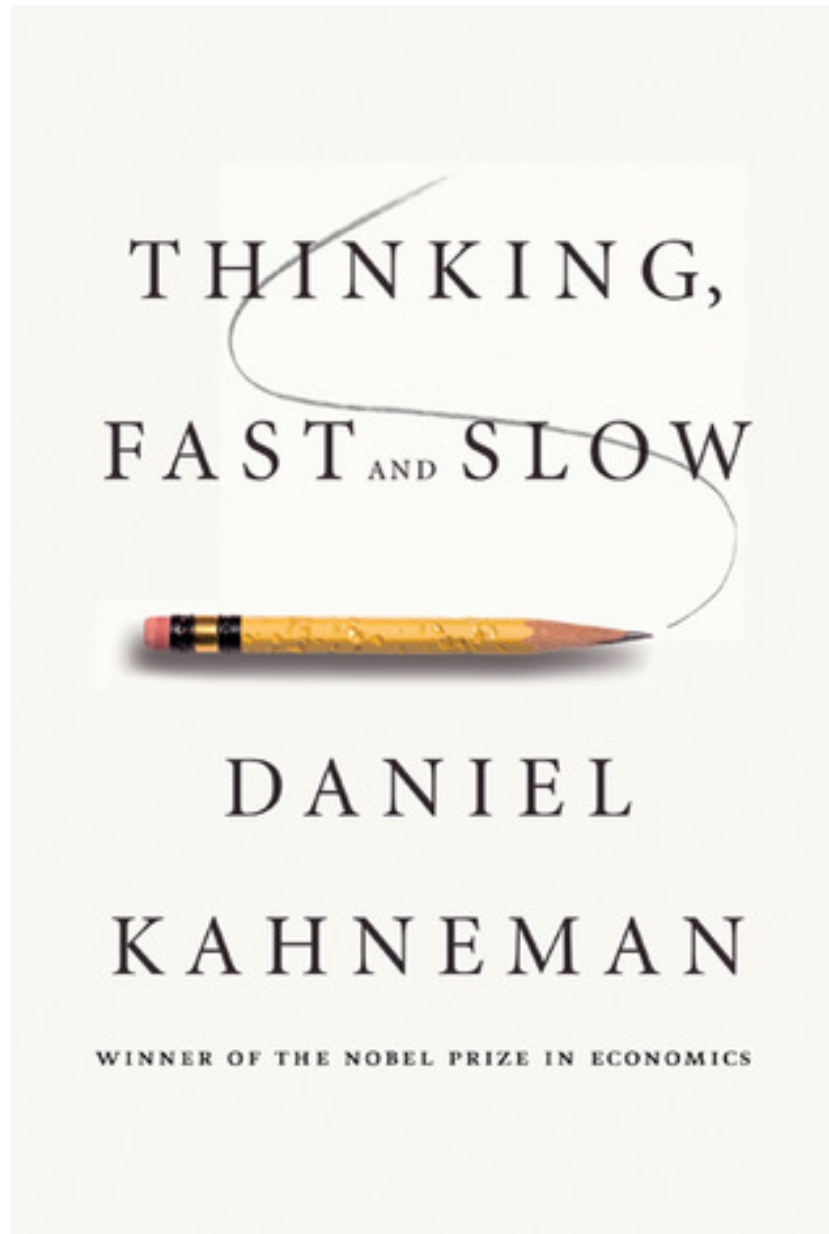


## Thinking, Fast and Slow Book PDF Download



**By:**  
**Daniel Kahneman**

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### Folboteur

In the last few years two books took me FOREVER to get through. The first was Daniel Dennett's "Darwin's Dangerous Idea" and the second is Kahneman's "Thinking, Fast and Slow." What caused this? What do they have in common? Both books explain, in minute detail, simple concepts with immensely far-reaching implications, and both have been... after the slog... the most intellectually rewarding reading of my adult life.

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Where to begin... I have a number of theories running around in my head, and occasionally I try to corral them on paper. I organize, sequence and interconnect them in a way that will prevent my reader from meaningfully widening their eyes, in an aside, while winding their finger around one ear... ("Cuckoo!") Good writing about complex topics is very, very difficult, and Kahneman has corraled 30+ years of science, his career and all he has learned into a perfectly arranged sequence that leads the reader into a wilderness... provisioning you in each chapter with the tools you'll need for the next part of the journey.

The second most striking effect on me is the number of times I said, "Yes... YES!!! this is what I've been saying!" In my case it has usually been some sort of "intuitive"(excuse me, Mr. Kahneman... I mean "System 1") recognition of a pattern in my observations about the way we think. In Kahneman's case those intuitions have been converted into theoretical propositions, each meticulously researched in well designed experiments. Clearly, this is at least one difference between me and a Nobel Prize winning researcher.

So why does this stuff matter? In the context of broader discussions of free will, intention, choice and control over the directions our lives take, this book can provide powerful insights that might currently be obscured by these "cognitive illusions" and the inherent limitations of "System 1/System 2" thinking.

Perhaps we're not as "free" in our decisions as we might like to think, if "priming" has such a stunningly reproducible effect. Perhaps we're not so determined, if activities that initially require "System 2" attention, can be turned into second-nature, "technical-expertise intuitions." I.e. learning and training MATTERS in our ability to detect and respond to events that... if untrained... might take

advantage of our brain's inherent "blind spots" or weaknesses.

Perhaps childhood religious indoctrination is a very adept recognition of these mental tendencies/flaws, so profoundly (if intuitively/naively) expressed by Ignatius Loyola, founder of the Jesuit order, "Give me the boy until 7, I will give you the man." (paraphrased; forgive me)

Kahneman's discoveries and documentation of mental capacity and biases could form the basis of a "Mental Martial Arts" program: an alternative form of indoctrination, in which students are trained to understand their brains' weaknesses, and learn to take stances or engage in practices that eliminate or reduce the errors to which these weaknesses can lead.

