Book Recommendations

Ordered Alphabetically

Last Updated: September 1st, 2025

Blindspot: Hidden Biases of Good People

Author: Mahzarin R. Banaji & Anthony G. Greenwald
Pages: 272

Summary:

In Blindspot, leading psychologists Mahzarin R. Banaji and Anthony G. Greenwald explore the hidden biases we all carry from a lifetime of exposure to cultural attitudes about age, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, social class, sexuality, disability status, and nationality. Using their experience with the Implicit Association Test, a method that gives us a glimpse of our unconscious biases at work, Banaji and Greenwald question the extent to which our perceptions of social groups shape our judgements about people's character, abilities, and potential. Explaining the science clearly and plainly, Banaji and Greenwald guide us through the workings of the brain, how it uses common stereotypes, and how to "outsmart the machine" that relies on them. Powerful, challenging, and revealing, *Blindspot* is an invitation to understand our own minds and, in the process, be fairer to those around us.

Brave The Wild River (The Untold Story of Two Women Who Mapped the Botany of The Grand Canyon)

Author: Melissa L. Sevigny
Pages: 304

Summary:

In the summer of 1938, botanists Elzada Clover and Lois Jotter set off down the Colorado River, accompanied by an ambitious expedition leader, a zoologist, and two amateur boatmen. With churning waters and treacherous boulders, the Colorado was famed as the most dangerous river in the world. But for Clover and Jotter, it held a tantalizing appeal: no one had surveyed the Grand Canyon's plants, and they were determined to be first. Through vibrant letters and diaries of these two women, science journalist Melissa L. Sevigny traces their daring forty-three-day journey, during which they risked their lives to make an unprecedented botanical survey of a defining landscape in the American West.

Entangled Life: How Fungi Make Our Worlds, Change Our Minds & Shape Our Futures

Author: Merlin Sheldrake
Pages: 222

Summary:

When we think of fungi, we likely think of mushrooms. But mushrooms are only fruiting bodies, analogous to apples on a tree. Most fungi live out of sight, yet make up a massively diverse kingdom of organisms that supports and sustains nearly all living systems. Fungi provide a key to understanding the planet on which we live, and the ways we think, feel, and behave.In Entangled Life, the brilliant young biologist Merlin Sheldrake shows us the world from a fungal point of view, providing an exhilarating change of perspective. Sheldrake's vivid exploration takes us from yeast to psychedelics, to the fungi that range for miles underground and are the largest organisms on the planet, to those that link plants together in complex networks known as the "Wood Wide Web," to those that infiltrate and manipulate insect bodies with devastating precision.Fungi throw our concepts of individuality and even intelligence into question. They are metabolic masters, earth makers, and key players in most of life's processes. They can change our minds, heal our bodies, and even help us remediate environmental disasters. By examining fungi on their own terms, Sheldrake reveals how these extraordinary organisms—and our relationships with them—are changing our understanding of how life works.

Gene Machine: The Race to Decipher The Secrets of the Ribosome
Author: Ramakrishnan
Pages: 288

Summary:

Everyone has heard of DNA. But by itself, DNA is just an inert blueprint. It is the ribosome—an enormous molecular machine made up of a million atoms—that makes DNA come to life. *Gene Machine* is an insider account of the race to discover the ribosome's structure and so its workings, a fundamental discovery to both advance our knowledge of life-threatening diseases. But this is also a frank and human story of Ramakrishnan's unlikely journey, from his first fumbling lab experiments to his fierce competition with some of the world's best scientists, an uncommon insider's account of the pursuit of high-stakes science.

I Contain Multitudes: The Microbes Within Us and a Grander View of Life
Author: Ed Yong
Pages: 368

Summary:

Joining the ranks of popular science classics like The Botany of Desire and The Selfish Gene, a groundbreaking, wondrously informative, and vastly entertaining examination of the most significant revolution in biology since Darwin—a "microbe's-eye view" of the world that reveals a marvelous, radically reconceived picture of life on earth.Every animal, whether human,

squid, or wasp, is home to millions of bacteria and other microbes. Ed Yong, whose humor is as evident as his erudition, prompts us to look at ourselves and our animal companions in a new light—less as individuals and more as the interconnected, interdependent multitudes we assuredly are.The microbes in our bodies are part of our immune systems and protect us from disease. In the deep oceans, mysterious creatures without mouths or guts depend on microbes for all their energy. Bacteria provide squid with invisibility cloaks, help beetles to bring down forests, and allow worms to cause diseases that afflict millions of people.Many people think of microbes as germs to be eradicated, but those that live with us—the microbiome—build our bodies, protect our health, shape our identities, and grant us incredible abilities. In this astonishing book, Ed Yong takes us on a grand tour through our microbial partners, and introduces us to the scientists on the front lines of discovery. It will change both our view of nature and our sense of where we belong in it.

She Has Her Mother's Laugh: The Powers, Perversions, and Potential of Heredity
Author: Carl Zimmer
Pages: 672

Summary:

Celebrated New York Times columnist and science writer Carl Zimmer presents a profoundly original perspective on what we pass along from generation to generation. Charles Darwin played a crucial part in turning heredity into a scientific question, and yet he failed spectacularly to answer it. The birth of genetics in the early 1900s seemed to do precisely that. Gradually, people translated their old notions about heredity into a language of genes. As the technology for studying genes became cheaper, millions of people ordered genetic tests to link themselves to missing parents, to distant ancestors, to ethnic identities… But, Zimmer writes, "Each of us carries an amalgam of fragments of DNA, stitched together from some of our many ancestors. Each piece has its own ancestry, traveling a different path back through human history. A particular fragment may sometimes be cause for worry, but most of our DNA influences who we are—our appearance, our height, our penchants—in inconceivably subtle ways." Heredity isn't just about genes that pass from parent to child. Heredity continues within our own bodies, as a single cell gives rise to trillions of cells that make up our bodies. We say we inherit genes from our ancestors—using a word that once referred to kingdoms and estates—but we inherit other things that matter as much or more to our lives, from microbes to technologies we use to make life more comfortable. We need a new definition of what heredity is and, through Carl Zimmer's lucid exposition and storytelling, this resounding tour de force delivers it. Weaving historical and current scientific research, his own experience with his two daughters, and the kind of original reporting expected of one of the world's best science journalists, Zimmer ultimately unpacks urgent bioethical quandaries arising from new biomedical technologies, but also long-standing presumptions about who we really are and what we can pass on to future generations.

The Next Great Migration: The Beauty and Terror of Life on the Move
Author: Sonia Shah
Pages: 400

Summary:

Dislocated people are on the move. Wild species, too, are escaping warming seas and desiccated lands, and news media present this scrambling of the planet's migration patterns as unprecedented, tapping into fears of the spread of disease and conflict and provoking waves of anxiety across the Western world. On both sides of the Atlantic, experts issue alarmed predictions of millions of invading aliens, and anti-immigration leaders have slammed closed borders that were historically porous. But the science and history of migration in animals, plants, and humans tell a different story. Far from being a disruptive behavior to be quelled at any cost, migration is an ancient and lifesaving response to environmental change. Unhampered by barbed wire, migration allowed our ancestors to people the planet, catapulting us into the highest reaches of the Himalayan mountains and the most remote islands of the Pacific, creating and disseminating the biological, cultural, and social diversity that ecosystems and societies depend upon. In other words, migration is not the crisis—it is the solution. Conclusively tracking the history of misinformation from the eighteenth century through today's anti-immigration policies, The Next Great Migration makes the case for a future in which migration is not a source of fear, but of hope.