

# Blink Summary

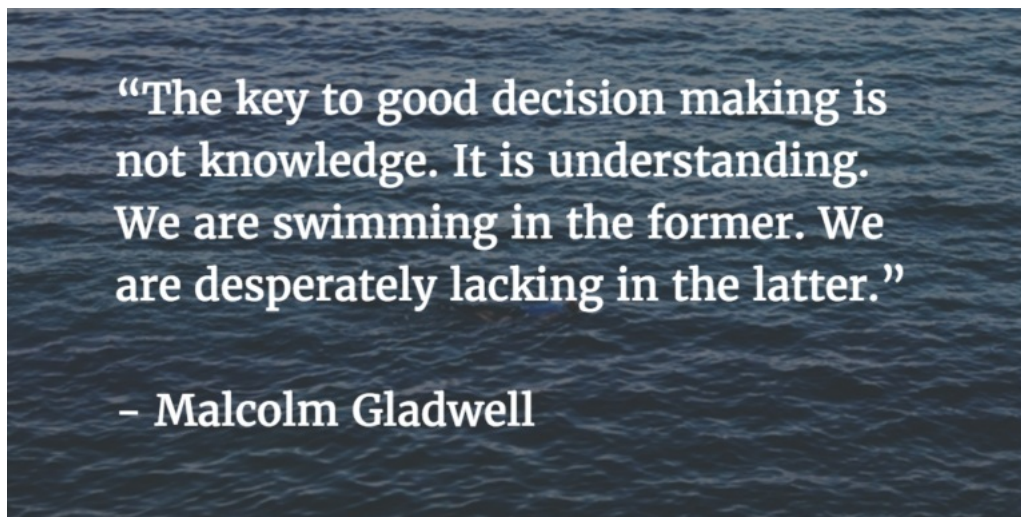
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 [fourminutebooks.com/blink-summary](https://fourminutebooks.com/blink-summary)

## 1-Sentence-Summary: *Blink*

**Read in:** 4 minutes

### **Favorite quote from the author:**



I really wonder how one man can discover so many insights and change the way we think in several, only loosely related areas, like Malcolm Gladwell. From success to human intuition to macro-economic trends, his curiosity seems to know no boundaries.

Do you think he decides his next book's topic in the blink of an eye, or rather deliberately after giving it some thought? While that's a question I can't answer, *Blink* can help you understand how your own intuition works, and when it's best to trust it, or keep analyzing.

Here are 3 lessons about the surprising power of human intuition:

1. Your unconscious is the world's fastest filter of information.
2. Stress can lead your gut astray.
3. Put up screens in situations where you can't trust your intuition.

Ready to school your snap judgment system? Here we go!

## Lesson 1: Your unconscious is the world's fastest filter of information.

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There's a rule, which says you should only make decisions when you have at least 40% of the relevant information, but never wait until you have more than 70%.

It's called the 40-70 rule and it describes the ideal relationship between time and information, ensuring you act fast, but not uninformed, without waiting until making a decision eventually becomes moot.

The funny thing is that in most situations, focusing on very few, but crucially important facts, while blocking out all the rest, is enough to do so.

For example when deciding whether to move to apartment A or apartment B, knowing location, price and having a few pictures is usually all you need. Once you over-analyze every detail, such as where the plugs are more conveniently placed, it becomes impossible to make a good call, because the little puzzle pieces of information start to hide the much more important ones.

**Lucky for you, your unconscious is the best and fastest information filtering system in the world.**

When first confronted with new information, it sifts through all of it, instantly tossing out the less important factors, judging the few big ones in a split second, and presenting you with the solution.

However, even your unconscious gets it wrong sometimes.

## Lesson 2: Stress can temporarily lead your gut down the wrong path.

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For example in a high stress environment, your ability to read other people's facial expressions rapidly declines.

When your boss completely loses it, gets a big, fat, red head, and screams at you from the top of his lungs, flailing his arms and making wild and rude gestures, you might end up punching him in the face, simply due to the fear of a physical attack, that his current emotional state triggers in you.

Similarly, a police officer will sometimes shoot an unarmed man, just because he holds a black leather wallet. This inability to read nonverbal cues is very common among autistic people. They can't instinctively judge a person's intentions and emotional state based on gestures, facial expressions, and behavior, which is why they have to rely on what information is communicated.

**When you find yourself in a stressful situation, this can render you temporarily autistic, and you develop a sort of tunnel vision, focusing on only the most imminent, threatening piece of information.** This will lead your gut to make the wrong call often times, so it should be prevented whenever possible.

If in a stressful situation, you should try to reduce the stress as quickly as possible. Take a walk to cool off, hide and breathe for a few minutes, or continue the conversation at a later point, to make sure your tunnel vision doesn't go into overdrive.

## Lesson 3: Use screens to filter irrelevant information in scenarios where your gut tends to be wrong.

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Apart from stressful situations, sometimes associations are forged so deeply in our brain, that it's hard to turn them off, even though we might know they're wrong.

For example, you might expect every Asian to be good at math, Fortune 500 CEOs as tall, white men and good singers to be beautiful. That last one comes from the music industry artificially pushing any singers visual image during performances, on album covers and in music videos, until we ultimately believed all singers to be beautiful.

But if you're an agent for a record label, that's a problem. You're supposed to find the best singers, not models. In this case **it's good to create your own screens and filters, to keep the irrelevant information (here: looks) from ever reaching your brain** in the first place.

For example, the casting show "The Voice" has judges in chairs, their backs turned to the stage, so the only information they get from the singer is what their voice sounds like. If they like what they hear, they can hit a button and turn around, automatically confirming they'd like to have the singer on their team.

So if music agents just scout talent based on audio samples, they'll probably make much better decisions. Think through your own life and you'll surely come across one or two areas, where your decisions are usually heavily biased, because of ancient prejudices you hold. Try to think of a few screens and filters you could use to make sure you only get those relevant 40% of information.

### Blink Review

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Another fascinating book by Malcolm Gladwell. Packed with examples, *Blink* makes a good case for why we should probably listen to our gut more often than we allow ourselves to.

The summary provides a good recollection of the ark of the book, but of course skips plenty of the examples. It's still a great introductory read to the topic, so you can confidently check it out before committing to reading the entire book.

[Read full summary on Blinkist](#)

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[Learn more about the author](#)

### What else can you learn from the blinks?

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- The key difference between your brain's two decision making strategies
- Why your rational reasoning is often just backing up what your gut already decided

- What happened when people thought about a professor and a hooligan before playing Trivial Pursuit
- Why the new Coke failed, in spite of tons of market research
- How to rid yourself of the prejudices you carry with you

## **Who would I recommend the Blink summary to?**

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The 16 year old, who tends to overanalyze situations at school and in her personal life, the 42 year old talent scout, who's trying to find the best artists, singers or soccer players, and anyone who was ever surprised by how prejudiced they were.