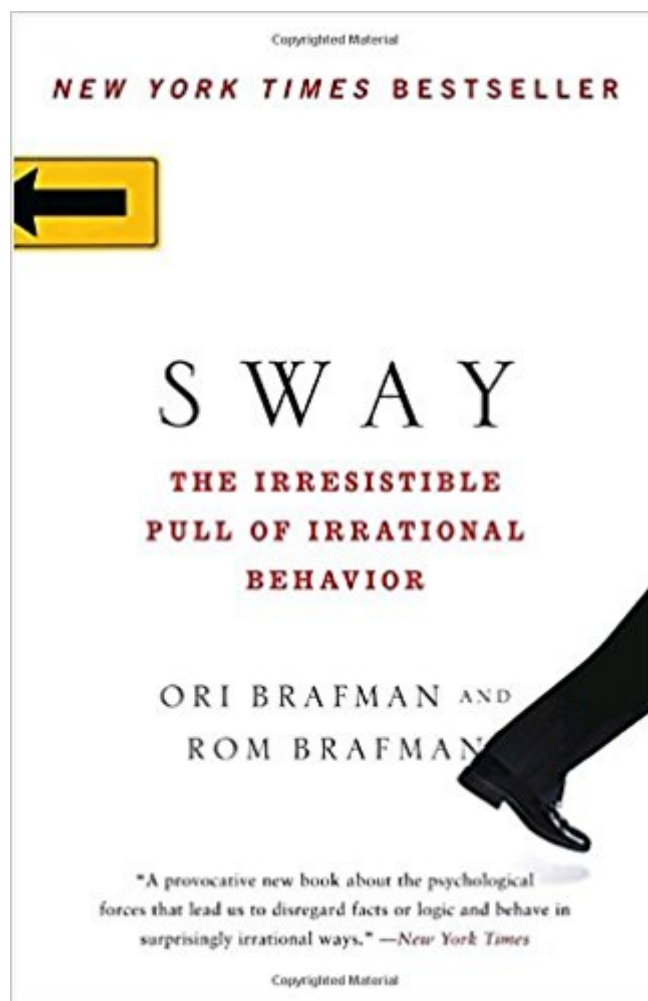


The book was found

Sway: The Irresistible Pull Of Irrational Behavior



Synopsis

A fascinating journey into the hidden psychological influences that derail our decision-making, *Sway* will change the way you think about the way you think. Why is it so difficult to sell a plummeting stock or end a doomed relationship? Why do we listen to advice just because it came from someone we deem "important"? Why are we more likely to fall in love when there's danger involved? In *Sway*, renowned organizational thinker Ori Brafman and his brother, psychologist Rom Brafman, answer all these questions and more. Drawing on cutting-edge research from the fields of social psychology, behavioral economics, and organizational behavior, *Sway* reveals dynamic forces that influence every aspect of our personal and business lives, including loss aversion (our tendency to go to great lengths to avoid perceived losses), the diagnosis bias (our inability to reevaluate our initial diagnosis of a person or situation), and the "chameleon effect" (our tendency to take on characteristics that have been arbitrarily assigned to us). *Sway* introduces us to the Harvard Business School professor who got his students to pay \$204 for a \$20 bill, the head of airline safety whose disregard for his years of training led to the transformation of an entire industry, and the football coach who turned conventional strategy on its head to lead his team to victory. We also learn the curse of the NBA draft, discover why interviews are a terrible way to gauge future job performance, and go inside a session with the Supreme Court to see how the world's most powerful justices avoid the dangers of group dynamics. Every once in a while, a book comes along that not only challenges our views of the world but changes the way we think. In *Sway*, Ori and Rom Brafman not only uncover rational explanations for a wide variety of irrational behaviors but also point readers toward ways to avoid succumbing to their pull.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Recently we have seen plenty of irrational behavior, whether in politics or the world of finance. What makes people act irrationally? In a timely but thin collection of anecdotes and empirical research, the Brafman brothers—Ari (The Starfish and the Spire), a business expert, and Rom, a psychologist—look at sway, the submerged mental drives that undermine rational action, from the desire to avoid loss to a failure to consider all the evidence or to perceive a person or situation beyond the initial impression and the reluctance to alter a plan that isn't working. To drive home their points, the authors use contemporary examples, such as the pivotal decisions of presidents Lyndon B. Johnson and George W. Bush, coach Steve Spurrier and his Gators football team, and a sudden apparent epidemic of bipolar disorder in children (which may be due more to flawed thinking by doctors making the diagnoses). The stories are revealing, but focused on a few common causes of irrational behavior, the book doesn't delve deeply into the psychological demons that can devastate a person's life and those around him. (June) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Praise for SWAY—"A breathtaking book that will challenge your every thought, Sway hovers above the intersection of Blink and Freakonomics."--Tom Rath, coauthor of the New York Times #1 bestseller How Full Is Your Bucket?—"Now we know why no one ever coined the phrase 'irrational exuberance.' Behind the surprising ways we all make choices, the Brafmans find biology, humanity, and the wisdom of our collective experience. As a longtime student of how financial decisions are made, I found their insights utterly fascinating. Once I started reading, I couldn't stop—and I suspect the Brafmans could tell you exactly why!"--Sallie Krawcheck, CEO, Citi Global Wealth Management"Count me swayed--but in this instance by the pull of entirely rational forces. Ori and Rom Brafman have done a terrific job of illuminating deep-seated tendencies that skew our behavior in ways that can range from silly to deadly. We'd be fools not to learn what they have to teach us."--Robert B. Cialdini, author of New York Times bestseller Influence—"Brilliant."--Klaus Schwab, chairman of the World Economic Forum"A page-turner of an investigation into how our minds work . . . and trick us. Think you behave rationally? Read this book first."--Timothy Ferriss, author of the New York Times #1 bestseller The 4-Hour Workweek "Sway helped me recognize an aspect of irrational

