

Why People Believe Weird Things

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Why People Believe Weird Things

Pseudoscience, Superstition, and Other Confusions of Our Time *Holt Paperbacks*

Revised and Expanded Edition. In this age of supposed scientific enlightenment, many people still believe in mind reading, past-life regression theory, New Age hokum, and alien abduction. A no-holds-barred assault on popular superstitions and prejudices, with more than 80,000 copies in print, Why People Believe Weird Things debunks these nonsensical claims and explores the very human reasons people find otherworldly phenomena, conspiracy theories, and cults so appealing. In an entirely new chapter, "Why Smart People Believe in Weird Things," Michael Shermer takes on science luminaries like physicist Frank Tippler and others, who hide their spiritual beliefs behind the trappings of science. Shermer, science historian and true crusader, also reveals the more dangerous

side of such illogical thinking, including Holocaust denial, the recovered-memory movement, the satanic ritual abuse scare, and other modern crazes. Why People Believe Strange Things is an eye-opening resource for the most gullible among us and those who want to protect them.

Why People Believe Weird Things

Pseudoscience, Superstition and Other Confusions of Our Time *Souvenir Press*

A survey of a range of irrationalisms, with explanations of their empirical and logical flaws, this book describes the differences between science and pseudo-science, and goes on to describe and critique popular contemporary irrationalisms. Why do smart people believe weird things? Why do so many people believe in mind reading, past-life regression therapy, extra-terrestrial abduction and ghosts? What is behind the rise of 'scientific creationism' and Holocaust denial? In an age of supposed scientific enlightenment why do we appear more impressionable than ever? Scientific historian, and director of the Skeptics Society, Michael Shermer debunks these extraordinary claims in a no-holds-barred assault on the popular superstitions and confused prejudices of our time. Exploring the very human reasons behind otherworldly phenomena, conspiracy theories and cults Shermer explains why are they are so appealing to so many. "Skepticism is the agent of reason against organized irrationalism - and is therefore one of the keys to human social and civic decency." Stephen Jay Gould, from his foreword Shermer reveals the darker side of wishful thinking, through the recovered memory movement, satanic rituals and other modern witch hunts, and ideologies of racial superiority. Confronting those who take advantage of the gullibility of other people to advance their own, self-serving agendas Why People Believe Weird Things is compelling and often disturbing. It is a perceptive portrait of the human capacity for self-delusion and a celebration of the scientific spirit.

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How We Believe

The Search for God in an Age of Science *Macmillan*

Recent polls show that 96% of Americans believe in God. Why are people turning to religion in greater numbers than ever before? In How We Believe, Michael Shermer presents the results of an exhaustive empirical study in which he asked 10,000 Americans how and why they believe and about details of their faith. The result offers fresh and startling insights into age-old questions.

The Science of Good and Evil

Why People Cheat, Gossip, Care, Share, and Follow the Golden Rule *Macmillan*

From bestselling author Michael Shermer, an investigation of the evolution of morality that is "a paragon of popularized science and philosophy" The Sun (Baltimore) A century and a half after Darwin first proposed an "evolutionary ethics," science has begun to tackle the roots of morality. Just as evolutionary biologists study why we are hungry (to motivate us to eat) or why sex is enjoyable (to motivate us to procreate), they are now searching for the very nature of humanity. In The Science of Good and Evil, science historian Michael Shermer explores how humans evolved from social primates to moral primates; how and why morality motivates the human animal; and how the foundation of moral principles can be built upon empirical evidence. Along the way he explains the implications of scientific findings for fate and free will, the existence of pure good and pure evil, and the development of early moral sentiments among the first humans. As he closes the divide between science and morality, Shermer draws on stories from the Yanamamö, infamously known as the "fierce people" of the tropical rain forest, to the Stanford studies on jailers' behavior in prisons. The Science of Good and Evil is ultimately a profound look at the moral animal, belief, and the scientific pursuit of truth.

Skeptic

Viewing the World with a Rational Eye *Henry Holt and Company*

Collected essays from bestselling author Michael Shermer's celebrated columns in Scientific American For fifteen years, bestselling author Michael Shermer has written a column in Scientific American magazine that synthesizes scientific concepts and theory for a general audience. His trademark combination of deep scientific understanding and entertaining writing style has thrilled his huge and devoted audience for years. Now, in Skeptic, seventy-five of these columns are available together for the first time; a welcome addition for his fans and a stimulating introduction for new readers.

