

# Blink book review

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Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking by Malcolm Gladwell is a self-reflection provoking book in which the author takes us by the hand and guides us through our mind on the unconscious side of things. To blink is to perform beyond the speed of light; a brief, rapid movement that is done in a quick flash and is typically unnoticeable. The book relates to this action through the examination of our minds and how we unknowingly react to high speed and on the spot situations. The thesis of the book is to convince a simple fact: that decisions made very quickly can be as good as or better than decisions made cautiously and deliberately. To blink is not only to trust our instincts and to go along with our best profound choices, but also the meaning of a blink is to judge things at a mere glance, in a split second. When we meet someone new, a complete stranger, we instantly judge them just based on their looks, their ethnicity, and what they wear, and we make a snap judgment. For instance when musicians audition for an orchestra, a screen must be blocking the judges from viewing the candidates. Without it, the selection committee is prone to make snap judgments based upon their appearance. As Gladwell said, " Some people look like they sound better than they actually sound, because they look confident and have good posture" (page 251). Our world and the cultures we're exposed to have crammed our brains with constant generalizations and stereotypes about certain groups of people. This is one of the reasons our rapid cognition sometimes fails us — it relies on these stereotypes we've been primed to believe. Proof of this is any of the priming experiments Gladwell talked about, such as where students imagined being a professor prior to a test as opposed to imagining being a soccer player and scoring higher on the test after imagining being a professor (page 56). Our quick judgment also lacks

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subtlety and the definition of what we really want and our explanation of what we perceive and what is real doesn't exactly match up in many cases. Like women in Iyengar and Fisman's speed dating experiment (pages 64-65); they ranked intelligence and sincerity more important than looks and a sense of humor, but after a quick date with an attractive and funny man she will then rank those attributes more important. But as we increase our experiences with rapid cognition, and learn how to "thin-slice," a term the author designated himself to refer to "the ability of our unconscious mind to recognize patterns and behaviors through slices of experiences and respond accordingly," (page 23) we will also learn to make better decisions. We can tame ourselves in time for similar future situations. Practice is all we need. There are many lessons to be learned in a valuable book such as Blink. Blink tells us to "listen with our eyes," avoid making bad snap judgments, and learn to "thin-slice" effectively. Included in Blink are numerous accounts of people's personal experiences, series of conducted experiments, and examples upon examples of situations, rational changes, and statistical data. Because of this is why the book was so enjoyable. It opened my eyes to my own locked doors and what I could possibly do to open them. Gladwell talked about mistakes billions of people make on a daily basis that I have made too. And he made me realize with practice of "thin-slicing" and with a change of environment someone, even like myself, could open the locked doors.