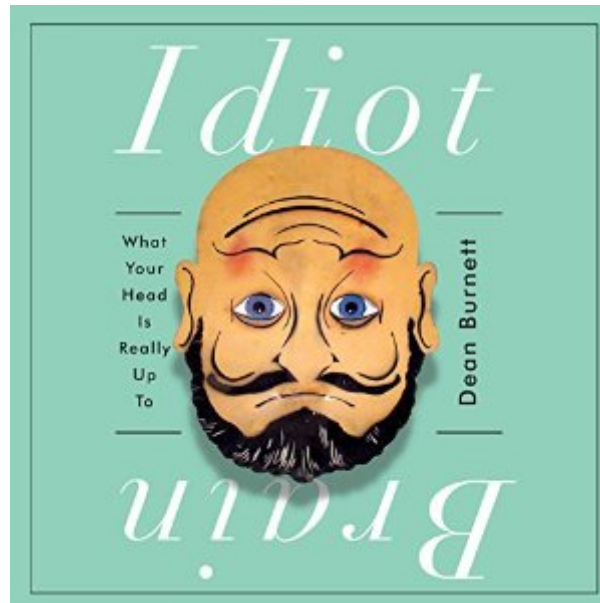


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# Idiot Brain: What Your Head Is Really Up To



## Synopsis

A delightful tour of our mysterious, mischievous gray matter from neuroscientist and massively popular Guardian blogger Dean Burnett. The brain may be the seat of consciousness and the engine of all human experience, but it's also messy, fallible, and disorganized. For example, did you know that your memory is egotistical? That conspiracy theories and superstitions are the inevitable effects of a healthy brain? Or that alcohol can actually improve your memory? (Editor's note: Please listen to the book before testing that last conclusion.) In *Idiot Brain*, Dr. Dean Burnett celebrates blind spots, blackouts, insomnia, and all the other downright laughable things our minds do to us while also exposing the many mistakes we've made in our quest to understand how our brains actually work. This is the best kind of popular science - lucid, funny, and whip smart - from a debut author who will be tickling funny bones and firing neurons for a long time to come.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Stumbled across this in a sleep deprived 4am random internet browsing session. Read a couple of pages, got the book, a few chapters in now. ... Now I don't trust my brain nearly as much anymore. And I don't know if I'm better for it. My one go-to for all the answers in life turns out has been lying to me for years. .. It's certainly an entertaining read, and puts quite a knot in your trust in the brain. If you're in a fine agreement with your brain, and want to keep the blind trust, don't pick up the book. But if you wish to find another thing in the world to question the "good intentions" why not ask your brain "why you doing this" pick up the book and ruin that delicate trust between yourself and your brain! xD

As a neurologist I have spent many years studying the brain and its foibles, but I have rarely read such an entertaining and frankly brilliant description of how the brain works.

Excellent compilation of fun facts based on research past and present. Mr. Burnett directs us through a surprisingly comprehensive laundry list of brain functions (malfunctions?) all the while illustrating his points with lively anecdotes and witty observations on human behavior and how it is directed (or misdirected?) by our brain. Written to make a lay reader feel smart, understandable without being condescended to. It was a great read. I recommend it highly.

The author provides convincing prove that our brains modify our memories to make us the hero or central character in every human interaction. Of course, it's not possible in any interaction with one person or many that one person's opinion or contribution is automatically superior to others, but each person thinks that is the case. Our brain is like a bad computer program that arbitrarily modifies the data before it writes to disk.

This is a fun read. Burnett makes the science of what's going on in your head really engaging and often quite funny. Like other great science writers, (think Brian Greene), he doesn't so much dumb down the material as he mixes accessible metaphors with scientific lingo so the reader understands both the language and the ideas. Neat trick. I am happily annoying friends and family by constantly relating just about every action and interaction with something I've learned from the book. They will be glad when I'm done with it.

First, with a five star rating I obviously enjoyed it. I'm not exactly sure if there is a particular target audience for this book but suspect many may get bogged down in unfamiliar vocabulary unless they have a biology or psychology background, which I do. But, I do not think that type of background is necessary to enjoy this book and only mention it if you cringe at the thought of any discussions involving brain anatomy and neurotransmitters; the author is a funny neuroscientist after all so it should be expected. The book is well written with humor effectively used to make important points. It is an easy read that I enjoyed on a cruise. I found it to be a very good summary of what is currently understood in human biology/psychology as it relates to our behavior and think it would be excellent mandatory reading toward the end of an undergraduate degree program. The simplicity and humor in all the chapters demonstrates how well the author understands the material and certain he would

be a delight to listen to in person.Great book!

After 300 pages of unfailingly entertaining and informative observations , Neuroscientist (and stand-up comic) Dean Burnett concludes: "Given every possible thing that can affect how the brain does things....it's amazing how humans get anything done ...." To help fill in the ellipses indicated by the foregoing: here is Burnett's intro: "The brain ... is a tangled mess of habits,traits, outdated processes and inefficient systems.... Over millions of years... it has accrued a great deal of junk, like a hard drive riddled with old software programs and obsolete downloads ... like those cursed pop-ups offering you discount cosmetics when all you're trying to do is read an email. Bottom line: the brain is fallible ... incredibly messy and disorganized....It's undeniably impressive, but it's far from perfect, and these imperfections influence everything humans say, do and experience."Churchill's famous "riddle, wrapped in a mystery, inside an enigma" is both literally and figuratively true of our brain, and yet this unfathomably complex, imperfect organ is, of course, what we must use to investigate and comment on the organ itself -- the ultimate hall of mirrors!Burnett takes on dozens of conundrums from every aspect of human life and in his wry yet well-informed style offers a theory as to how a "normal" and/or "abnormal" brain might have produced the result, making reference to the many physical components of the organ, from the corpus callosum and amygdala to the neurons and synapses, all supported by dozens of footnoted scholarly references.Any time I find myself doing something I regret, I hope I will remember to re-consult Idiot Brain, compassionately acknowledging of our wonderful but fallible master: "it is what it is. I forgive myself since I can't truly know why I do what I do."

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