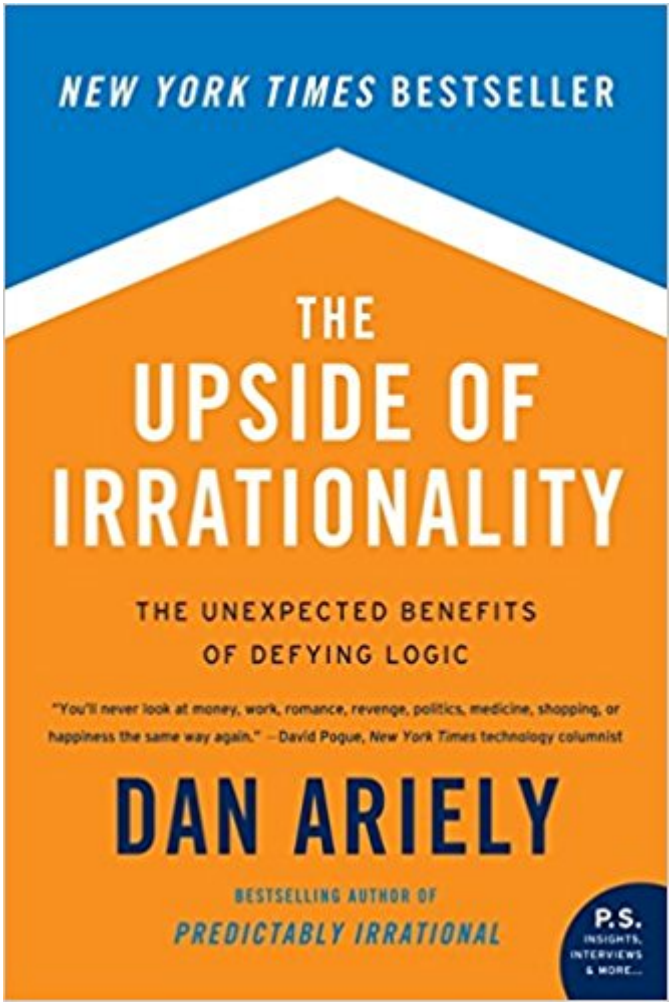
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The Upside Of Irrationality: The Unexpected Benefits Of Defying Logic



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Synopsis

Ã¢â ¬Å“Dan Ariely is a genius at understanding human behavior: no economist does a better job of uncovering and explaining the hidden reasons for the weird ways we act.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â • James Surowiecki, author of The Wisdom of Crowds Behavioral economist and New York Times bestselling author of Predictably Irrational Dan Ariely returns to offer a much-needed take on the irrational decisions that influence our dating lives, our workplace experiences, and our temptation to cheat in any and all areas. Fans of Freakonomics, Survival of the Sickest, and Malcolm GladwellÃ¢â ¬â„¢s Blink and The Tipping Point will find many thought-provoking insights in The Upside of Irrationality.

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Customer Reviews

Ariely (Predictably Irrational) expands his research on behavioral economics to offer a more positive and personal take on human irrationality's implications for life, business, and public policy. After a youthful accident left him badly scarred and facing grueling physical therapy, Ariely's treatment required him to accept temporary pain for long-term benefitÃ¢â ¬â •a trade-off so antithetical to normal human behavior that it sparked the author's fascination with why we consistently fail to act in our own best interest. The author, professor of behavioral economics at Duke, leads us through experiments that reveals such idiosyncrasies as the IKEA effect (if you build something, pride and sentimental attachment are likely to give you an inflated sense of its quality) and the Baby Jessica effect (why we respond to one person's suffering but not to the suffering of many). He concludes

with prescriptions for how to make real personal and societal changes, and what behavioral patterns we must identify to improve how we love, live, work, innovate, manage, and govern.
Self-deprecating humor, an enthusiasm for human eccentricities, and an affable and snappy style make this read an enriching and eye-opening pleasure. (June) Copyright Ã Â© Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

In Predictably Irrational (2008), Ariely explored the reasons why human beings frequently put aside common sense and why bad things often happen when they do. Here, in this equally entertaining and clever follow-up, Ariely shows us the other side of the irrationality coin: the beneficial outcomes and pleasant surprises that often arise from irrational behavior. Although pleasant should be taken as a relative term, since the outcomes are not necessarily pleasant for the person who was behaving irrationally. Take, for example, Thomas EdisonÃ¢â ¬â„¢s obsession with DC current, and his irrational hatred of AC: trying to prove how dangerous AC was, he inadvertentlyÃ¢â ¬â •with his development of the electric chairÃ¢â ¬â •demonstrated to the world how powerful it could be. Ariely is an engaging and efficient writer, amusing us with stories about irrational behavior while staying away from needless technical terminology and bafflegab. Thought-provoking, entertaining, and smart: a winning combination. --David Pitt --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Of the three books by this author that I have read (the other two are on irrationality being predictable and on dishonesty), this is by far the most interesting, notwithstanding that its presentation is rather less organised in parts.The first half of the book covers motivation and incentives at work. Description of experiments is vivid, often presented from the perspective of the subjects in the experiments (ie rats and humans). The findings indeed provide useful lessons for employers, supervisors, as well as government. It is also a joy to read.The second half covers the author's personal reflection and observation, as well as experiments to look into a mishmash of issues, such as revenge, online dating, adaptation to change, etc. The discussion is still interesting and enlightening. However, there is a tendency to be too brief on the statistical outcome of experiments. For example, instead of stating the proportion of subjects who responded in a certain manner, the author strays into using 'most' or 'many' in describing such proportions. I suspect that some of the experiments were performed some time ago, and it may be too cumbersome for the author to look up the actual data of these dated experiments. As such, his discussion appears rather less