The Believing Brain

From Ghosts and Gods to Politics and Conspiracies---How We Construct Beliefs and Reinforce Them as Truths *Macmillan*

The Believing Brain is bestselling author Michael Shermer's comprehensive and provocative theory on how beliefs are born, formed, reinforced, challenged, changed, and extinguished. In this work synthesizing thirty years of research, psychologist, historian of science, and the world's best-known skeptic Michael Shermer upends the traditional thinking about how humans form beliefs about the world. Simply put, beliefs come first and explanations for beliefs follow. The brain, Shermer argues, is a belief engine. From sensory data flowing in through the senses, the brain naturally begins to

look for and find patterns, and then infuses those patterns with meaning. Our brains connect the dots of our world into meaningful patterns that explain why things happen, and these patterns become beliefs. Once beliefs are formed the brain begins to look for and find confirmatory evidence in support of those beliefs, which accelerates the process of reinforcing them, and round and round the process goes in a positive-feedback loop of belief confirmation. Shermer outlines the numerous cognitive tools our brains engage to reinforce our beliefs as truths. Interlaced with his theory of belief, Shermer provides countless real-world examples of how this process operates, from politics, economics, and religion to conspiracy theories, the supernatural, and the paranormal. Ultimately, he demonstrates why science is the best tool ever devised to determine whether or not a belief matches reality.

The WEIRDest People in the World

How the West Became Psychologically Peculiar and Particularly Prosperous *Farrar, Straus and Giroux*

A New York Times Notable Book of 2020 A Bloomberg Best Non-Fiction Book of 2020 A Behavioral Scientist Notable Book of 2020 A Human Behavior & Evolution Society Must-Read Popular Evolution Book of 2020 A bold, epic account of how the co-evolution of psychology and culture created the peculiar Western mind that has profoundly shaped the modern world. Perhaps you are WEIRD: raised in a society that is Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic. If so, you're rather psychologically peculiar. Unlike much of the world today, and most people who have ever lived, WEIRD people are highly individualistic, self-obsessed, control-oriented, nonconformist, and analytical. They focus on themselves—their attributes, accomplishments, and aspirations—over their relationships and social roles. How did WEIRD populations become so psychologically distinct? What role did these psychological differences play in the industrial revolution and the global expansion of Europe during the last few centuries? In *The WEIRDest People in the World*, Joseph Henrich draws on cutting-edge research in anthropology, psychology, economics, and evolutionary biology to explore these questions and more. He illuminates the origins and evolution of family structures, marriage, and religion, and the profound impact these cultural transformations had on human psychology. Mapping these shifts through ancient history and late antiquity, Henrich reveals that the most fundamental institutions of kinship and marriage changed dramatically under pressure from the Roman Catholic Church. It was these changes that gave rise to the WEIRD psychology that would coevolve with impersonal markets, occupational specialization, and free competition—laying the foundation for the modern world. Provocative and engaging in both its broad scope and its surprising details, *The WEIRDest People in the World* explores how culture, institutions, and psychology shape one another, and explains what this means for both our most personal sense of who we are as individuals and also the large-scale social, political, and economic forces that drive human history. Includes black-and-white illustrations.

Giving the Devil his Due

Reflections of a Scientific Humanist *Cambridge University Press*

Who is the 'Devil'? And what is he due? The Devil is anyone who disagrees with you. And what he is due is the right to speak his mind. He must have this for your own safety's sake because his freedom is inextricably tied to your own. If he can be censored, why shouldn't you be censored? If we put barriers up to silence 'unpleasant' ideas, what's to stop the silencing of any discussion? This book is a full-throated defense of free speech and open inquiry in politics, science, and culture by the New York Times bestselling author and skeptic Michael Shermer. The new collection of essays and articles takes the Devil by the horns by tackling five key themes: free thought and free speech, politics and society, scientific humanism, religion, and the ideas of controversial intellectuals. For our own sake, we must give the Devil his due.

Why Darwin Matters

The Case Against Intelligent Design *Macmillan*

A creationist-turned-scientist demonstrates the facts of evolution and exposes Intelligent Design's real agenda Science is on the defensive. Half of Americans reject the theory of evolution and "Intelligent Design" campaigns are gaining ground. Classroom by classroom, creationism is overthrowing biology. In *Why Darwin Matters*, bestselling author Michael Shermer explains how the newest brand of creationism appeals to our predisposition to look for a designer behind life's complexity. Shermer decodes the scientific evidence to show that evolution is not "just a theory" and illustrates how it achieves the design of life through the bottom-up process of natural selection. Shermer, once an evangelical Christian and a creationist, argues that Intelligent Design proponents are invoking a combination of bad science, political antipathy, and flawed theology. He refutes their pseudoscientific arguments and then demonstrates why conservatives and people of faith can and should embrace evolution. He then appraises the evolutionary questions that truly need to be settled, building a powerful argument for science itself. Cutting the politics away from the facts, *Why Darwin Matters* is an incisive examination of what is at stake in the debate over evolution.

