

Blink

Malcolm Gladwell

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Non-fiction

277 pages

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In the *Blink* of an Eye

Review by Kyle M.

As you read this paragraph, your brain is unconsciously allowing you to make snap decisions while analyzing the consequences in the *Blink* of an eye (approximately 200 milliseconds). Psychology proves that the brain can do wonders “behind the scenes” and take small segments of time to predict what is going to happen in the future. This is the basis on which the book *Blink* by Malcolm Gladwell was written.

Imagine observing a random married couple having a conversation for fifteen minutes. Professor Gottman in *Blink* would be able to tell if the relationship would continue or not. This prediction is far from a mere guess. It is the analysis of the brain picking up the slightest emotions and shedding light to them. Comparing the positive emotion to the negative, Gottman can “predict with 95 percent accuracy whether that couple will still be married fifteen years later.”. Some may call it a miracle or even luck, but what *Blink* shows is that within our brains, comes the origination of instinct. This book by Malcolm Gladwell teaches the reader not only about the several functions of the brain but also the importance of the brain to humanity as a whole. Now tell me, why do we have “hunches” about which door hides the ultimate prize or which sports team will win the next game. These are some of the unanswered phenomenons

revealed in *Blink*. The difference between life and death can be dependent upon someone's snap judgements. Just like having a "hunch" about something, one can accurately predict whether a man is just reaching into his pocket for a pack of gum or for a handgun. These snap decisions can and do save many lives.

The series of short but very thorough stories support each other as this author takes you on a journey to understanding the science of the unconscious. Starting off as a science and business reporter for the Washington Post, Gladwell has written many critically acclaimed novels before *Blink* such as *The Tipping Point* and *Outliers* which are both non-fiction. After the publication of these books came the birth of *Blink* where Gladwell displays his style of writing that some may find to be a distraction to the main idea he is trying to convey. Having to follow each story and what each is explaining can become somewhat tedious in that Gladwell switches and blends the stories to support his argument. I was caught going back to the beginning of the book frequently to remember what had happened. There were some moments in the book where I would doze off into space, trying to go back to chapter one and extract the lesson taught in that chapter. In addition, the references became redundant while making the book seem longer than it actually was. When reading *Blink*, the most important thing that stood out throughout the book was Gladwell's credibility and his gift of getting the reader involved in the book. Gladwell's use of statistics to support his statements made his work more credible and easier to believe. "When Schooler did this experiment..., he found that people who were asked to explain themselves ended up solving 30 percent fewer problems...." Gladwell astonishingly picked up the tempo by giving me the option to take a test that was taken in the book or to go online and look something up. "If you want to try a computerized IAT, you can go to www.implicit.harvard.edu." This is when I found myself a prisoner of the book taking all of the IAT's and what I discovered was

that my brain was a false friend. I started the tests thinking I had no biases towards a certain topic but as the results came up at the end of the test, I was startled to see how I have been living a lie my whole life. *Blink* excels at getting into your mind and explaining why we have these snap decisions with great detail and credibility.

Blink is an easy and captivating read as the author digs into the inner parts of your brain unlocking the “Locked Door” to your unconscious, “Because everyone in that room had not one mind but two, and all the while their conscious mind was blocked, their unconscious was scanning the room, sifting through possibilities, processing every conceivable clue.” *Blink* would be a great read for those who are hungry for truth. Aside from the fact that I believe that nearly every high schooler would find this book enjoyable, it is better suited for people who fantasize about knowing everything there is to know about everything. I know you’re out there. So go ahead, *Blink*, and discover a new way to see the world around you.