

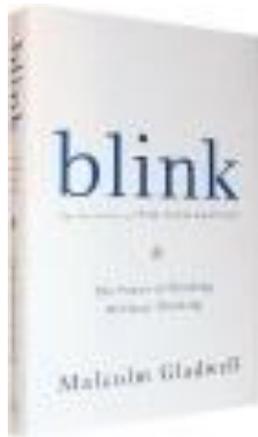
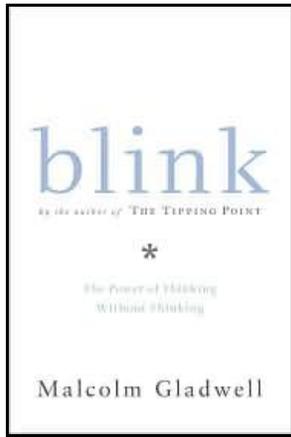
Book Review

by

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**Gladwell, Malcolm: “Blink – The Power of Thinking Without Thinking” Little, Brown and Company, Time Warner Book Group. January 2005.**

This is a book about the first moment of an encounter. In that moment lies the entire story of the encounter and Malcolm Gladwell (Author of the famous “The Tipping Point”) sets out to decode what really happens in that instant called the “Blink.”

The Blink moment is the un-guarded, un-rationalised response to the stimulus in the world outside. The Blink draws upon resources that lie deeply embedded behind the locked doors of the subconscious, intuitive mind. Snap judgements are made and acted upon. The Blink holds the key to many a fortune as well as many a misfortune – for in that instant, lies the seeding of the future. Blink moments can go right or wrong – its hard to foretell.

Thin-slicing is taking a microcosm of data and extrapolating the macro-universe of meaning. Using extraordinarily small bits of information, one can unerringly project the success or otherwise of marital relationships, material successes, career paths and the future can become more certain.

Eastern cultures like ours where mysticism, intuitiveness and symbolisms abound would turn around and say “So, what’s new?”

Yes, it is old wine in a new bottle. We feel it in our bones, and play hunches, and go by our instincts all the time. We have been doing it for centuries. Narratives and symbols from our culture have never downplayed human instincts. Even modern Indian literature often describes the “moment” when connections are made and insights happen.

The only difference is that now we have scientific evidence to prove it. It's a paradox of sorts...using left brain logical and scientific thinking to prove the power of the right brain and intuitive thinking.

What's new is that Malcolm Gladwell reviews current scientific literature and experiments, cases and incidents and stories that are new and recent. From experiments of a psychologist to test instant response of students to teachers, he moves on to thin-slicing data on marital relationships, and ends with bringing home the importance of conducting blind auditions for musical performances. The book begins with making a case for the blink response and goes on to warn of the dangers of making errors if we were to act on this response. It finally ends up with recommending that we need to blinker our eyes if we are to be more "objective" in our judgments. Quite a flip-flop as Gladwell actually lands up with not making a point either for or against the Blink response.

Much energy has gone into thinking about not thinking. Thankfully, humankind will continue to be human and choose when to think and when not to think. The book really doesn't change anything.

Aneeta Madhok