Science Friction

Where the Known Meets the Unknown *Macmillan*

Bestselling author Michael Shermer delves into the unknown, from heretical ideas about the boundaries of the universe to Star Trek's lessons about chance and time A scientist pretends to be a psychic for a day-and fools everyone. An athlete discovers that good-luck rituals and getting into "the zone" may, or may not, improve his performance. A historian decides to analyze the data to see who was truly responsible for the Bounty mutiny. A son explores the possibilities of alternative and experimental medicine for his cancer-ravaged mother. And a skeptic realizes that it is time to turn the skeptical lens onto science itself. In each of the fourteen essays in *Science Friction*, psychologist and science historian Michael Shermer explores the very personal barriers and biases that plague and propel science, especially when scientists push against the unknown. What do we know and what do we not know? How does science respond to controversy, attack, and uncertainty? When does theory become accepted fact? As always, Shermer delivers a thought-provoking, fascinating, and entertaining view of life in the scientific age.

How We Believe

Science, Skepticism, and the Search for God *Holt Paperbacks*

A new edition covering the latest scientific research on how the brain makes us believers or skeptics Recent polls report that 96 percent of Americans believe in God, and 73 percent believe that angels regularly visit Earth. Why is this? Why, despite the rise of science, technology, and secular education, are people turning to religion in greater numbers than ever before? Why do people

believe in God at all? These provocative questions lie at the heart of *How We Believe*, an illuminating study of God, faith, and religion. Bestselling author Michael Shermer offers fresh and often startling insights into age-old questions, including how and why humans put their faith in a higher power, even in the face of scientific skepticism. Shermer has updated the book to explore the latest research and theories of psychiatrists, neuroscientists, epidemiologists, and philosophers, as well as the role of faith in our increasingly diverse modern world. Whether believers or nonbelievers, we are all driven by the need to understand the universe and our place in it. *How We Believe* is a brilliant scientific tour of this ancient and mysterious desire.

Denying History

Who Says the Holocaust Never Happened and Why Do They Say It? Updated and Expanded *Univ of California Press*

Denying History takes a bold and in-depth look at those who say the Holocaust never happened and explores the motivations behind such claims. While most commentators have dismissed the Holocaust deniers as antisemitic neo-Nazi thugs who do not deserve a response, historians Michael Shermer and Alex Grobman have immersed themselves in the minds and culture of these Holocaust "revisionists." In the process, they show how we can be certain that the Holocaust happened and, for that matter, how we can confirm any historical event. This edition is expanded with a new chapter and epilogue examining current, shockingly mainstream revisionism.

The Moral Arc

How Science Makes Us Better People *Henry Holt and Company*

Bestselling author Michael Shermer's exploration of science and morality that demonstrates how the scientific way of thinking has made people, and society as a whole, more moral From Galileo and Newton to Thomas Hobbes and Martin Luther King, Jr., thinkers throughout history have consciously employed scientific techniques to better understand the non-physical world. The Age of Reason and the Enlightenment led theorists to apply scientific reasoning to the non-scientific disciplines of politics, economics, and moral philosophy. Instead of relying on the woodcuts of dissected bodies in old medical texts, physicians opened bodies themselves to see what was there; instead of divining truth through the authority of an ancient holy book or philosophical treatise, people began to explore the book of nature for themselves through travel and exploration; instead of the supernatural belief in the divine right of kings, people employed a natural belief in the right of democracy. In *The Moral Arc*, Shermer will explain how abstract reasoning, rationality, empiricism, skepticism--scientific ways of thinking--have profoundly changed the way we perceive morality and, indeed, move us ever closer to a more just world.

The Borderlands of Science

Where Sense Meets Nonsense *Oxford University Press, USA*

Presents a collection of essays on various topics in science and personalities in science, including Carl Sagan, Sigmund Freud, and Alfred Russel Wallace.

