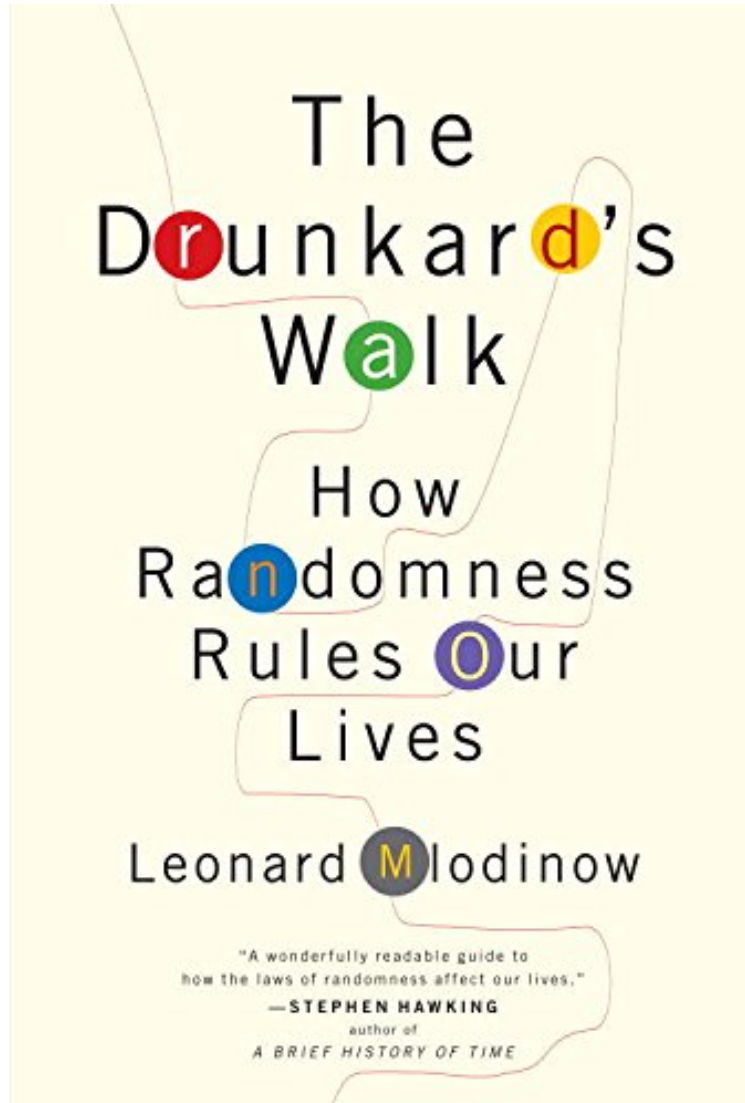


(Download) The Drunkard's Walk: How Randomness Rules Our Lives

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Leonard Mlodinow

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Leonard Mlodinow : The Drunkard's Walk: How Randomness Rules Our Lives before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Drunkard's Walk: How Randomness Rules Our Lives:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. The Right Balance of History, Philosophy, Mathematics and Popular Culture By Jay Although it's seemingly impossible to discuss this book without drawing parallels to Fooled By Randomness, these books provide a great compliment to each other. This book in particular differs in its scope, traversing many areas outside of finance. It also speaks more directly to the reader, explaining the mathematics of probability by breaking down the mathematics (in contrast to Taleb who speaks more through analogies and

metaphors). The writer explains concepts clearly, and explores the role (and misunderstandings of) probability in Hollywood, the board room, the courts, and why the Greeks, despite their immense mathematical contributions had no understanding of probability; and a great skepticism of probability. This book contains just the right balance of history, philosophy, mathematics, popular culture (Monty Hall problem, etc), and it's accessible to all. If you're on the fence about it, look at the Table of Contents for some inspiration. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. It opened my eyes to the randomness in our lives. By Peter Do you think randomness only applies to games? Think twice, this book shows how randomness is everywhere and how we are tricked by it. It is a great read and it may open a new world for you if you read it with care. How we infer causes from outcomes and forget how randomness could have played part is key. Love the idea on the asymmetry between past and future and he explains it very clearly. In summary this is a very good book, with clear ideas. The only downside I found is that it could feel a bit repetitive (some points are made several times). I definitely recommend this book as a starting read on randomness in our lives. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. The Power of Persistence By Winston D. Jen We humans are notorious pattern-seeking creatures. In experiments where two lights are flashed with differing frequencies, human test subjects attempt to predict the pattern. Rats, however, will simply pick the light that appears more often. In so doing, they will outperform the most intelligent species on the planet. In a similar vein, even experts cannot predict the success of books or films submitted for publishing. JK Rowling suffered numerous setbacks before her Harry Potter series was finally adopted, earning very handsome sums for her, Bloomsbury and Warner Brothers pictures. So too for Bruce Willis and Bill Gates. Anne Frank's diary was initially treated with similar derision. While hindsight is often (claimed) to be 20/20, foresight is notoriously unreliable, as Mlodinow illustrates in the latter half, after describing statistical significance and the bell curve. Most people do not expect clusters; they think patterns will inevitably reveal themselves in any random distribution. This is, obviously, not the case. Random events, by definition, cannot be predicted (at least not with our current technology). The counter-intuitive and hard-to-grasp nature of probability doesn't stop there. Studies have shown that ordinary citizens not trained in probability are quite prone to simple errors. For example, if they are asked whether it is more likely that Jane, a woman in her 20s, is a feminist, or both a feminist and an elementary school teacher, most will answer that the latter is more likely. The latter, in fact, is a mathematical impossibility. It can only be equally likely, not more likely, than the former. Part of the difficulty lies in the sheer number of possibilities for any given situation, such as the risk of a single valve in a fission reactor leading to a meltdown. Since valves are open quite often, a single valve is likely to be considered par for the course. It is also why the phrase "military intelligence" is frequently treated with scorn. Although in hindsight the decision to leave Pearl Harbor be, due to its solid defensive emplacements, politics inevitably leads to finger-pointing and blame games. Trial by mathematics can lead to the innocent being convicted, especially since the wrong probabilities are often used (i.e. where the number of inter-racial couples in a city who own a certain car, vs. the number of total couples in that same city). Likewise, the Monty-Hall problem (using a gameshow where a contestant can win a goat or a car) had the world's top mathematicians making a simple blunder, unwilling to accept their error until seeing it demonstrated in a computer simulation (for more details, watch the film 21). Regression towards the mean is explained through genetics (shorter parents are more likely to have children who outgrow them, and vice versa. A recurring method for keeping things interesting is the continual use of brief biographies peppered throughout the book. Even the Greeks and Romans get a smattering of compliments and criticism (for instance, they had no concept of zero, and irrational numbers were thought to be too dangerous for the common populace). I especially enjoyed the tale of the mathematician who took Las Vegas casinos for a very costly ride, with some assistance from his students. This book is a great way to make complex mathematics fun, and you won't have to cramp your hands while you do it!