This book will rearrange the way you think... about how you think.

## John

An unrelentingly tedious book that can be summed up as follows. We are irrationally prone to jump to conclusions based on rule-of-thumb shortcuts to actual reasoning, and in reliance on bad evidence, even though we have the capacity to think our way to better conclusions. But we're lazy, so we don't. We don't understand statistics, and if we did, we'd be more cautious in our judgments, and less prone to think highly of our own skill at judging probabilities and outcomes. Life not only is uncertain

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If you like endless -- and I mean endless -- algebraic word problems and circuitous anecdotes about everything from the author's dead friend Amos to his stint with the Israeli Air Defense Force, if you like slow-paced, rambling explanations that rarely summarize a conclusion, if your idea of a hot date is to talk Bayesian theory with a clinical psychologist or an economist, then this book is for you, who are likely a highly specialized academically-inclined person. Perhaps you are even a blast at parties, I don't know.

But if you're like me and you prefer authors to cut to the chase, make their point, and then leave you with a whopping big appendix if you're interested in the regression analysis of how many freshmen would watch a guy choke to death because they think someone else will come to the rescue, then this book is not for you.

If you want to take the Reader's Digest pass through the book, then Chapter 1 and Section 3 are probably the most accessible and can be read in less than an hour, and still leave you with a fair understanding of the author's thesis.

## Trevor

This is a fascinating book. Reading this book means not having to read so many others. For example, you could avoid having to read, Sway, Blink, Nudge and probably a dozen or so other books on Behavioural Economics. And the best part of it is that this is the guy (or, at least one half of the two guys) who came up with these ideas in the first place.

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I was thinking that perhaps the best way to explain those other books would be to compare them to Monty Python. I want you to imagine something - say you had spent your entire life and never actually seen an episode of Monty Python's Flying Circus. That wouldn't mean you wouldn't know anything about Monty Python. It is impossible to have lived at any time since the late 60s and not have had some socially dysfunctional male reprise the entire Parrot sketch or Spanish Inquisition sketch at you at some stage in your life. I suspect, although there is no way to prove this now,

obviously, that Osama bin Laden could do the Silly Walk like a natural. Well, if you had never seen an episode of Monty Python and your entire experience of their work was via the interpretation of men of a certain age down the pub - then finally getting to see an episode of the original would be much the same effect as reading this book. Hundreds of people have already told all this guy's best stories in their own books - but all the same it is a pleasure to hear them again by the guy that first said, 'this parrot is dead' or rather, 'framing effects make fools of us all'.

You need to read this book - but what is particularly good about it is that you come away from it knowing we really are remarkably easy to fool. It's because we think we know stuff that this comes as a constant surprise to us. Years ago I was talking to a guy who liked to bet. Everyone needs a hobby and that was his. Anyway, he told me he was playing two-up - an Australian betting game - and he realised something like tails hadn't come up frequently enough and so he started betting on tails and sure enough he made money. I told him that coins don't remember the last throw and so the odds of getting a tail was still 50%, as it had previously been. But I had no credibility - I'd already told him I never bet - so, how would I possibly know anything if I wasn't even brave enough to put my own money on the outcome? And didn't I understand the point of this story was he had already WON?

Still, when faced with a series of coin flips that run - H, H, H, H, H, T, H, H, H - it does feel like tails are 'due'. This is the sort of mistake we are all too prone to make. The thing to remember is that while there is a law of large numbers - toss a coin often enough and in the very long run there will be as many heads turn up as tails - that isn't the case in the short run - where just about anything is possible.

We (that is, we humans) are remarkably bad at mental statistics. And what makes it worse is that we are predictably bad at statistics. And this brings me to Bourdieu and him saying that Sociology is kind of martial art. He means that Sociology allows you to defend yourself from those who would manipulate you. Well, this book is the Bruce Lee book of advanced self-defence. Learning just how we fool ourselves might not make you feel terribly great about what it means to be human - but at least you will know why you hav stuffed up next time you do stuff up. I'm not sure it will stop you stuffing up - but that would be asking for an awful lot from one book.

If you want the short version of this book, he has provided the two papers that probably got him the Nobel Prize - and they are remarkably clear, easy to understand and comprehensive. But look, read this book - it will do you good.

## Vijai

If your objective, like it is when one finishes reading a self-help book, is to implement what Mr. Kahneman has to say in real life and benefit from it, I should warn you, you will be sorely disappointed. Believe it or not, in my opinion, I believe Mr. Kahneman is telling you exactly that in this book - that whether you like it or not, your entire life is guided or may I say decided by two fundamental ideas and that there is very little you can do to change it, period.

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Mr. Kahneman is probably the villain in every modern day spiritual guru's life, he argues very effectively that contrary to what these gurus may say the external world/ your environment/ surroundings/ or even society for that matter has a large say in your personal deliberate actions. You don't have a choice.

So, having said that, shelving this book in psychology section would be gross injustice. In my view this is such a good commentary of human nature. The two are different, very much so.

Read it, totally worth it in my opinion. Can get a little too drab but hang in there, this book is an eye opener.

## Megan Baxter

is just okay. It's being marketed as a book on psychology (and economic psychology, in particular) for the layperson. I'm not sure if other laypeople agree, but this wasn't really for me. And it's not that



the prose is too technical (okay, sometimes it is) but rather that Kahneman is stuck somewhere between academic technicalities and clear expressive prose.

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In the meantime, you can read the entire review at