Why People Believe Weird Things

Why We Believe What We Believe

Uncovering Our Biological Need for Meaning, Spirituality, and Truth *Simon and Schuster*

WHY DO YOU BELIEVE THE THINGS YOU BELIEVE? Do you remember events differently from how they really happened? Where do your superstitions come from? How do morals evolve? Why are some people religious and others nonreligious? Everyone has thoughts and questions like these, and now Andrew Newberg and Mark Waldman expose, for the first time, how our complex views emerge from the neural activities of the brain. Bridging science, psychology, and religion, they demonstrate, in simple terminology, how the brain perceives reality and transforms it into an extraordinary range of personal, ethical, and creative premises that we use to build meaning, value, spirituality, and truth into our lives. When you come to understand this remarkable process, it will change forever the way you look at the world and yourself. Supported by groundbreaking research, including brain scans of people as they pray, meditate, and even speak in tongues, Newberg and Waldman propose a new model for how deep convictions emerge and influence our lives. You will even glimpse how the mind of an atheist works when contemplating God. Using personal stories, moral paradoxes, and optical illusions, the authors demonstrate how our brains construct our fondest assumptions about reality, offering recommendations for exercising your most important "muscle" in order to develop a more life-affirming, flexible range of attitudes. You'll discover how to: Recognize when your beliefs are altered by othersGuard against mental traps and prejudicial thinkingDistinguish between destructive and constructive beliefsCultivate spiritual and ethical ideals Ultimately, we must always return to our beliefs. From the ordinary to the extraordinary, they give meaning to the mysteries of life, providing us with our individual uniqueness and the ability to fill our lives with joy. Most important, though, they give us inspiration and hope, beacons to guide us through the light and dark corners of the soul.

The Mind of the Market

How Biology and Psychology Shape Our Economic Lives *Macmillan*

The best-selling author of *Why People Believe Weird Things* offers a revealing study of the influence of evolutionary theory on the modern economy, as well as the evolutionary roots of human economic behavior, bringing together the latest research in neuroeconomics, psychology, biology, and other fields to analyze the economics of everyday life. Reprint. 40,000 first printing.

Suspicious Minds

Why We Believe Conspiracy Theories *Bloomsbury Publishing*

'A first class book' Sunday Times We're all conspiracy theorists. Some of us just hide it better than others. Conspiracy theorists do not wear tin-foil hats (for the most part). They are not just a few kooks lurking on the paranoid fringes of society with bizarre ideas about shape-shifting reptilian aliens running society in secret. They walk among us. They are us. Everyone loves a good conspiracy. Yet conspiracy theories are not a recent invention. And they are not always a harmless curiosity. In *Suspicious Minds*, Rob Brotherton explores the history and consequences of conspiracism, and delves into the research that offers insights into why so many of us are drawn to implausible, unproven and unproveable conspiracy theories. They resonate with some of our brain's built-in quirks and foibles, and tap into some of our deepest desires, fears, and assumptions about the world. The fascinating and often surprising psychology of conspiracy theories tells us a lot - not

just why we are drawn to theories about sinister schemes, but about how our minds are wired and, indeed, why we believe anything at all. Conspiracy theories are not some psychological aberration – they're a predictable product of how brains work. This book will tell you why, and what it means. Of course, just because your brain's biased doesn't always mean you're wrong. Sometimes conspiracies are real. Sometimes, paranoia is prudent.

Heavens on Earth

The Scientific Search for the Afterlife, Immortality, and Utopia Henry Holt

A scientific exploration into humanity’s obsession with the afterlife and quest for immortality from the bestselling author and skeptic Michael Shermer In his most ambitious work yet, Shermer sets out to discover what drives humans’ belief in life after death, focusing on recent scientific attempts to achieve immortality along with utopian attempts to create heaven on earth. For millennia, religions have concocted numerous manifestations of heaven and the afterlife, and though no one has ever returned from such a place to report what it is really like—or that it even exists—today science and technology are being used to try to make it happen in our lifetime. From radical life extension to cryonic suspension to mind uploading, Shermer considers how realistic these attempts are from a proper skeptical perspective. Heavens on Earth concludes with an uplifting paean to purpose and progress and how we can live well in the here-and-now, whether or not there is a hereafter.

The Skeptic Encyclopedia of Pseudoscience ABC-CLIO

Examines supernatural controversies such as crop circles, the Shroud of Turin, and cold fusion, and provides evidence for and against each phenomenon.

WHY PEOPLE BELIEVE WEIRD THINGS

How to Think about Weird Things

Critical Thinking for a New Age McGraw-Hill Humanities/Social Sciences/Languages

This brief, inexpensive text helps the reader to think critically, using examples from the weird claims and beliefs that abound in our culture to demonstrate the sound evaluation of any claim. The authors focus on types of logical arguments and proofs, making How to Think about Weird Things a versatile supplement for logic, critical thinking, philosophy of science, or any other science appreciation courses.

