



The Art of Choosing

By Sheena Iyengar

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Every day we make choices. Coke or Pepsi? Save or spend? Stay or go?

Whether mundane or life-altering, these choices define us and shape our lives. Sheena Iyengar asks the difficult questions about how and why we choose: Is the desire for choice innate or bound by culture? Why do we sometimes choose against our best interests? How much control do we really have over what we choose? Sheena Iyengar's award-winning research reveals that the answers are surprising and profound. In our world of shifting political and cultural forces, technological revolution, and interconnected commerce, our decisions have far-reaching consequences. Use THE ART OF CHOOSING as your companion and guide for the many challenges ahead.

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The Art of Choosing By Sheena Iyengar Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Starred Review. Choice, perhaps the highest good in the American socioeconomic lexicon, is a very mixed blessing, according to this fascinating study of decision making and its discontents. Psychologist Iyengar cites evidence that a paucity of choice can damage the mental and physical health of dogs, rats, and British civil servants alike. But, she contends, choice can also mislead and burden us: advertising manipulates us through the illusion of choice; a surfeit of choices can paralyze decision making; and some choices, like the decision to withdraw life support from a loved one, are so terrible that we are happier if we delegate them to others. Iyengar draws on everything from the *pensées* of Albert Camus to *The Matrix*, but her focus is on the ingenious experiments that psychologists have concocted to explore the vagaries of choice. (In her own experiment, shoppers presented with an assortment of 24 jams were 1/10th as likely to buy some than those who were shown a mere six.) Iyengar writes in a lucid, catchy style, very much in the Malcolm Gladwell vein of pop psychology–cum–social commentary, but with more rigor. The result is a delightful, astonishing take on the pitfalls of making up one's mind. (*Mar.*)

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From [Booklist](#)

Prominent social psychologist Iyengar begins her unique and invigorating study of choice by telling the story of a man who survived for 76 days stranded alone in the middle of the ocean. He chose to live, Iyengar tells us, just as she has chosen not to let her blindness keep her from conducting prodigious research and intrepid experiments. Iyengar exponentially expands our understanding of the central role choice plays in the lives of animals and humans in a rapid-fire, many-faceted, and original inquiry that is at once personable and commanding. She explains our “biological need for choice and control,” the decision process, and the myriad influences that dictate everything from purchasing choices to career moves, voting, medical decisions, and marriage. The daughter of Sikh immigrants from India, Iyengar is particularly astute in her globally significant analysis of the striking differences between how Americans and Asians make decisions. Much of this eye-opening anatomy of choice focuses on consumerism, a lively, revealing arena, but Iyengar’s high-voltage curiosity and penetrating insights are far more valuable when applied to deeper matters of existence. --Donna Seaman

Review

"No one asks better questions, or comes up with more intriguing answers." (*Malcolm Gladwell*)

"Sheena Iyengar's work on choice and how our minds deal with it has been groundbreaking, repeatedly surprising, and enormously important. She is someone we need to listen to." (*Atul Gawande, author of Better and Complications*)

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Geraldine Noll:

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