convincing.In all, the book provides important lessons on the psychology of decisions. It also gives a reflective account of the personal pain that the author has suffered since sustaining horrific injuries as a teenager. A touching and instructive book.

I've often wondered why I can listen to a song only a certain number of times before I'm sick of it. If I like the song the first time I hear it, that only means that I'll get tired of it sooner. But the ones I begin to like around the sixth or seventh listen, the ones that grow on me, those are the best ones. But my enjoyment if them still eventually wears thin and I have to find some new music. Now I know what that's called - hedonic adaptation. It's why we stop loving that new car as soon as the new car smell is gone, and why we get used to new jobs, relationships and whatnot. It also works in reverse - you can get used to negative experiences like incarceration (from my experience, I can tell you that it's nightmarish at first, but eventually you get used to it; it becomes bearable). I once heard that a miserable person who wins the lottery will still be miserable a year later, and a happy person who becomes a paraplegic will still be happy a year later. In "The Upside of Irrationality" by Dan Ariely, I read that someone actually did perform a study on hedonic adaptation using lottery winners and paraplegics. They found that both groups were close to normal levels of life satisfaction a year later, and that such life-altering events do have a huge impact on happiness at first, but the effect usually wears off over time. So what do we do? Do we spend our lives on the "hedonic treadmill" chasing illusions of happiness? Do we even know what will truly make us happy? Is it a new car, a new house, a new job, a new lover? A new song?Review Written by David Allan ReevesAuthor of "Running Away From Me"

Ariely writes about behavioral economics: "We don't assume that people are perfectly sensible, calculating machines. Instead, we observe how people actually behave, and quite often our observations lead us to the conclusion that human beings are irrational."No one ever admits to being irrational, yet we frequently witness irrational behavior in others. After reading the book, I'll have to begrudgingly admit that I'm not perfectly rational either !Throughout the 11 chapters of the book, various premises are tested by designing some easy to measure field tests which challenge our assumptions about behavior. The book is segregated into two sections - the first on "Ways we Defy Logic at Work" (Chapters 1 through 5) and "Ways We Defy Logic at Home" (Chapters 6 through 10).In Chapter 1, Ariely discusses the banking meltdown of 2008 and posits that huge bonuses don't work to incent better performance. There is plenty of actual and anecdotal evidence to support this idea. In Chapter 2, he discusses various situations and experiments that

demonstrate how important it is to each of us to imbue meaning in our work and to have meaningful work. There is a deep interconnection between identity and labor. Chapter 3, "The Ikea Effect" describes why we are so much more attached to things that we helped to produce, rather than things we did not have a hand in - "labor begets love". The NIH (not invented here) syndrome is discussed in Chapter 4. The NIH factor is called the "toothbrush theory" - everyone wants one, everyone needs one, everyone has one, but no one wants to use anyone else's. Chapter 5 discusses the irrational behavior of revenge which is one of the deepest-seated instincts we have. Ariely wrote: "The threat of revenge can serve as an effective enforcement mechanism that supports social cooperation and order."In Part II (defying logic at home), there are some very interesting chapters on adaptation - how we get used to things and rationalize both bad and good situations. The chapters on dating and online dating are quite fascinating. Chapters 9 and 10 cover empathy and emotion and why we are more motivated to donate to a single suffering individual than to a larger cause by which thousands or millions of people are affected.The final chapter summarizes and encourages us to recognize the upside of irrationality: "some of the ways in which we are irrational are also what makes us wonderfully human.""The Upside of Irrationality" is a very thought-provoking book written by a believable and articulate professional. Ariely has a very personal style, incorporating many incidents from his own life and his struggles with debilitating burn injuries in his youth that altered the course of his life and certainly affected his point of view. I highlighted many passages in my Kindle and suspect that I will be picking up this book again from time to time to reread the highlights.

Dan Ariely always does the most fascinating research and tells the story in the most entertaining way, one can't help but enjoy reading his work and listening to his TED talks and lectures. The Upside to Irrationality is no different. A great look at how people actually make decisions, from who they date, to how they make money, the implications of Ariely's research is profound and obvious. A terrific book for anyone who interacts with people.

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