Fads and Fallacies in the Name of Science Courier Corporation

Fair, witty appraisal of cranks, quacks, and quackeries of science and pseudoscience: hollow earth, Velikovsky, orgone energy, Dianetics, flying saucers, Bridey Murphy, food and medical fads, and much more.

White Fragility

Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism Beacon Press

The New York Times best-selling book exploring the counterproductive reactions white people have when their assumptions about race are challenged, and how these reactions maintain racial inequality. In this “vital, necessary, and beautiful book” (Michael Eric Dyson), antiracist educator Robin DiAngelo deftly illuminates the phenomenon of white fragility and “allows us to understand racism as a practice not restricted to ‘bad people’ (Claudia Rankine). Referring to the defensive moves that white people make when challenged racially, white fragility is characterized by emotions such as anger, fear, and guilt, and by behaviors including argumentation and silence. These behaviors, in turn, function to reinstate white racial equilibrium and prevent any meaningful cross-racial dialogue. In this in-depth exploration, DiAngelo examines how white fragility develops, how it protects racial inequality, and what we can do to engage more constructively.

Ask a Manager

How to Navigate Clueless Colleagues, Lunch-Stealing Bosses, and the Rest of Your Life at Work Ballantine Books

From the creator of the popular website Ask a Manager and New York’s work-advice columnist comes a witty, practical guide to 200 difficult professional conversations—featuring all-new advice! There’s a reason Alison Green has been called “the Dear Abby of the work world.” Ten years as a workplace-advice columnist have taught her that people avoid awkward conversations in the office because they simply don’t know what to say. Thankfully, Green does—and in this incredibly helpful book, she tackles the tough discussions you may need to have during your career. You’ll learn what to say when • coworkers push their work on you—then take credit for it • you accidentally trash-talk someone in an email then hit “reply all” • you’re being micromanaged—or not being managed at all • you catch a colleague in a lie • your boss seems unhappy with your work • your cubemate’s loud speakerphone is making you homicidal • you got drunk at the holiday party Praise for Ask a Manager “A must-read for anyone who works . . . [Alison Green’s] advice boils down to the idea that you should be professional (even when others are not) and that communicating in a straightforward manner with candor and kindness will get you far, no matter where you work.”—Booklist (starred review) “The author’s friendly, warm, no-nonsense writing is a pleasure to read, and her advice can be widely applied to relationships in all areas of readers’ lives. Ideal for anyone new to the job market or new to management, or anyone hoping to improve their work experience.”—Library Journal (starred review) “I am a huge fan of Alison Green’s Ask a Manager column. This book is even better. It teaches us how to deal with many of the most vexing big and little problems in our workplaces—and to do so with grace, confidence, and a sense of humor.”—Robert Sutton, Stanford professor and author of The No Asshole Rule and The Asshole Survival Guide “Ask a Manager is the ultimate playbook for navigating the traditional workforce in a diplomatic but firm way.”—Erin Lowry, author of Broke Millennial: Stop Scraping By and Get Your Financial Life Together

Wings of Illusion

The Origin, Nature, and Future of Paranormal Belief

"'Wings of Illusions' offers a unique and disquieting perspective on paranormal belief, including religious belief. Schumaker points out that reality-defying beliefs represent one of the few truly universal elements of human culture. ... The object of this study is to trace the psychological origins of the paranormal and to consider the implications of the prevalence of paranormal belief for the future development of humanity." -- Back cover.

The Scientific Attitude

Defending Science from Denial, Fraud, and Pseudoscience MIT Press

An argument that what makes science distinctive is its emphasis on evidence and scientists' willingness to change theories on the basis of new evidence. Attacks on science have become commonplace. Claims that climate change isn't settled science, that evolution is “only a theory,” and that scientists are conspiring to keep the truth about vaccines from the public are staples of some politicians' rhetorical repertoire. Defenders of science often point to its discoveries (penicillin! relativity!) without explaining exactly why scientific claims are superior. In this book, Lee McIntyre argues that what distinguishes science from its rivals is what he calls “the scientific attitude”—caring about evidence and being willing to change theories on the basis of new evidence. The history of science is littered with theories that were scientific but turned out to be wrong; the scientific attitude reveals why even a failed theory can help us to understand what is special about science. McIntyre offers examples that illustrate both scientific success (a reduction in childbed fever in the nineteenth century) and failure (the flawed “discovery” of cold fusion in the twentieth century). He describes the transformation of medicine from a practice based largely on hunches into a science based on evidence; considers scientific fraud; examines the positions of ideology-driven denialists, pseudoscientists, and “skeptics” who reject scientific findings; and argues that social science, no less than natural science, should embrace the scientific attitude. McIntyre argues that the scientific attitude—the grounding of science in evidence—offers a uniquely powerful tool in the defense of science.

