

Scanning and Satisficing

Lessons from Don't Make Me Think (chapter 2)

Scanning

WHAT WE DESIGN FOR... THE REALITY...

WHAT WE DESIGN FOR...

Read

Read

Read

Read

[Pause for reflection]

Finally, click on a carefully chosen link

THE REALITY...

Look around feverishly for anything that

a) is interesting, or vaguely resembles what you're looking for, and

b) is clickable.

As soon as you find a halfway-decent match, click.

If it doesn't pan out, click the Back button and try again.

What we say to dogs

Okay, Ginger! I've had it!
You stay out of the garbage!
Understand, Ginger? Stay out
of the garbage, or else!



What they hear

blah blah GINGER blah
blah blah blah blah
blah blah GINGER blah
blah blah blah blah...

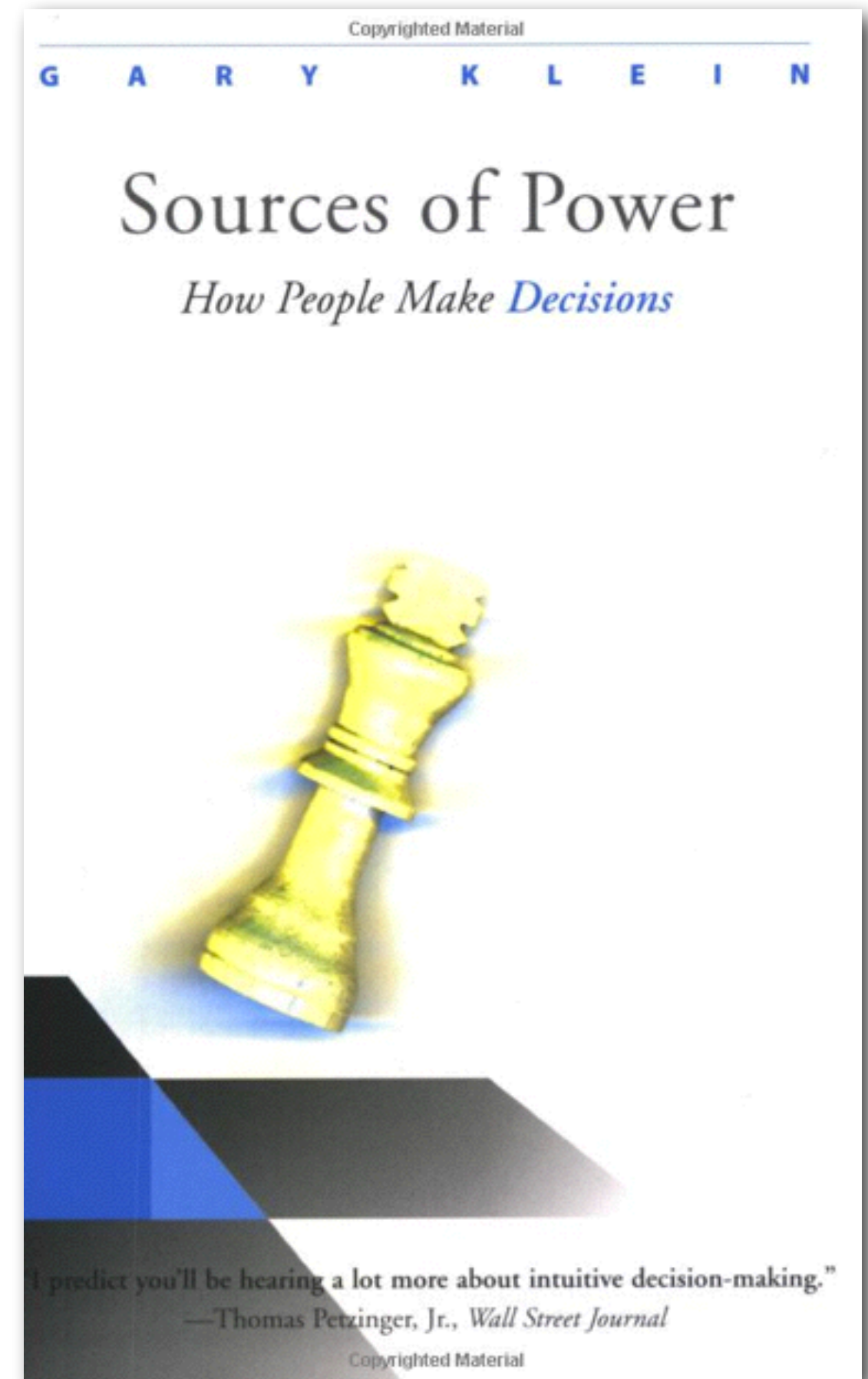


We don't read, we scan - but why do we scan?

- We're usually in a hurry
- We know we don't *need* to read everything
- We're good at it

Satisficing

- Choosing the *first reasonable option*
- It's how firefighters, pilots, chessmasters, and nuclear power plant operators make important decisions within constraints of time, with limited information, vague goals, and changing conditions



Why do we satisfice?

- We're usually in a hurry
- There's not much of a penalty for guessing wrong
- Weighing options may not improve our chances
- Guessing is more fun

We usually satisfice, but not always. It depends!

We don't figure out how things work. We muddle through.



Why do we muddle through?

- It's not important to us
- If we find something that works, we stick to it