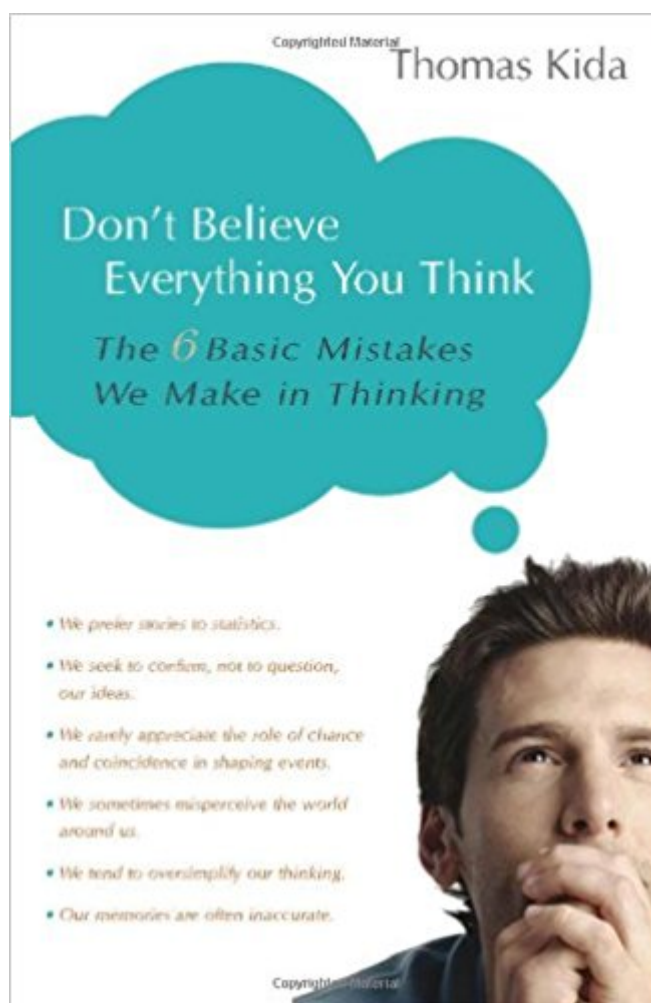


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# Don't Believe Everything You Think: The 6 Basic Mistakes We Make In Thinking



## Synopsis

Do you believe that you can consistently beat the stock market if you put in the effort?--that some people have extrasensory perception?--that crime and drug abuse in America are on the rise? Many people hold one or more of these beliefs although research shows that they are not true. This enlightening book discusses how to recognize faulty thinking and develop the necessary skills to become a more effective decision maker. Author Thomas Kida identifies a "six-pack of problems" that leads many of us to accept false ideas. The book vividly illustrates these tendencies with numerous eye-opening examples that demonstrate how easily we can be fooled into believing something that isn't true.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Don't Believe Everything You Think is essential reading for anyone interested in the psychology of belief and pseudoscientific thinking. It also provides one of the best arguments around for the importance of science literacy..." -- Skeptic  
"This is an informative, interesting, and entertaining contribution ...[Kida] goes beyond simply describing our false beliefs to describing the ways in which we acquire them. This book is a valuable resource in the ongoing, difficult process of developing critical thinking." -- Skeptical Inquirer  
"Even the most rational-minded readers may be surprised by how many errors in thinking they make without even noticing. Those looking to sharpen their critical thinking and decision-making skills will appreciate this eye-opening book." -- Kirkus Reports  
Listed as a Critical Thinking Classic in Skeptic magazine  
"Don't Believe Everything You Think is a treat.

Thomas Kida brings the science of psychology to the public, explaining how we often believe things because we want to, even when they are not true...Even if you haven't worried about the minefields of thinking, you'll want to read this book." -- Elizabeth Loftus, Distinguished Professor at the University of California, Irvine and former President of the Association for Psychological Science "How can we tell the difference between what is true and false? The answer is science and critical thinking, a process that Thomas Kida, in this exceptionally readable and delightfully informative book, explicates with clarity. His '6 basic mistakes we make in thinking' should be printed on a laminated wallet-sized card and examined every morning before we go out into the world." -- Michael Shermer, publisher of Skeptic magazine, columnist for Scientific American, and author of Why People Believe Weird Things

Thomas Kida is a professor in the Isenberg School of Management at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst and the author of many articles on decision-making.

Two stars might be too harsh for a book that delivers important critical thinking ideas, which this book does, but again and again I find that the book just misses the mark on certain things. For example, the author is talking about how being good at finding causes for events was advantageous during our evolution, but the example he gives is about finding rocks that can be good for filing into arrowheads. I don't think that quite captures the idea. And just a few pages later, he's talking about the phenomenon of incredible coincidences being predicted by probability, and he discusses how if you were thinking about a dead relative at the moment you absentmindedly slowed down your driving and consequently just missed being involved in a deadly accident, many people would assume that was intervention by that relative. The author then says (not in these exact words--I don't have the text in front of me) that people coincidentally just miss accidents all the time. But he leaves out the part that you were thinking about the dead relative! The same probabilistic principle applies, but he missed making the point. Thus, those who aren't already persuaded by the argument would likely feel confirmed that the more likely explanation is that it was supernatural intervention. These are just quick examples fresh in my mind. I felt repeatedly while reading that the book just needed more development at times. It's not a terrible book. It has lots of valuable tips for people who might not have put much thought into how to think. I just wanted it to be better.

I liked the basic premise, and many of the examples given were interesting, so the book as a whole was entertaining, and I learned things from the examples given. From a value standpoint, the Kindle

edition is quite inexpensive, which was a factor in my rating it as high as I did. On the negative side, he made a number of opinionated statements which, ironically, contradicted some of the points he was making, sometimes as he was making the points. For example, he warned against making assertions without providing evidence, and spoke the the principle of Occam's razor (the simplest explanation is often the best), and then made statements violating what he had just said. Also he could be rather long-winded and a bit imprecise on the explanations. However, back to the positive side, for the money it's OK, especially for the well-chosen examples.

If you have read *Think Twice: Harnessing the Power of Counter intuition*, then I advise you to save time by just reading the epilogue. The two books are very much similar in content. In some cases, the quoted examples are the same. If you are new to the world of psychology then this is a wonderful book! You could not help but grinned and laughed at the hilarious mistakes pointed out by Mr. Thomas Kida. In summary, the common mistakes committed by the general public could be grouped into 6 areas. 1. We prefer to believe and rely on anecdotal stories when statistics showed otherwise. 2. We believe in coincidence rather than the role of chance. When you flipped a coin ten times and it landed 10 times with a head, we tend to become superstitious. 3. We misconceive our world. No two person sees the world the same way. We can see and hear things that don't really exist. This could happen to a group of individuals at the same time! 4. We tend to oversimplify matters using heuristics and ignore relevant information of base rates, sample size and regression to mean. We rely on what comes easily to mind and overestimate the likelihood of sensational events. When the price of a stock rises, we believe in seeing trend and applying technical analysis to explain it. 5. We have faculty memories. Shockingly it has been proven time and again that current beliefs, expectation, and even suggestive questioning can affect our memories. In effect, we reconstruct our memories, and with each reconstruction, our memories get further and further away from the truth. 6. We seek to confirm rather than question our thoughts and beliefs. We emphasises information that confirms our beliefs and in a way that supports what we expect or want to believe. I found one area lacking in this book. It is easy to be a skeptic and point out weaknesses and mistakes committed by others, however it is challenging to guide people on the right way of thoughts and actions! Thomas Kidas might want to consider adding sessions on the right way to train ourselves to avoid these pitfalls or even capitalise on them in his future editions.

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