Revelation Canongate Books

The final book of the Bible, Revelation prophesies the ultimate judgement of mankind in a series of allegorical visions, grisly images and numerological predictions. According to these, empires will fall, the "Beast" will be destroyed and Christ will rule a new Jerusalem. With an introduction by Will Self.

Abducted

How People Come to Believe They Were Kidnapped by Aliens Harvard University Press

They are tiny. They are tall. They are gray. They are green. They survey our world with enormous glowing eyes. To conduct their shocking experiments, they creep in at night to carry humans off to their spaceships. Yet there is no evidence that they exist at all. So how could anyone believe he or she was abducted by aliens? Or want to believe it? To answer these questions, psychologist Susan Clancy interviewed and evaluated "abductees"--old and young, male and female, religious and agnostic. She listened closely to their stories--how they struggled to explain something strange in their remembered experience, how abduction seemed plausible, and how, having suspected abduction, they began to recollect it, aided by suggestion and hypnosis. Clancy argues that abductees are sane and intelligent people who have unwittingly created vivid false memories from a toxic mix of nightmares, culturally available texts (abduction reports began only after stories of extraterrestrials appeared in films and on TV), and a powerful drive for meaning that science is unable to satisfy. For them, otherworldly terror can become a transforming, even inspiring experience. "Being abducted," writes Clancy, "may be a baptism in the new religion of this millennium." This book is not only a subtle exploration of the workings of memory, but a sensitive inquiry into the nature of belief.

Denialism

How Irrational Thinking Harms the Planet and Threatens Our Lives Penguin

"A superb and convincing work." -Malcolm Gladwell At a time when our planet is in dire peril, Americans mistrust science more than ever. Few journalists appreciate what is at stake better than Michael Specter, who has spent the last twenty years reporting on everything from the AIDS epidemic to the digital revolution. In Denialism, he eloquently shows how, in a world where protesters march against childhood vaccines and Africans starve to death rather than import genetically modified grains, we must reconnect with the rational thinking that has underpinned the advance of civilization since the eighteenth century. What emerges is a manifesto that brilliantly captures one of the pivotal clashes of our era.

The Secret Simon and Schuster

The tenth-anniversary edition of the book that changed lives in profound ways, now with a new foreword and afterword. In 2006, a groundbreaking feature-length film revealed the great mystery of the universe—The Secret—and, later that year, Rhonda Byrne followed with a book that became a worldwide bestseller. Fragments of a Great Secret have been found in the oral traditions, in literature, in religions and philosophies throughout the centuries. For the first time, all the pieces of The Secret come together in an incredible revelation that will be life-transforming for all who experience it. In this book, you’ll learn how to use The Secret in every aspect of your life—money, health, relationships, happiness, and in every interaction you have in the world. You’ll begin to understand the hidden, untapped power that’s within you, and this revelation can bring joy to every aspect of your life. The Secret contains wisdom from modern-day teachers—men and women who have used it to achieve health, wealth, and happiness. By applying the knowledge of The Secret, they bring to light compelling stories of eradicating disease, acquiring massive wealth, overcoming obstacles, and achieving what many would regard as impossible.

Faces in the Clouds

A New Theory of Religion Oxford University Press

Religion is universal human culture. No phenomenon is more widely shared or more intensely studied, yet there is no agreement on what religion is. Now, in Faces in the Clouds, anthropologist Stewart Guthrie provides a provocative definition of religion in a bold and persuasive new theory. Guthrie says religion can best be understood as systematic anthropomorphism--that is, the attribution of human characteristics to nonhuman things and events. Many writers see anthropomorphism as common or even universal in religion, but few think it is central. To Guthrie, however, it is fundamental. Religion, he writes, consists of seeing the world as humanlike. As Guthrie shows, people find a wide range of humanlike beings plausible: Gods, spirits, abominable snowmen, HAL the computer, Chiquita Banana. We find messages in random events such as earthquakes, weather, and traffic accidents. We say a fire "rages," a storm "wreaks vengeance," and waters "lie still." Guthrie says that our tendency to find human characteristics in the nonhuman world stems from a deep-seated perceptual strategy: in the face of pervasive (if mostly unconscious) uncertainty about what we see, we bet on the most meaningful interpretation we can. If we are in the woods and see a dark shape that might be a bear or a boulder, for example, it is good policy to think it is a bear. If we are mistaken, we lose little, and if we are right, we gain much. So, Guthrie writes, in scanning the world we always look for what most concerns us--livings things, and especially, human ones. Even animals watch for human attributes, as when birds avoid scarecrows. In short, we all follow the principle--better safe than sorry. Marshalling a wealth of evidence from anthropology,

cognitive science, philosophy, theology, advertising, literature, art, and animal behavior, Guthrie offers a fascinating array of examples to show how this perceptual strategy pervades secular life and how it characterizes religious experience. Challenging the very foundations of religion, *Faces in the Clouds* forces us to take a new look at this fundamental element of human life.

