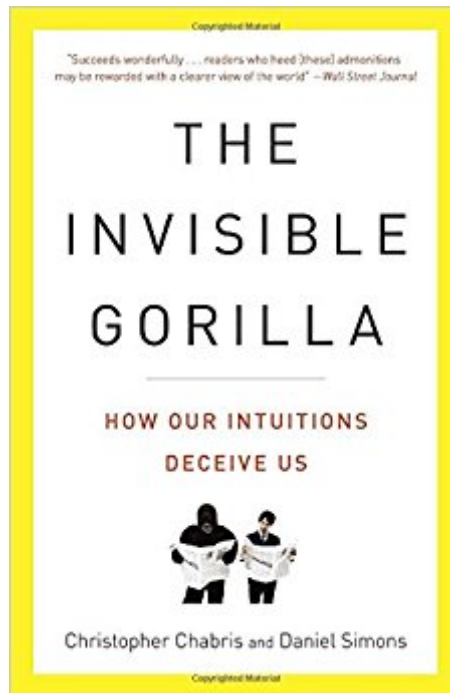




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# The Invisible Gorilla: How Our Intuitions Deceive Us



## Synopsis

Reading this book will make you less sure of yourself—and that's a good thing. In *The Invisible Gorilla*, Christopher Chabris and Daniel Simons, creators of one of psychology's most famous experiments, use remarkable stories and counterintuitive scientific findings to demonstrate an important truth: Our minds don't work the way we think they do. We think we see ourselves and the world as they really are, but we're actually missing a whole lot. Chabris and Simons combine the work of other researchers with their own findings on attention, perception, memory, and reasoning to reveal how faulty intuitions often get us into trouble. In the process, they explain: Why a company would spend billions to launch a product that its own analysts know will fail How a police officer could run right past a brutal assault without seeing it Why award-winning movies are full of editing mistakes What criminals have in common with chess masters Why measles and other childhood diseases are making a comeback Why money managers could learn a lot from weather forecasters Again and again, we think we experience and understand the world as it is, but our thoughts are beset by everyday illusions. We write traffic laws and build criminal cases on the assumption that people will notice when something unusual happens right in front of them. We're sure we know where we were on 9/11, falsely believing that vivid memories are seared into our minds with perfect fidelity. And as a society, we spend billions on devices to train our brains because we're continually tempted by the lure of quick fixes and effortless self-improvement. *The Invisible Gorilla* reveals the myriad ways that our intuitions can deceive us, but it's much more than a catalog of human failings. Chabris and Simons explain why we succumb to these everyday illusions and what we can do to inoculate ourselves against their effects. Ultimately, the book provides a kind of x-ray vision into our own minds, making it possible to pierce the veil of illusions that clouds our thoughts and to think clearly for perhaps the first time. From the Hardcover edition.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Tom Vanderbilt Reviews *The Invisible Gorilla* Tom Vanderbilt writes on design, technology, architecture, science, and many other topics. He is author of *Traffic: Why We Drive the Way We Do (and What It Says About Us)* published in 2008 by Alfred A. Knopf, and *Survival City: Adventures Among the Ruins of Atomic America*, published in 2002 by Princeton Architectural Press. He is contributing editor to *I.D.* and *Print* magazines, contributing writer at *Design Observer*, and writes for many publications, ranging from *Wired* to the *New York Times* to *Men's Vogue* to the *Wilson Quarterly*. He lives in Brooklyn, NY. Do you remember when you first saw--or more likely, didn't see--the gorilla? For me it was one afternoon a number of years ago when I clicked open one of those noxious-but-irresistible forwarded emails ("You Won't Believe Your Eyes!"). The task was simple--count the number of passes in a tight cluster of basketball players--but the ensuing result was astonishing: As I dutifully (and correctly) tracked the number of passes made, a guy in a gorilla suit had strolled into the center, beat his chest, and sauntered off. But I never saw the gorilla. And I was hardly alone. The video, which went on to become a global viral sensation, brought "inattention blindness"--a once comparatively obscure interest of cognitive psychologists--into striking relief. Here was a dramatic reminder that looking is not necessarily seeing, that "paying attention to one thing might come at the cost of missing another altogether. No one was more taken with the experience than the authors of the original study, Daniel Simons and Christopher Chabris, as they recount in their new--and, dare I say, eye-opening--book, *The Invisible Gorilla*. "The fact that people miss things is important," they write, "but what impressed us even more was the surprise people showed when they realized what they had missed." *The Invisible Gorilla* uses that ersatz primate as a departure point (and overarching metaphor) for exploring the myriad of other illusions, perceptual or otherwise, that we encounter in everyday life--and our often complete lack of awareness as we do so. These "gorillas" are lurking everywhere--from the (often false) memories we think we have to the futures we think we can anticipate to the cause-and-effect chains we feel must exist. Writing with authority, clarity, and a

