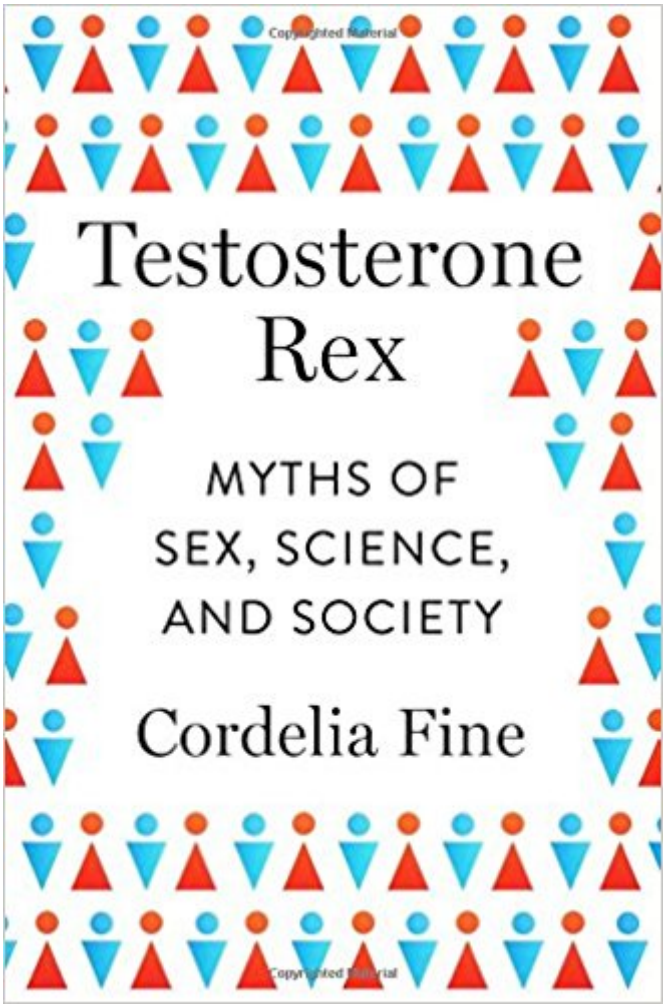
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Testosterone Rex: Myths Of Sex, Science, And Society



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Synopsis

Ã¢â ¬Å“Goodbye, beliefs in sex differences disguised as evolutionary facts. Welcome the dragon slayer: Cordelia Fine wittily but meticulously lays bare the irrational arguments that we use to justify gender politics.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â ¢Uta Frith, emeritus professor of cognitive development, University College LondonMany people believe that, at its core, biological sex is a fundamental, diverging force in human development. According to this overly familiar story, differences between the sexes are shaped by past evolutionary pressuresÃ¢â ¬â ¢women are more cautious and parenting-focused, while men seek status to attract more mates. In each succeeding generation, sex hormones and male and female brains are thought to continue to reinforce these unbreachable distinctions, making for entrenched inequalities in modern society.In Testosterone Rex, psychologist Cordelia Fine wittily explains why past and present sex roles are only serving suggestions for the future, revealing a much more dynamic situation through an entertaining and well-documented exploration of the latest research that draws on evolutionary science, psychology, neuroscience, endocrinology, and philosophy. She uses stories from daily life, scientific research, and common sense to break through the din of cultural assumptions. Testosterone, for instance, is not the potent hormonal essence of masculinity; the presumed, built-in preferences of each sex, from toys to financial risk taking, are turned on their heads.Moving beyond the old Ã¢â ¬Å“nature versus nurtureÃ¢â ¬Â• debates, Testosterone Rex disproves ingrained myths and calls for a more equal society based on both sexesÃ¢â ¬â„¢ full, human potential.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

An Best Book of January 2017: Fine knocks it out of the park with her smart and eye-opening investigation into why we give credit to (or blame) testosterone for so many behaviors. With a writing style that reminds me of Mary Roach and her gift for seeking out the ridiculous, Fine puts under the microscope our assumption that testosterone is the wonder hormone that makes men risk takers and competitive and, in its absence, women less so. This might sound like heavy stuffÃ¢â ¬â •like the gender studies classes I avoided in collegeÃ¢â ¬â •but Fine invites you to laugh with her as she punctures outdated notions and points out obvious weaknesses in the mighty social (not scientific) barricade of sex-specific dogma and the daily throwaway comments that carelessly reinforces that wall. After reading Testosterone Rex, my new resolution is to never say "Boys will be boys" again. Because while boys are, of course, boys, we owe it to themÃ¢â ¬â •and to girlsÃ¢â ¬â •to understand that they are not defined by this single hormone. Ã¢â ¬â •Adrian Liang, The Book Review

