

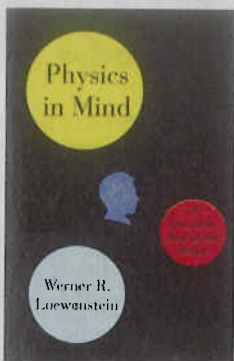
MASTERMIND
by Maria Konnikova

THE FAST-PACED, high-tech world we inhabit may be more complex than Sherlock Holmes's Baker Street, but we can still leverage the mental strategies of the renowned reasoner. Weaving together the fictional detective's cases and modern day neuroscience, science journalist Konnikova explains exactly how.

Much of our environment is unnecessary noise, so the key is learning how to filter information, much as the famous detective does when he gathers clues. Instinct may be important,

but a methodological approach (think: checklists) is essential. Mental breathing room is also crucial: When Holmes was stuck on a case, he'd smoke a pipe and reflect. Ideas need time to incubate; not all solutions are Eureka moments. ▶

Most people rely on mental shortcuts, flying autopilot on what Konnikova calls System Watson. Forcing the mind to observe, imagine, and deduce can make the brain more precise—important for solving cases or simply staying sharp as we age. —*Marina Koren*



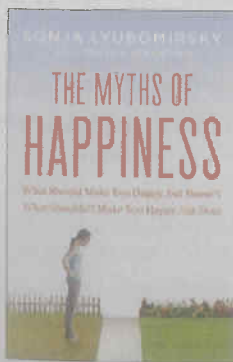
PHYSICS IN MIND
by Werner R. Loewenstein

TO PERCEIVE and understand the world around us, we need to process vast amounts of information. While the brain dedicates dense networks of neurons to the task, biophysicist Loewenstein explains that the heavy lifting is done by a complex array of microscopic particles making calculations at the quantum level.

Light, for example, is made up of quantum-level particles called photons. The sensors in our eyes have not only evolved to detect these vanishingly

small particles but to make sense of the information they convey with stunning speed. When you look at an object, different channels in the brain simultaneously process separate inputs like shape, color, and location.

Ultimately, survival depends on how well an organism can spot patterns and distinguish signal from noise—a test of computational power. It's an indication, Loewenstein notes, that to understand the mysteries of consciousness, we may have to think small. —*Luciana Gravotta*



THE MYTHS OF HAPPINESS
by Sonja Lyubomirsky

WE TEND to believe that achievements, such as marriage, kids, careers, and wealth, will make us happy, while failures, like divorces and lost savings, will keep us dejected forever. But you can be happily broke or miserably rich. You can be joyfully single or depressed amidst a loving family.

Mind-set has the power to turn around even the worst circumstances. In each chapter, Lyubomirsky details an event that people assume creates happiness (e.g., marrying well) or sadness (e.g., deferred

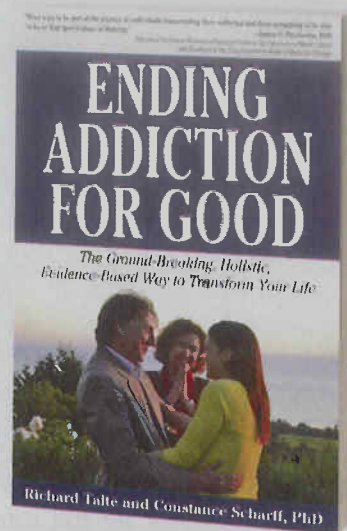
dreams), and then goes on to show how each event can just as easily lead to the opposite outcome. Even good marriages can become boring, while reflecting on regrets can make us more mature, complex, and ultimately happier.

Fretting about what life should look like can make us unaware of what we already have—an idea summed up nicely by Socrates in the book's epigraph: "He who is not contented with what he has would not be contented with what he would like to have." —*Lina Zeldovich*

"What a joy to be a part of the journey of individuals transcending their suffering and struggling to be able to be in that special place of thriving."

- James O. Prochaska, PhD

Director of the Cancer Prevention Research Center at the University of Rhode Island and Developer of the Transtheoretical Model of Behavioral Change



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