*The* *Halo Effect* does not promise to unveil any secrets of success, or the formula to exercise control over a market, but rather it is a framework for thinking about causality. The ideas presented in this book is that when dealing with a complex system like the business world - uncomplicated cause and effect relationships are impossible since such relationships are not to be found. Alternatively, there is an arrangement of intersecting nonlinear interactions between many often unpredictable variables that gradually or abruptly develop over time. Instead of trying to find a non-complex method for achieving a certain outcome such as permanent business success, one has to devise a strategy based on evaluation and examination, be able to execute, observe results to avoid biases, advance the method to justify one’s findings and continuous change with hopes of hitting luck along the way. Despite doing all of these things, there are still no guarantees to success. From time to time, there are those who make pragmatic decisions and still get bad results, whereas those who did not make pragmatic decisions get strong results. However the likelihood of an individual getting strong results will be higher when taking this calculated and robust approach.

Rosenzweig justifies this by introducing a set of delusions that much of business thinking is shaped by. Generally, anyone with a background in social science and especially in medical research should have some familiarity with these delusions. In medicine particularly, randomized controlled studies are implemented to see if a certain variable is more likely to make a difference, on average, for a given population on average in a set time frame despite not knowing what the influence (or lack of) will be in a certain individual case, nor what degree the influence can get generalized beyond the given study population. When a randomized controlled study cannot be done, focusing on an assortment of observational studies can be used to monitor trends over time in order to infer correlations, perhaps with ‘case controls’ that can possibly pinpoint the possible influences of one or more variables. However, correlation does not always portray causality. Take for example the following: Suppose that if X is correlated with Y, X can influence Y, Y can influence X, X & Y can be influenced by Z, X & Y can loop and influence each other, or perhaps, the correlation is simply random. Additionally, this means that observed correlations are generally weak, thus implying that corresponding causal influences may also be weak. It’s also important to recognize that the data collected in such studies can be of bad quality. Take for example the data source being individuals applying hindsight to recount past actions of individuals and associations, which is frequently the case in research conducted by businesses. In short, our projections are only as good as the quality of our data and the quality of our assumptions (garbage-in, garbage-out), and even despite the quality of data, one can still get garbage-out due to the shortcomings and blemishes in inferential methods.