Ã¢â ¬Å“FineÃ¢â ¬â„¢s funny, spiky book gives reason to hope that weÃ¢â ¬â„¢ve heard Testosterone rexÃ¢â ¬â„¢s last roar.Ã¢â ¬Â• - Annie Murphy Paul, New York Times Book ReviewÃ¢â ¬Å“Fascinating [and] bold. . . . Fine has written a book thatÃ¢â ¬â„¢s not only well-researched and convincing but also . . . delightfully humorous.Ã¢â ¬Â• - Barbara J. King, NPRÃ¢â ¬Å“In this witty corrective, psychologist Cordelia Fine examines the fraying Ã¢â ¬Å“biological big pictureÃ¢â ¬Â• of sexual selection, and corrals findings in evolutionary science, neuroscience and endocrinology to add nuance to it.Ã¢â ¬Â• - Barbara Kiser, Nature, Ã¢â ¬Å“Best Science PicksÃ¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬Å“The expression Ã¢â ¬Ëœessential reading for everyoneÃ¢â ¬â„¢ is usually untrue as well as a clichÃƒÂ©, but if there were a book deserving of that description this might just be it.Ã¢â ¬Â• - Antonia Macaro, Financial TimesÃ¢â ¬Å“In addition to being hopeful, Fine is also angry. We should all be angry. Testosterone Rex is a debunking rumble that ought to inspire a roar.Ã¢â ¬Â• - The GuardianÃ¢â ¬Å“[Fine] convincingly and entertainingly demonstrates that, despite stereotypes, such characteristics as risk-taking, competitiveness and nurturing are not Ã¢â ¬Å“essentialÃ¢â ¬Â• to one sex over the other and cannot be blamed for the lack of equality between males and females in contemporary society.Ã¢â ¬Â• - Clara Moskowitz, Scientific AmericanÃ¢â ¬Å“Cordelia FineÃ¢â ¬â„¢s Testosterone Rex: Myths of Sex, Science, and Society does the public service of deconstructing the biological and societal tenets on which the continued inequality of the sexes is largely founded. . . . Using humor and her uniquely accessible academic writing style, . . . [Fine disrupts] what we think we know about gender difference.Ã¢â ¬Â• - Katie Klabusich, RewireÃ¢â ¬Å“A provocative and

often fascinating book.Ã¢â ¬Â• - The Economist

I remember as a graduate student in the early 1990s when the framework for the study of human nature shifted from nature vs. nurture (i.e., genes vs. environment) to the interaction between genes and the environment. Unfortunately, many people have not made that shift and are still left with simplistic ideas about the sexes, such as that males are invariably promiscuous risk takers while females are coy risk avoiders, although even Richard Dawkins' _Selfish Gene_ (1976) showed that there were multiple successful strategies for males, ranging from indiscriminate promiscuity to picky pair-bonding.Contrary to what some faux reviewers say, Fine does not believe there are no psychological differences between the sexes. What she believes, and demonstrates, is that stereotypically male or female behaviors are not automatic or invariant. For example, the amount of nurturing that males do, or the sexual behavior of females, varies by species, circumstance, and, in the case of human beings, culture. Rather that being the prime mover behind male behavior, the production of testosterone (among other hormones) is affected by the environment. For example, putting a male cichlid fish, in a tank with larger males, or having a human father spend time with his newborn child, causes testosterone levels to go down.This book is a good way for a reader to get up to date on what empirical evolutionary psychology shows, rather than what simplistic models predict, about sex-linked behavior.

I found this book interesting and well-written. Challenges the knee-jerk response to blame testosterone for all conceived differences between men and women's personalities and skills. Personally, I think that her other book, "Delusions of Gender", was much stronger and well-written, but this one was worth the money as well. However, if you are torn between buying "Testosterone Rex" and "Delusions of Gender", buy "Delusions of Gender"! It's one of those books everyone should read.

This is a much-needed review of the outdated scientific interpretations of the role of testosterone on behavior. From the earliest experiments, Fine shows how value-laden and culturally reinforcing many of these "scientific" experiments are. To sum up a wonderfully entertaining and thorough investigation of the history of sex hormone research Fine points out that the current agreed upon model is that behavior influences hormones more than hormones influence behavior. There are many studies that now show how testosterone increases when people are put in stressful situations or positions of power. And equally how testosterone decreases when people are given infants to

take care of. It blows out of the water the boys-will-be-boys model where testosterone has been blamed (or praised) for making men: logical, assertive, aggressive, risk-takers and just generally better suited to high-status positions like finance, higher mathematics, and science, fighting and sports. One particularly interesting example is a testosterone test on men who had just competed in elite international athletic competitions - several of the men had levels BELOW the normal reference range. Moreover, these are TOP competing athletes. The book is extremely compelling and should be required reading for parents, teachers, politicians, religious leaders (honestly everybody) or anybody who has a role in legislating or shaping the gendered experiences of people.

I found this book extremely well written and the author supports her assertion with well-documented evidence. I so much appreciated how much our developmental context has to do with with how our sex identity is expressed in behavior and brains. We do not have to choose between the influence of biology and society--both go to explaining how we express our sex identity. She does not make the reader select from a simplistic and inaccurate binary. I reach a course titled Justice and Difference and will probably be incorporating some Fine's material in my course. I also appreciated her sense of humor that is displayed in the book

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