With the born storyteller's command of narrative and imaginative approach, Leonard Mlodinow vividly demonstrates how our lives are profoundly informed by chance and randomness and how everything from wine ratings and corporate success to school grades and political polls are less reliable than we believe. By showing us the true nature of chance and revealing the psychological illusions that cause us to misjudge the world around us, Mlodinow gives us the tools we need to make more informed decisions. From the classroom to the courtroom and from financial markets to supermarkets, Mlodinow's intriguing and illuminating look at how randomness, chance, and probability affect our daily lives will intrigue, awe, and inspire. From the Trade Paperback edition.

.com Guest : Stephen Hawking Published in 1988, Stephen Hawking's A Brief History of Time became perhaps one of the unlikeliest bestsellers in history: a not-so-dumbed-down exploration of physics and the universe that occupied the London Sunday Times bestseller list for 237 weeks. Later successes include 1995's A Briefer History of Time, The Universe in a Nutshell, and God Created the Integers: The Mathematical Breakthroughs that Changed History. Stephen Hawking is Lucasian Professor of Mathematics at the University of Cambridge. In The Drunkard's Walk Leonard Mlodinow provides readers with a wonderfully readable guide to how the mathematical laws of randomness affect our lives. With insight he shows how the hallmarks of chance are apparent in the course of events all around us. The understanding of randomness has brought about profound changes in the way

we view our surroundings, and our universe. I am pleased that Leonard has skillfully explained this important branch of mathematics. --Stephen Hawking From Publishers Weekly

A drunkard's walk is a type of random statistical distribution with important applications in scientific studies ranging from biology to astronomy. Mlodinow, a visiting lecturer at Caltech and coauthor with Stephen Hawking of *A Briefer History of Time*, leads readers on a walk through the hills and valleys of randomness and how it directs our lives more than we realize. Mlodinow introduces important historical figures such as Bernoulli, Laplace and Pascal, emphasizing their ideas rather than their tumultuous private lives. Mlodinow defines such tricky concepts as regression to the mean and the law of large numbers, which should help readers as they navigate the daily deluge of election polls and new studies on how to live to 100. The author also carefully avoids veering off into the terra incognita of chaos theory aside from a brief mention of the famous butterfly effect, although he might have spent a little more time on the equally famous n-body problem that led to chaos theory. Books on randomness and statistics line library shelves, but Mlodinow will help readers sort out Mark Twain's damn lies from meaningful statistics and the choices we face every day. (May 13) Copyright copy; Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

"Mlodinow writes in a breezy style, interspersing probabilistic mind-benders with portraits of theorists.... The result is a readable crash course in randomness."--The New York Times Book "A wonderfully readable guide to how the mathematical laws of randomness affect our lives."--Stephen Hawking, author of *A Brief History of Time* "[Mlodinow] thinks in equations but explains in anecdote, simile, and occasional bursts of neon. . . . The results are mind-bending."--Fortune "Even if you begin *The Drunkard's Walk* as a skeptic, by the time you reach the final pages, you will gain an understanding--if not acceptance--of the intuitively improbable ways that probability biases the outcomes of life's uncertainties."--Barron's "Delightfully entertaining."--Scientific American "A magnificent exploration of the role that chance plays in our lives. The probability is high that you will be entertained and enlightened by this intelligent charmer."--Daniel Gilbert, author of *Stumbling on Happiness* "Mlodinow is the perfect guy to reveal the ways unrelated elements can relate and connect."--The Miami Herald "A primer on the science of probability."--The Washington Post Book World "Challenges our intuitions about probability and explores how, by understanding randomness, we can better grasp our world."--Seed Magazine "Mlodinow has an intimate perspective on randomness."--The Austin Chronicle

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