

# CONTENTS

Introduction	<i>xv</i>
1 Why You Should Visit Cemeteries: Survivorship Bias	1
2 Does Harvard Make You Smarter?: Swimmer's Body Illusion	4
3 Why You See Shapes in the Clouds: Clustering Illusion	7
4 If Fifty Million People Say Something Foolish, It Is Still Foolish: Social Proof	10
5 Why You Should Forget the Past: Sunk Cost Fallacy	13
6 Don't Accept Free Drinks: Reciprocity	16
7 Beware the "Special Case": Confirmation Bias (Part 1)	19
8 Murder Your Darlings: Confirmation Bias (Part 2)	22
9 Don't Bow to Authority: Authority Bias	25
10 Leave Your Supermodel Friends at Home: Contrast Effect	28
11 Why We Prefer a Wrong Map to None at All: Availability Bias	31



## Contents

12	Why “No Pain, No Gain” Should Set Alarm Bells Ringing: The It’ll-Get-Worse-Before-It-Gets-Better Fallacy	34
13	Even True Stories Are Fairy Tales: Story Bias	37
14	Why You Should Keep a Diary: Hindsight Bias	40
15	Why You Systematically Overestimate Your Knowledge and Abilities: Overconfidence Effect	43
16	Don’t Take News Anchors Seriously: Chauffeur Knowledge	46
17	You Control Less Than You Think: Illusion of Control	49
18	Never Pay Your Lawyer by the Hour: Incentive Super-Response Tendency	52
19	The Dubious Efficacy of Doctors, Consultants, and Psychotherapists: Regression to Mean	55
20	Never Judge a Decision by Its Outcome: Outcome Bias	58
21	Less Is More: Paradox of Choice	61
22	You Like Me, You Really, Really Like Me: Liking Bias	64
23	Don’t Cling to Things: Endowment Effect	67
24	The Inevitability of Unlikely Events: Coincidence	70
25	The Calamity of Conformity: Groupthink	73



- 26 Why You'll Soon Be Playing Mega Trillions:  
Neglect of Probability 76
- 27 Why the Last Cookie in the Jar Makes Your  
Mouth Water: Scarcity Error 80
- 28 When You Hear Hoofbeats, Don't Expect a Zebra:  
Base-Rate Neglect 83
- 29 Why the "Balancing Force of the Universe"  
Is Baloney: Gambler's Fallacy 86
- 30 Why the Wheel of Fortune Makes Our Heads Spin:  
The Anchor 89
- 31 How to Relieve People of Their Millions: Induction 92
- 32 Why Evil Is More Striking Than Good: Loss Aversion 95
- 33 Why Teams Are Lazy: Social Loafing 98
- 34 Stumped by a Sheet of Paper:  
Exponential Growth 101
- 35 Curb Your Enthusiasm: Winner's Curse 104
- 36 Never Ask a Writer If the Novel Is Autobiographical:  
Fundamental Attribution Error 107
- 37 Why You Shouldn't Believe in the Stork:  
False Causality 110



## Contents

- 38 Why Attractive People Climb the Career Ladder More Quickly: Halo Effect 113
- 39 Congratulations! You've Won Russian Roulette: Alternative Paths 116
- 40 False Prophets: Forecast Illusion 119
- 41 The Deception of Specific Cases: Conjunction Fallacy 122
- 42 It's Not What You Say, but How You Say It: Framing 125
- 43 Why Watching and Waiting Is Torture: Action Bias 128
- 44 Why You Are Either the Solution—or the Problem: Omission Bias 131
- 45 Don't Blame Me: Self-Serving Bias 134
- 46 Be Careful What You Wish For: Hedonic Treadmill 137
- 47 Do Not Marvel at Your Existence: Self-Selection Bias 140
- 48 Why Experience Can Damage Your Judgment: Association Bias 143
- 49 Be Wary When Things Get Off to a Great Start: Beginner's Luck 146
- 50 Sweet Little Lies: Cognitive Dissonance 149



51	Live Each Day as If It Were Your Last—but Only on Sundays: Hyperbolic Discounting	152
52	Any Lame Excuse: “Because” Justification	155
53	Decide Better—Decide Less: Decision Fatigue	158
54	Would You Wear Hitler’s Sweater?: Contagion Bias	161
55	Why There Is No Such Thing as an Average War: The Problem with Averages	164
56	How Bonuses Destroy Motivation: Motivation Crowding	167
57	If You Have Nothing to Say, Say Nothing: Twaddle Tendency	170
58	How to Increase the Average IQ of Two States: Will Rogers Phenomenon	173
59	If You Have an Enemy, Give Him Information: Information Bias	176
60	Hurts So Good: Effort Justification	179
61	Why Small Things Loom Large: The Law of Small Numbers	182
62	Handle with Care: Expectations	185
63	Speed Traps Ahead!: Simple Logic	188



## Contents

64	How to Expose a Charlatan: Forer Effect	191
65	Volunteer Work Is for the Birds: Volunteer's Folly	194
66	Why You Are a Slave to Your Emotions: Affect Heuristic	197
67	Be Your Own Heretic: Introspection Illusion	200
68	Why You Should Set Fire to Your Ships:	
	Inability to Close Doors	203
69	Disregard the Brand New: Neomania	206
70	Why Propaganda Works: Sleeper Effect	209
71	Why It's Never Just a Two-Horse Race:	
	Alternative Blindness	212
72	Why We Take Aim at Young Guns:	
	Social Comparison Bias	215
73	Why First Impressions Are Deceiving:	
	Primacy and Recency Effects	218
74	Why You Can't Beat Homemade:	
	Not-Invented-Here Syndrome	221
75	How to Profit from the Implausible:	
	The Black Swan	224
76	Knowledge Is Nontransferable:	
	Domain Dependence	227



77	The Myth of Like-Mindedness:	
	False-Consensus Effect	230
78	You Were Right All Along: Falsification of History	233
79	Why You Identify with Your Football Team: In-Group	
	Out-Group Bias	236
80	The Difference between Risk and Uncertainty:	
	Ambiguity Aversion	239
81	Why You Go with the Status Quo: Default Effect	242
82	Why “Last Chances” Make Us Panic:	
	Fear of Regret	245
83	How Eye-Catching Details Render Us Blind:	
	Salience Effect	248
84	Why Money Is Not Naked: House-Money Effect	251
85	Why New Year’s Resolutions Don’t Work:	
	Procrastination	254
86	Build Your Own Castle: Envy	257
87	Why You Prefer Novels to Statistics:	
	Personification	260
88	You Have No Idea What You Are Overlooking:	
	Illusion of Attention	263



## Contents

89	Hot Air: Strategic Misrepresentation	266
90	Where's the Off Switch?: Overthinking	269
91	Why You Take On Too Much: Planning Fallacy	272
92	Those Wielding Hammers See Only Nails: Déformation Professionnelle	275
93	Mission Accomplished: Zeigarnik Effect	278
94	The Boat Matters More Than the Rowing: Illusion of Skill	281
95	Why Checklists Deceive You: Feature-Positive Effect	284
96	Drawing the Bull's-Eye around the Arrow: Cherry Picking	287
97	The Stone Age Hunt for Scapegoats: Fallacy of the Single Cause	290
98	Why Speed Demons Appear to Be Safer Drivers: Intention-to-Treat Error	293
99	Why You Shouldn't Read the News: News Illusion	296
	Epilogue	299
	Acknowledgments	307
	A Note on Sources	309