behavior in my experimental work in physics. Sometimes I have jumped into some research that didn't feel quite right . . . but some irrational lure, such as the hope of quick success, pulled me in."--Martin L. Perl, 1995 Nobel Laureate in Physics*DISCLAIMER: If you decide to buy this book because of these endorsements, you just got swayed. One of the psychological forces you'll read about in Sway is our tendency to place a higher value on opinions from people in positions of prominence, power, or authority.(But you should still buy the book.)"If you think you know how you think, you'd better think again! Take this insightful, delightful trip to the sweet spot where economics, psychology, and sociology converge, and you'll discover how our all-too-human minds actually work."--Alan M. Webber, founding editor of Fast Company magazine

While this book was interesting in parts, it felt like a Malcolm-Gladwell wannabe/rehash. The authors use the same format as Gladwell (linking two seemingly disparate ideas through a themed chapter), but their anecdotes somehow felt more forced and a little bit tired. I thought that the blurbs at the front of each chapter (stylized text hinting at what was to come), were distracting and lessened the impact of the "reveals" as they occurred. The book is very short, but entertaining enough in its own way. I didn't hate it, I just don't feel that it lived up to the potential of its subject.

In the genre of carefully selecting facts to fit our thesis, and smoothing over the rough spots when they don't exactly fit. Persuasive, but the editing often leaves you asking questions (when they cite something in particular like a study or an event, I often feel like more context is needed, like when and where). They ignore inconvenient facts (like when discussing an ad for a bank; they found that the direct mailer with a picture of a person on it worked best and called this irrational, which fails to account for advertising clutter and how a picture of a person can cut through the clutter). The Israeli military study used in the book and referenced in other reviews is, to me, reprehensible; courses like the one mentioned can make or break a career. To casually try to affect outcomes for the sake of a journal article is without regard to what it does to those officers is just plain wrong; to use it in the book is to perpetuate the wrong. Interesting discussion on Prozac, et al, but ignored in this are the clinical trials that had to be done for FDA approval - what was different about the subsequent tests? Interesting, but incomplete

There comes a time when every person feels the irresistible urge to be reckless. The examples in this book are outstanding and hit the spot. Not sure how many young adults/teens would read the book but if they did, it's very eye opening. It'd be helpful if we held ourselves back for a moment and

ask, "would my actions prove to be irrational or a reckless to a point that it'd negatively affect my entire future and everyone else's?" In short it tells you about the warning signs which could lead to disaster. Each situation that led to irrational behavior that in turn led to disastrous situation or complication is different and worth reflecting upon.

This book felt like a rip off of Malcolm Gladwell books, which are really fun and informative to read. This is a cheap imitation. I got really tired of the authors, who are brothers, referring to one another throughout the book. It's so annoying when authors want the reader to feel like they're in on their special experience of writing their book together. It seemed rather narcissistic since my purpose in reading it was to understand some concepts rather than hear about their examples from their special experiences. Those pointless details take up a chunk of space so that when it comes down to it the book has very little substance, lots of anecdotes, lots of explanations about who he and his brother are and why they're attracted to these issues, blah, blah. I read a lot of books each year. I can't remember one meaningful thing about this book. It felt like a waste of time. I recommend reading Malcolm Gladwell's "Blink" "Outliers" and "The Tipping Point" instead.

As many have noted, this is a quick, entertaining read. But it's ironic that a key insight from Sway is that "people see what they want to see," since that's what the authors seem to do as well. Their main message is that irrational behavior leads to bad outcomes and they find many stories and examples to support it. And while the premise is often true, so is its opposite. Many great successes happen when people do seemingly irrational things, like starting a business (about 95 percent fail) or trying to become a professional athlete or musician (only a tiny fraction can make a living at it). Turns out that in many cases, you have to believe you can overcome the odds (irrational) or you won't try and without trying, you have no chance to succeed. My point: this book could just as easily be filled with stories about people like Michael Jordan, Steve Jobs and others who beat the odds and succeeded by doing things at which most people fail. I think Sway would be on more solid ground if it looked at irrationality and "risk" together. It's one thing to act in seemingly irrational ways when there is a big upside to success and not a huge downside to failure. It is against the odds (even if you have talent) to think you can launch a successful business or make it in sports or music. But the rewards can also be great if you succeed. That's called a calculated risk. By contrast, the first example in Sway is about a normally safety-conscious pilot who crashes after making some very rash decisions. It wasn't just that the pilot's choices were irrational but that the consequences (risks) of being wrong were so great in terms of loss of passengers' lives. Overall, a set of

interesting stories here but with some questionable conclusions. Enjoy them but don't be too easily swayed by the one-sided perspective.

This book is enriching. It will open up your eyes and cause you to look at the world differently. I think most of the readers will hear this piece or that piece in other books. However when you see it all in one place the impact increases. There are several stories that just reinforces the obvious. One example is high expectations tends to lead to better performance. I loved the chapter about the fallacy of job interviews. He relates that to the NBA draft of 84. Then image over ruled substance and lead Portland to pass on drafting Michael Jordan. The chapter on money motivation is really interesting. Through all of these stories he does relate the story to real life. This book is also very short. It is written in a way that will grab your attention. You will fly right through it.

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