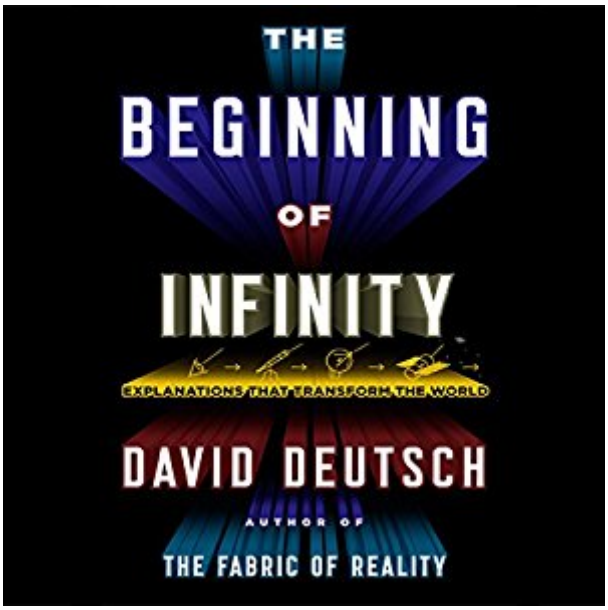
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The Beginning Of Infinity: Explanations That Transform The World



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Synopsis

A bold and all-embracing exploration of the nature and progress of knowledge from one of today's great thinkers. Throughout history, mankind has struggled to understand life's mysteries, from the mundane to the seemingly miraculous. In this important new book, David Deutsch, an award-winning pioneer in the field of quantum computation, argues that explanations have a fundamental place in the universe. They have unlimited scope and power to cause change, and the quest to improve them is the basic regulating principle not only of science but of all successful human endeavor. This stream of ever improving explanations has infinite reach, according to Deutsch: we are subject only to the laws of physics, and they impose no upper boundary to what we can eventually understand, control, and achieve. In his previous book, The Fabric of Reality, Deutsch describe the four deepest strands of existing knowledge-the theories of evolution, quantum physics, knowledge, and computation-arguing jointly they reveal a unified fabric of reality. In this new book, he applies that worldview to a wide range of issues and unsolved problems, from creativity and free will to the origin and future of the human species. Filled with startling new conclusions about human choice, optimism, scientific explanation, and the evolution of culture, The Beginning of Infinity is a groundbreaking audio book that will become a classic of its kind.

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Customer Reviews

Dr. Deutsch is an extremely intelligent person, well versed not on science and philosophy, but in almost all facets of Western culture. He uses this knowledge wisely to bring forward his

explanations (a term one finds central to this book) of how the Universe works. He’s also an optimist and sees the emergence of intelligence as the take off point towards infinity. In this case "infinity" means the very long road that the Universe itself is beginning to take in order to know itself. And that’s an amazing fact in itself, that the Universe, in its eternal process of emergence of things more interesting and complex at each turn, emerges conscience/intelligence, a property which can begin to understand the Universe itself.The book is sometimes heavy because of its high density of ideas/page (a measure of how much attention you have to pay if you want to follow it). I think sometimes Dr. Deutsch goes a bit on a limb on certain topics that he cannot be an expert on, for nobody is an expert on everything. I am still unclear on whether memes have a drive to expand and if so, whether it means they posses some kind of will, which he makes quite clear they don’t, but not too clear how they grow and expand. I guess some day will understand that when we have a theory of emergence, which to me is the next big big thing in physics.I have never myself been a great fan of the multiverse theories and although Dr. Deutsch makes a good case for them, or at least one of them, his own version, I find that part the most questionable. To me, not yet a definite explanation of quantum weirdness.I do recommend it to those who want to be aware of where we are in the frontiers of physics and philosophy of science.

If you hoped for a book of the same breadth as David Deutsch’s "The Fabric of Reality" you’ll be disappointed.However, Deutsch is such a tremendous physicist and thinker that you can enjoy anything he writes.

This book is like GÃƒÂ¶del Escher Bach in its ambitious scope and its capacity to inspire deep insight and shift the reader’s entire worldview. It is a grand unified theory of intelligence, creativity, and the human project writ large. Intoxicatingly optimistic, a superb example of poetic naturalism at its best. When it stumbles, it is because of its outrageous velocity and the difficulty of the terrain, when it leaps, it soars.

I cannot add much to the two excellent reviews by Elliot Temple and Michael Golding. They obviously have more background in the four themes that David Deutsch masterfully weaves together: quantum physics, universal computing, evolution, and epistemology. In The Beginning of Infinity, Deutsch develops and expands upon the idea that we may be at a point in our knowledge and explanations, that we have developed "the first real Theory of Everything." This is not just the narrow, parochial theory regarding particle physics, but really, everything.The quotation comes from

David Deutsch’s earlier book, The Fabric of the Reality. The Beginning of Infinity is more sweeping and developed than The Fabric of Reality, but both books are brilliant and utterly vital.The Beginning of Infinity is both a culmination of our most powerful explanations on the nature of reality and the launching point for a breathtaking future of greater explanations and unlimited progress, if we embrace the challenge of the Enlightenment.I have always loved ideas and pursued many different ones in the undisciplined fashion of an amateur thinker. David Deutsch is a virtuoso in his ability to develop, explain, and connect so many powerful ideas.I made this book my first purchase on my Kindle and am so glad that I did. I could re-read this book a hundred times and am reading The Fabric of Reality for the third time. Reading David Deutsch is like listening to a great piece of music - it bears repeating many times.I would encourage anyone who is interested in understanding reality, or even just their own small part of it, to read this book. Deutsch has given us a great gift, but as he readily says, we are all fallible. This book is just the beginning, but what a start.

One of the most important books of the new millennia. Prof Deutsch describes how a way of thought is the key ingredient behind the rapid expanse in knowledge and technology beginning with the Enlightenment and continuing through to this day. The book is filled with bold claims that rankle on first encounter, but then you are led down a gentle path of deductive reasoning in which each step is easy and agreeable, only to find yourself standing at the exact place of that initial bold claim! And that is the very essence of the book: that an enquiring and critical mind can find solutions to seemingly intractable problems. The power of this mode of thought is so great that it benefits the whole of humanity while only requiring a tiny fraction of the population to actually understand it. How much better off would we all be if more people were aware of and applied these successful thought patterns in their daily lives? If you only buy one book this year, then this should be it; the world desperately needs more people who can think for themselves.

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