The 9.9 Percent

The New Aristocracy That Is Entrenching Inequality and Warping Our Culture *Simon and Schuster*

A “brilliant” (The Washington Post), “clear-eyed and incisive” (The New Republic) analysis of how the wealthiest group in American society is making life miserable for everyone—including themselves. In 21st-century America, the top 0.1% of the wealth distribution have walked away with the big prizes even while the bottom 90% have lost ground. What’s left of the American Dream has taken refuge in the 9.9% that lies just below the tip of extreme wealth. Collectively, the members of this group control more than half of the wealth in the country—and they are doing whatever it takes to hang on to their piece of the action in an increasingly unjust system. They log insane hours at the office and then turn their leisure time into an excuse for more career-building, even as they rely on an underpaid servant class to power their economic success and satisfy their personal needs. They have segregated themselves into zip codes designed to exclude as many people as possible. They have made fitness a national obsession even as swaths of the population lose healthcare and grow sicker. They have created an unprecedented demand for admission to elite schools and helped to fuel the dramatic cost of higher education. They channel their political energy into symbolic conflicts over identity in order to avoid acknowledging the economic roots of their privilege. And they have created an ethos of “merit” to justify their advantages. They are all around us. In fact, they are us—or what we are supposed to want to be. In this “captivating account” (Robert D. Putnam, author of *Bowling Alone*), Matthew Stewart argues that a new aristocracy is emerging in American society and it is repeating the mistakes of history. It is entrenching inequality, warping our culture, eroding democracy, and transforming an abundant economy into a source of misery. He calls for a regrouping of American culture and politics on a foundation closer to the original promise of America.

How to Have Impossible Conversations

A Very Practical Guide *Da Capo Lifelong Books*

"This is a self-help book on how to argue effectively, conciliate, and gently persuade. The authors admit to getting it wrong in their own past conversations. One by one, I recognize the same mistakes in me. The world would be a better place if everyone read this book." -- Richard Dawkins, author of *Science in the Soul* and *Outgrowing God* In our current political climate, it seems impossible to have a reasonable conversation with anyone who has a different opinion. Whether you're online, in a classroom, an office, a town hall -- or just hoping to get through a family dinner with a stubborn relative -- dialogue shuts down when perspectives clash. Heated debates often lead to insults and shaming, blocking any possibility of productive discourse. Everyone seems to be on a hair trigger. In *How to Have Impossible Conversations*, Peter Boghossian and James Lindsay guide you through the straightforward, practical, conversational techniques necessary for every successful conversation -- whether the issue is climate change, religious faith, gender identity, race, poverty, immigration, or gun control. Boghossian and Lindsay teach the subtle art of instilling doubts and opening minds. They cover everything from learning the fundamentals for good conversations to achieving expert-level techniques to deal with hardliners and extremists. This book is the manual everyone needs to foster a climate of civility, connection, and empathy.

Emotional

How Feelings Shape Our Thinking *Pantheon*

We’ve all been told that thinking rationally is the key to success. But at the cutting edge of science, researchers are discovering that feeling is every bit as important as thinking. You make hundreds of decisions every day, from what to eat for breakfast to how you should invest, and not one of those decisions would be possible without emotion. It has long been said that thinking and feeling are separate and opposing forces in our behavior. But as Leonard Mlodinow, the best-selling author of *Subliminal*, tells us, extraordinary advances in psychology and neuroscience have proven that emotions are as critical to our well-being as thinking. How can you connect better with others? How can you make sense of your frustration, fear, and anxiety? What can you do to live a happier life? The answers lie in understanding your emotions. Journeying from the labs of pioneering scientists to real-world scenarios that have flirted with disaster, Mlodinow shows us how our emotions can help, why they sometimes hurt, and what we can learn in both instances. Using deep insights into our evolution and biology, Mlodinow gives us the tools to understand our emotions better and to maximize their benefits. Told with his characteristic clarity and fascinating stories, *Emotional* explores the new science of feelings and offers us an essential guide to making the most of one of nature’s greatest gifts.

