

My impressions from freakonomics book

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My initial response when we were told our summer reading book was called Freakonomics, was: great, I will not understand what I read nor I will care. However, as I kept reading, I soon realized the book wasn't just a typical economist throwing numbers at you and hoping you would understand. Instead, authors Stephen Dubner and Steven Levitt make it their mission to constantly engage you and always keep you on track of what is going on. This can be seen when they ask the readers what they think, or when they show all the data it required for them to solve their thesis questions. In some occasions, readers are also encouraged to try and solve the problems on their own, however, I was almost never able to do so. After failing time after time to answer the questions by myself, I realized that the key to finding out the answer was thinking outside the box, without compromising the logical part.

As the authors themselves confirmed, there is no “ unifying theme” for this book, nonetheless, there are a series of ideas that are recurrent throughout the chapters. These include the importance of incentives, the significance of defying conventional wisdom, realizing about information asymmetry, informing about crime and discussing parent roles. Although every chapter talks more about one idea than the other, at the end of the day the answer always seems to be unique and unexpected. It appears that what they have in common is the fact that you need to think in an unconventional manner to solve these ideas.

The message of the book can be seen from its title. Freakonomics. The word screams unique, different, and challenging. Throughout the book, the message the authors intend to convey is that we can't actually take

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information as if it were taken from the bible. We need to be our own source of information, always being curious and always digging deeper. I completely agree with the message they are giving the readers because what I perceived was that I should never let others tell me how or what to think. When they talked about parents and the importance they have on the future of their children, I was in absolute awe and had to begin and question many ideas I have always believed.

Something I found very interesting from the book is that it's not only made up of fancy words that just a select few can understand, but rather has a very wide range from the most sophisticated words to cuss words. If I have to say so myself, I would have never imagined reading a “ bad” word in an economy book, but that is part of the essence of the book. I was also attracted during every chapter because the explanations and reasoning behind their answers weren't boring. The authors managed to find an engaging way to explain everything, a perfect example is when they talked about bagels in order to explain incentives and how much they matter to people. Finally, I admired the fact that even when talking about controversial issues, the authors maintained a very neutral point of view and only gave ideas that could be supported by facts given from numbers.