

seems to be absolutely and completely divorced from the person he thought he was. Moreover, it is not just that people make wrong predictions about themselves—their predictions are wrong by a large margin.

Most of the time, according to the results of the study, Roy is smart, decent, reasonable, kind, and trustworthy. His frontal lobes are fully functioning, and he is in control of his behavior. But when he's in a state of sexual arousal and the reptilian brain takes over, he becomes unrecognizable to himself.

Roy thinks he knows how he will behave in an aroused state, but his understanding is limited. He doesn't truly understand that as his sexual motivation becomes more intense, he may throw caution to the wind. He may risk sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancies in order to achieve sexual gratification. When he is gripped by passion, his emotions may blur the boundary between what is right and what is wrong. In fact, he doesn't have a clue to how consistently wild he really is, for when he is in one state and tries to predict his behavior in another state, he gets it wrong.

Moreover, the study suggested that our inability to understand ourselves in a different emotional state does not seem to improve with experience; we get it wrong even if we spend as much time in this state as our Berkeley students spend sexually aroused. Sexual arousal is familiar, personal, very human, and utterly commonplace. Even so, we all systematically underpredict the degree to which arousal completely negates our superego, and the way emotions can take control of our behavior.

WHAT HAPPENS, THEN, when our irrational self comes alive in an emotional place that we think is familiar but in fact is