

The upside of the irrationality

Dan Ariely

From the laboratory to the waiting public, nothing lost in translation, humor gained

This is a wonderfully written, amusing book on top of being very informative. The author benefited (?!) by being almost burned to death when he was 18. It gave him a new perspective on life, and the limitations of the lifelong scarring, pain, and physical disability forced him to choose a compatible career path. Fortunately for us, it was academia.

He talks about innumerable irrational things we do. The IKEA effect is the love we have for furniture when we have assembled ourselves. The very well known "not invented here" effect, which smothers good ideas in their crib. The ones I found most interesting concerned our mating habits. How do we make ourselves attractive to the opposite sex, and conversely, how does the human animal deal with the fact that he or she is just not that attractive? Keep hitting on people above our class? Rationalize that ugly people have other qualities such as a sense of humor? Or simply retreat into a monastery?

He has interesting riffs on the virtues of a society which employs yentas, the downside of computer dating, the psychology of speed dating in a great deal more.

I'm not going to invest great deal more in this because more than 100 have preceded me. I generally agree with the five star reviews.