



The Art of Thinking Clearly

Rolf Dobelli

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The Art of Thinking Clearly Rolf Dobelli

The Art of Thinking Clearly by world-class thinker and entrepreneur Rolf Dobelli is an eye-opening look at human psychology and reasoning — essential reading for anyone who wants to avoid “cognitive errors” and make better choices in all aspects of their lives.

Have you ever: Invested time in something that, with hindsight, just wasn't worth it? Or continued doing something you knew was bad for you? These are examples of cognitive biases, simple errors we all make in our day-to-day thinking. But by knowing what they are and how to spot them, we can avoid them and make better decisions.

Simple, clear, and always surprising, this indispensable book will change the way you think and transform your decision-making—work, at home, every day. It reveals, in 99 short chapters, the most common errors of judgment, and how to avoid them.

The Art of Thinking Clearly Details

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Yasmin says

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<https://goo.gl/sXhMJH>

Manoj Arora says

My learning from the book:

- (1) Never underestimate the hard work and lower probability of success, just because we are shown more successful people than many more actual failures
 - (2) Confirmation bias is the mother of all misconceptions. It is a tendency to interpret new information so that it becomes compatible with our existing theories. Warren Buffet has seen people losing money with this because they ignore facts which contradict the theory in the mind of the investor. Dis confirming evidence must be seeked out to beat this theory. e.g. what is next in the sequence 2-4-6-8-...
 - (3) Calamity of Conformity - If you ever find yourself in a tight unanimous group, you must speak your mind, even if your team does not like it, even if it means risking expulsion from the warm nest. And if you lead a group, appoint someone as devil's advocate. He or she will not be the most popular member of the team, but definitely the most important.
 - (4) Induction - Send an email to 10,000 people with stock market prediction by dividing them into 2 groups - telling reverse prediction to each group. Prediction for one of the groups will come true. Send a new prediction to the 5,000 whom you predicted correctly earlier - again after dividing them into 2 groups...carry on like this, and the last 100 would consider you as a genius. People get inducted into a decision based on history without thinking logically.
 - (5) Loss Aversion - The fear of losing something motivates people more than the prospect of gaining something of equal value.
 - (6) When it comes to compounding, don't trust your intuition - you have no idea how powerful it is
 - (7) It is not what you say, but how you say, that's important. 98% Fat Free product seems more healthy than a product with 1% Fat.
 - (8) If you are not a part of the solution, you are definitely a part of the problem. There is no 3rd category of passive onlookers.
 - (9) Follow your passion even if you have to do away with part of your income for that
 - (10) Whenever you are dealing with averages, be careful of the distribution behind it. A Bill Gates monthly income in a group of 50 ordinary citizens can give an extremely misleading average.
 - (11) Money does not always motivate. It works as a motivation only in companies where employees work for only money.
 - (12) Money comes wrapped in emotions. Monet won incidentally, as against earned through hard work, is more likely to be spent erratically - though it is illogical because the money is the same. This can be prevented if you have a clear financial plan with you.
 - (13) Self Control drains your energy, and therefore you need a lot of energy if you want to exercise self control.
 - (14) Presence of something is more noticeable and valued than its absence. e.g. presence of disease than its absence. OR getting off a plane and not noticing that it did not crash.
 - (15) NEWS is to mind, what sugar is to body, appetizing, easy to digest - and highly destructive in the long run
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Ben Babcock says

This book is the dead tree equivalent of a BuzzFeed post. Its title could be “I Got 99 Cognitive Biases But a Psychology Degree Ain’t One.” Or maybe not.

Rolf Dobelli enumerates 99 thinking errors, or cognitive biases, in *The Art of Thinking Clearly*, dispensing as he does tips for leading a more rational, less error-prone life. Anyone who has done even the least amount of reading in this subject will recognize many of the cognitive biases that Dobelli describes here. Unlike most popular cognitive psychology books, however, this book makes no central argument and does not examine these biases within a larger context. It is literally **just a list, with extended descriptions, of the biases**. At times, Dobelli occasionally ascribes the bias to some evolutionary origins, and he will quite often cite some interesting experiments conducted by psychologists (he is not, by the way) that revealed or provided insight into the bias in question. In his introduction Dobelli explains that the book began life as a personal list kept for his own benefit, and I can believe that.

Dobelli covers 99 biases in 300 pages, so he can’t spend much time on each bias. Not every bias is as interesting or worthwhile as the next. But from the very beginning, I was frustrated by the brevity of each chapter. Just as I read something that intrigued me, Dobelli shepherded me on to the next bias like some kind of frantic tour guide worried that we won’t have time to see all of the art. Please stay with the tour, no cameras.

I wanted to be mollified by dazzling prose, but I had to settle for somewhat dull attempts at wit. I wanted to be satisfied with lucid, if too concise, explanations of these biases, but I had to settle for somewhat tepid attempts to demonstrate these biases without getting drawn into the bigger discussions of the cognitive and behavioural science that underlies them. Dobelli ties his own hands here, to poor effect.

To be fair, it is clear that Dobelli is well-read in this field. He has done his research (even if the “note on sources” section frustratingly places the sources under headings by the bias name but not the chapter number, and there is nary an endnote to be seen). It’s clear, judging from the number of times he quotes from or references *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, that he has been heavily influenced by the work of Daniel Kahneman. In fact, one could say that *The Art of Thinking Clearly* is little more than attempt to distil the biases and *only* the biases mentioned in *Thinking, Fast and Slow* and similar such books.