TIME the Science of Good and Evil *Time Home Entertainment*

One of the great enigmas of humanity is why we have such a devastating capacity for evil as well as such an enormous ability to do good. What makes some people commit violent harm, while others risk their lives to help those they may not even know? Now, to explore and navigate this essential question of human behavior, the editors at TIME bring you the special edition 'The Science of Good and Evil.' You'll examine "The Roots of Good and Evil," and consider the capacity for morality in animals. Then consider "What Makes Us Moral" by looking at the seemingly innate moral compass of human children and the role that nurturing plays in developing it. Follow modern neuroscience deep into the brain to see what it can tell us about where good and evil behavior might reside and what role genuine love plays in their development. Through it all, visit and analyze tales of senseless acts of violence and the profound acts of selflessness that occur in their wake. As destructive technologies and artificial intelligence continue to develop and strengthen, there has never been a more important time to understand the nature of our capacity for good and evil.

Weird Earth

Debunking Strange Ideas about Our Planet

Aliens. Ley lines. Water dowsing. Conspiracies and myths captivate imaginations and promise mystery and magic. Whether it's arguing about the moon landing hoax or a Frisbee-like Earth drifting through space, when held up to science and critical thinking, these ideas fall flat. In *Weird Earth: Debunking Strange Ideas About Our Planet*, Donald R. Prothero demystifies these conspiracies and offers answers to some of humanity's most outlandish questions. Applying his extensive scientific knowledge, Prothero corrects misinformation that con artists and quacks use to hoodwink others about geology--hollow earth, expanding earth, and bizarre earthquakes--and mystical and paranormal happenings--healing crystals, alien landings, and the gates of hell. By deconstructing wild claims such as prophecies of imminent natural disasters, Prothero provides a way for everyone to recognize dubious assertions. Prothero answers these claims with facts, offering historical and scientific context in a light-hearted manner that is accessible to everyone, no matter their background. With a careful layering of evidence in geology, archaeology, and biblical and historical records, Prothero's *Weird Earth* examines each conspiracy and myth and leaves no question unanswered.

The Song of Achilles *A&C Black*

SHORTLISTED FOR THE ORANGE PRIZE FOR FICTION 2012 Greece in the age of heroes. Patroclus, an awkward young prince, has been exiled to the court of King Peleus and his perfect son Achilles. Despite their differences, Achilles befriends the shamed prince, and as they grow into young men skilled in the arts of war and medicine, their bond blossoms into something deeper - despite the displeasure of Achilles’s mother Thetis, a cruel sea goddess. But when word comes that Helen of Sparta has been kidnapped, Achilles must go to war in distant Troy and fulfill his destiny. Torn between love and fear for his friend, Patroclus goes with him, little knowing that the years that follow will test everything they hold dear.

Off the Edge

Flat Earthers, Conspiracy Culture, and Why People Will Believe Anything *Algonquin Books*

“A deep dive into the world of Flat Earth conspiracy theorists . . . that brilliantly reveals how people fall into illogical beliefs, reject reason, destroy relationships, and connect with a broad range of conspiracy theories in the social media age. Beautiful, probing, and often empathetic . . . An insightful, human look at what fuels conspiracy theories.” —Science Since 2015, there has been a spectacular boom in a centuries-old delusion: that the earth is flat. More and more people believe that we all live on a pancake-shaped planet, capped by a solid dome and ringed by an impossible wall of ice. How? Why? In *Off the Edge*, journalist Kelly Weill draws a direct line from today's conspiratorial moment, brimming not just with Flat Earthers but also anti-vaxxers and QAnon followers, back to the early days of Flat Earth theory in the 1830s. We learn the natural impulses behind these beliefs: when faced with a complicated world out of our control, humans have always sought patterns to explain the inexplicable. This psychology doesn't change. But with the dawn of the twenty-first century, something else has shifted. Powered by Facebook and YouTube algorithms, the Flat Earth movement is growing. At once a definitive history of the movement and an essential look at its unbelievable present, *Off the Edge* introduces us to a cast of larger-than-life characters. We meet historical figures like the nineteenth-century grifter who first popularized the theory, as well as the many modern-day Flat Earthers Weill herself gets to know, from moms on vacation to determined creationists to neo-Nazi rappers. We discover what, and who, converts people to Flat Earth belief, and what happens inside the rabbit hole. And we even meet a man determined to fly into space in a homemade rocket-powered balloon—whose tragic death is as senseless and absurd as the theory he sets out to prove. In this incisive and powerful story about belief, Kelly Weill explores how we arrived at this moment of polarized realities and explains what needs to happen so that we might all return to the same spinning globe.