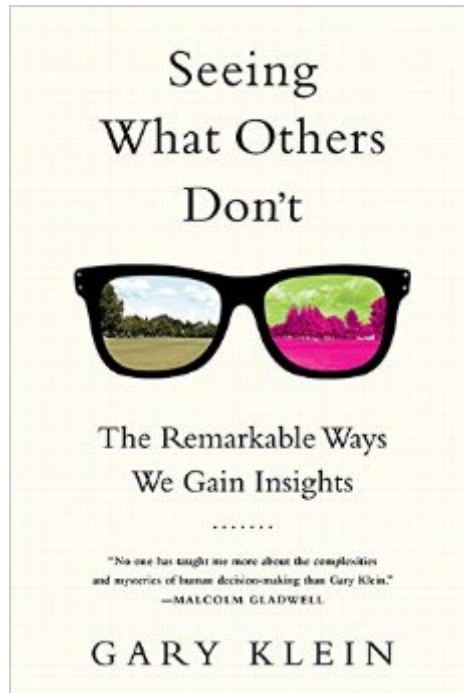


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Seeing What Others Don't: The Remarkable Ways We Gain Insights



Synopsis

Insights—like Darwin's understanding of the way evolution actually works, and Watson and Crick's breakthrough discoveries about the structure of DNA—can change the world. We also need insights into the everyday things that frustrate and confuse us so that we can more effectively solve problems and get things done. Yet we know very little about when, why, or how insights are formed—or what blocks them. In *Seeing What Others Don't*, renowned cognitive psychologist Gary Klein unravels the mystery. Klein is a keen observer of people in their natural settings—scientists, businesspeople, firefighters, police officers, soldiers, family members, friends, himself—and uses a marvelous variety of stories to illuminate his research into what insights are and how they happen. What, for example, enabled Harry Markopolos to put the finger on Bernie Madoff? How did Dr. Michael Gottlieb make the connections between different patients that allowed him to publish the first announcement of the AIDS epidemic? What did Admiral Yamamoto see (and what did the Americans miss) in a 1940 British attack on the Italian fleet that enabled him to develop the strategy of attack at Pearl Harbor? How did a "smokejumper" see that setting another fire would save his life, while those who ignored his insight perished? How did Martin Chalfie come up with a million-dollar idea (and a Nobel Prize) for a natural flashlight that enabled researchers to look inside living organisms to watch biological processes in action? Klein also dissects impediments to insight, such as when organizations claim to value employee creativity and to encourage breakthroughs but in reality block disruptive ideas and prioritize avoidance of mistakes. Or when information technology systems are "dumb by design" and block potential discoveries. Both scientifically sophisticated and fun to read, *Seeing What Others Don't* shows that insight is not just a "eureka!" moment but a whole new way of understanding.

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Customer Reviews

Long ago, I realized that the true value of most (if not all) breakthrough insights is best determined by the nature and extent of the disruptive impact they have on the given status quo. Here is a three-part challenge: 1. How to create an environment within which insights are most likely to occur? 2. How to recognize and then grasp them? 3. How to nourish their development and, if necessary, defend them while in that process? These are among the questions to which Gary Klein responds and he does so with a series of brilliant insights of his own. In 2005, he learned about a movement called "positive psychology," started by a psychotherapist - Martin Seligman - who was determined to add "meaning and pleasure to the lives of his clients" by emphasizing the positive dimension of their experience. "I felt that the concept of positive psychology applied to decision making as well," Klein notes, and suggests that to improve performance - increase the quality of decisions - "we need two things. The down arrow is what we have to reduce, errors. The up arrow is what we have to increase, insights. Performance depends on doing both of these things." Klein focuses on 120 "cases" that demonstrate one or (in most instances) several of five strategies: Connections (dots, yes, but also similarities, causal relationships, and interdependence); Coincidences (clues to possible patterns of evidence and verification); Curiosities (initially, inexplicable phenomena that require closer attention); Contradictions (initially viewed as absurdities but then...); and Creative Desperation (unexpectedly resolving a problem that seems unsolvable).

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