The thing about blog posts like this is that they seldom linger in one’s short- or long-term memories. They are space-filling exercises, attempts to get eyeballs to the page and clicks on ads. It doesn’t work well in book form; I don’t, as a general rule, enjoy books of lists all that much. There are some exceptions for lists compiled and enumerated in a hilarious manner, but that isn’t the case here. Yet with the cognitive biases removed from a larger context and reduced merely to a checklist of errors to avoid, Dobelli robs them of their greater meaning.

So if you’re truly interested in this subject matter, why not just skip *The Art of Thinking Clearly* and go read *Thinking, Fast and Slow*? I have. It’s much better than this book *and* much more informative, and it’s written by an actual psychologist. This book, like the BuzzFeed post it resembles, is a pale imitation of something more meaningful and accomplished. Imitation flowers have their place, but life is too short to waste it on imitation books.

PLAGARISM.

Dobelli uses examples taken directly from other sources, changes the names of characters and wording slightly, and uses them as if they were his own. Why not just quote from the original text?

My advice is to take the chapter headings of the book as a list. Then go through the sources listed... you will get 100x more understanding by reading Cialdini, Munger, Taleb, Kahneman.

<http://www.fooledbyrandomness.com/dob...>

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The Art of Thinking Clearly is a 2013 book by the Swiss writer Rolf Dobelli which describes in short chapters 99 of the most common thinking errors - ranging from cognitive biases to elements like envy and social distortions.

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Bob says

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If you had lots of time (and interest in becoming aware of your cognitive biases), you should read *Thinking Fast and Slow* by Daniel Kahneman, *Predictably Irrational* by Dan Ariely, everything by Steven Pinker, *Fooled by Randomness* and *The Black Swan* by Nassim Taleb, and others. But since not everyone has the time and interest, instead read *The Art of Thinking Clearly*. This book has 99 short chapters (all of them are almost exactly 2.5 pages) that cover the major hiccups in our thinking process. A book like this is so much better than any self-help book or positive thinking/inspirational fluff. Metacognition - thinking about how we think - is underrated. Learning more about biases and heuristics is so important that I am going to push this on my kids when they are a little older. Only bad thing about this book: he didn't need 99 biases/"syndromes." Some were similar enough they could have been combined. If people just learned the top 20, they would be in better shape. By including so many, some of the important ones got lost in the lesser known and lesser experienced ones.

The fact that this is a terrible book became known to me very early in the book, however I decided to keep reading and finish the book, mainly for this reason, plus interest in some of the short stories in there. One thing that this book had for me, was a short list of some useful books to get to once I'm done with this one.

There's tons wrong with this book, and I don't want you to have to read 5 pages here, so let's just get to a few major reasons and move on:

1. My main issue is the writer himself, read a few of the pages, and you soon come to understand that Rolf Dobelli doesn't know what he's talking about at all. He doesn't have any new knowledge to offer, and he doesn't even offer a better way to understand already known knowledge, regardless of how much he tries.
2. **Cynicism is present all over the book**, while that might be nice for a pessimist, it definitely isn't for an optimist like me, not even for non-pessimists all over the world. I could understand this if that cynicism was at the very least standing on some facts, but even that is not the case.
3. Plagiarism, if you looked at other reviews, you already know this one. Fortunately I've checked out "Thinking, Fast and Slow" by **Daniel Kahneman** a long time ago, and could see a lot of the places where Rolf Dobelli used Daniel's examples and researches throughout the book, without even slightest pointer to him, or his best-selling book, that's a big NO in my book. **This reason is enough for me to blacklist the writer for life.** (Not to mention the long list of stealing that he did from Nassim Taleb, just google it to see what I'm talking about)
4. Lots of the data in the book is incorrect, and gladly we have math and science to back us up on this. My biggest question at these points was, **"How this guy can be an investor, and work with money, if he doesn't even understand simplest statistics, and how someone must use math?"**
5. And probably the most clear one to every reader, **the writer is a hypocrite.** He uses at least half a dozen of methods that he explicitly "orders" you (yes, "order", not "suggest" or "recommend") not to use ever. While this is clear at some points in the book, unfortunately some people find a way to overlook it.

I could refer to 40 or 45 pages specifically and show you the problems I had with this book in details, but then no one would read this review, and so this couldn't help anyone avoid it, or be clear enough before reading it, so I decided to just point to a few generic and major issues, and not talk too specifically here.

Why I didn't rate the book 1 star then? Well, the book has a list of errors, 99 to be exact, and while I don't agree with about half of them, the list can still be useful for you, maybe you can't get the required information for each error in this mostly stolen book, but it gives you a starting point to follow from other books, like Daniel Kahneman's book, and start using those points in your life. Just make sure you apply that final step before changing anything in your life based on this book.

The book also had a couple of interesting short stories and pointers that I could use as clues and find more about later on. I wrote all of them on a small piece of paper and will get to at some point.

I guess you have 2 options if you're interested in this book, first of all, you could read the full book, but close off your mind and make sure you don't treat this pile of information as correct until you spent quite some time filtering it; and secondly, you could just look at the list of topics at the beginning of the book and see which ones you can agree with at that very moment, and then jump to the end of the book and check the

resources, and start reading the resources instead of the book itself to get to those interesting topics; after all, the writer didn't have anything useful to add here.

I personally don't see the time I put to read this book as wasted, in fact I see it as investment into better filter wrong info in my journey, and also to understand better, the people that base their life on such books, as I believe I can do that a little bit better than before I started reading this.

Thank you for spending time reading my review, will see you on the next book. :)

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