healthy dose of skepticism, Simons and Chabris explore why these illusions persist--and, indeed, seem to multiply in the modern world--and how we might work to avoid them. Alas, there are no easy solutions--doing crosswords to stave off cognitive decline in one's dotage may simply make you better at doing crosswords. But looking for those "gorillas in our midst" is as rewarding as actually finding them. (Photo © Kate Burton) --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Professors of Psychology Chabris and Simons write about six everyday illusions of perception and thought, including the beliefs that: we pay attention more than we do, our memories are more detailed than they are, confident people are competent people, we know more than we actually do, and our brains have reserves of power that are easy to unlock. Through a host of studies, anecdotes, and logic, the authors debunk conventional wisdom about the workings of the mind and what "experts" really know (or don't). Presented almost as a response to Malcolm Gladwell's blink, the books pay special attention to "the illusion of knowledge" and the danger of basing decision-making, in areas such as investing, on short-term information; in the authors' view, careful analysis of assumed truths is preferred over quick, intuitive thinking. Chabris and Simons are not against intuition, "...but we don't think it should be exalted above analysis without good evidence that it is truly superior." Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I had to read this book as part of my capstone for psychology and it was actually really interesting. And I know it says that after reading this book you'll look at everything around you differently and you really do. It's a great thinking book

Right at the top of the Customer Bucket core competency--is this principle: "We are zealots for researching and understanding our markets." So if your customer research is more anecdote than actuality, take a fascinating side trip through "The Invisible Gorilla." The book addresses six everyday illusions: Attention, Memory, Confidence, Knowledge, Cause, and Potential. Warning! This hard-to-put-down book will be hard on you--if you've based your customer research on the wrong hypotheses, incorrect associations (versus cause), and "change blindness blindness." I'll read this book again--maybe three times!

I was drawn to this book after I failed to notice Gorilla in the video on YouTube. I was totally

shocked by my selective blindness, and had to learn more. This book is loaded with examples, research data to show the everyday illusion about our memory, capability and confidence. The book will make you wiser (perhaps little less confident).

I thoroughly enjoyed reading this book. It is very well written and a quick and easy read, despite the potentially complex material. I also thought the author did a terrific job of integrating multiple concepts, particularly in the summary chapter at the end. When a book is this well put together and the concepts are so cleanly presented, you really see how well the author understands the material. That makes it much easier to digest. Bringing some professorial teaching experience to bear no doubt. I learned quite a bit despite having been introduced to some of these concepts and studies in other sources. Very thought provoking, makes you really think about...how you think!

Amazing read! This book will honestly blow your mind. I had to read this for my psychology class and do a report on it. Came in just in time for me to read it. I recommend everyone read this book

I was first introduced to the invisible gorilla video during my undergrad coursework and on its own, it was eye-opening (literally). When we realize that our own intuitions, knowledge, beliefs, memories, and experiences can be misleading, we begin to see and make better judgements. The authors do a tremendous job of presenting their information in a well laid out fashion, with plenty of real-world examples to put the techno-jargon into easily understood terms. You will do well to read this book cover to cover with an open mind and a recognition that despite your own beliefs (and those of others), you may not be as awesome as you think you are, and that's okay. :)

I loved this book! It was fascinating how we can be looking right at something but still not see it because we are so focused on one thing. It really lends insight into the psychology of the human mind and how we see and remember things. Of course we all know that eyewitness accounts are flawed, but most of us would argue that we are better than average at noticing details. The unbelievable part came in when viewing the actual video links (I won't spoil this for those who have not read the book yet). Suffice it to say that most of us will be amazed at exactly what we will miss. Just like the old game we used to play in school where someone whispered something to someone else and everyone passed it on- the final "story" never resembled the first statement. The tales of eyewitness accounts where people are positive they are right and someone's reputation and/or life hang in the balance-well, the fun tricks in the book are proof that not-so-fun events of mistaken

identity take place everyday. It is not a "preachy" book but shows through example (and story) how wrong we sometimes perceive things. I would recommend this book to anyone. It reminded me for some reason of "The Tipping Point" and the two "Freakanomics" releases. I believe if you liked those books, you will enjoy this one as well.

The Invisible Gorilla, a catch phrase destined to be as ubiquitous as the "elephant in the room" is a enjoyable, easy-to-read explanation of how we trick ourselves and the limitations of our physical brains to accurately recall details. What is reality? You will find yourself asking that question as the authors detail experiment after experiment and real life instances where participants forget, confuse, and add fantasies to actual events. Warning: You will never trust an eye-witness report again! If you are a student of the mind, this is a must-have book.

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