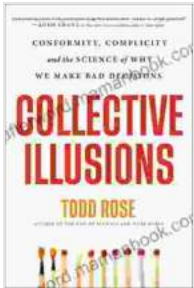


Conformity, Complicity, and the Science of Why We Make Bad Decisions



Collective Illusions: Conformity, Complicity, and the Science of Why We Make Bad Decisions by Todd Rose

★★★★☆ 4.6 out of 5

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We all make bad decisions from time to time. Maybe we buy something we don't need, or say something we regret, or do something we know we shouldn't. Why do we make these bad decisions? And what can we do to avoid them in the future?

One of the reasons we make bad decisions is because of conformity. Conformity is the tendency to change our behavior or beliefs in order to fit in with a group. We want to be liked and accepted by others, so we often go along with what they say or do, even if we don't agree with them.

Conformity can be a powerful force. In one famous experiment, psychologist Solomon Asch showed that people were willing to conform

even when they knew they were wrong. In this experiment, Asch asked participants to compare the length of two lines. The participants were all in a group, and one person in the group was a confederate of the experimenter. The confederate always gave the wrong answer, and over time, many of the other participants began to give the wrong answer as well.

Why did the participants conform? Asch believed that they did so because they were afraid of being different. They didn't want to stand out from the group, so they went along with the majority, even though they knew they were wrong.

Conformity can be a problem because it can lead us to make bad decisions. We may go along with the crowd even when we know that they are wrong, and we may end up doing things that we regret.

Another reason we make bad decisions is because of complicity. Complicity is the act of helping someone else do something wrong. We may not be the one who is directly responsible for the wrongdoing, but we still play a role in it by helping it to happen.

Complicity can be a problem because it can make it difficult for us to hold ourselves accountable for our actions. We may say that we didn't do anything wrong, but if we helped someone else to do something wrong, then we are still responsible.

For example, if we know that someone is planning to rob a bank, and we give them a ride to the bank, then we are complicit in the robbery. We may not have robbed the bank ourselves, but we still played a role in it by helping it to happen.

Complicity can also be a problem because it can make us feel guilty. We may know that we did something wrong, but we may not want to admit it to ourselves. This can lead to feelings of shame and guilt, which can make it difficult to move on from our mistakes.

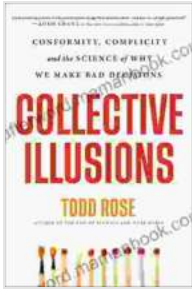
So what can we do to avoid making bad decisions? Here are a few tips:

- **Be aware of your own biases.** We all have biases, and these biases can influence our decisions. Be aware of your own biases, and be careful not to let them cloud your judgment.
- **Think critically about information before you believe it.** Don't just accept everything you hear at face value. Think critically about information before you believe it, and be skeptical of claims that seem too good to be true.
- **Be willing to stand up for what you believe in.** Don't be afraid to be different. Be willing to stand up for what you believe in, even if it means going against the crowd.
- **Be accountable for your actions.** If you make a mistake, own up to it. Don't try to blame others or make excuses. Be accountable for your actions, and learn from your mistakes.

Making good decisions is not always easy, but it is important. By being aware of our own biases, thinking critically about information, and being willing to stand up for what we believe in, we can make better decisions and avoid the negative consequences of bad decisions.

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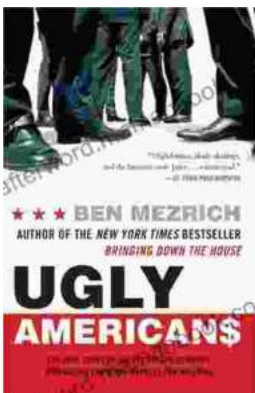


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