



SuperSense: Why We Believe in the Unbelievable

By Bruce M. Hood

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“In an account chock full of real-world examples reinforced by experimental research, Hood’s marvelous book is an important contribution to the psychological literature that is revealing the actuality of our very irrational human nature.” — *Science*

In the vein of Malcolm Gladwell’s *Blink*, Mary Roach’s *Spook*, and Dan Ariely’s *Predictably Irrational*, *The Science of Superstition* uses hard science to explain pervasive irrational beliefs and behaviors: from the superstitious rituals of sports stars, to the depreciated value of houses where murders were committed, to the adoration of Elvis.

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SuperSense: Why We Believe in the Unbelievable By Bruce M. Hood Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From [Booklist](#)

A handful of recent books disparaging religion by atheists such as Richard Dawkins have largely put the blame on culture for humanity's widespread unscientific beliefs. Yet what if the greatest influence on our supernatural convictions is the built-in wiring of our brains? Hood is an internationally renowned neuroscientist who has developed a revolutionary new theory to explain why, in the face of dubious evidence, humans so readily put their faith in supernatural forces. Dubbed supersense, Hood's theory traces religious inclinations to how the brain processes information: a hardwired tool kit for making sense of the world that begins in childhood. In 10 engaging and informative chapters with titles like "Could You Wear a Killer's Cardigan?" and "Would You Let Your Wife Sleep with Robert Redford?" Hood lays out the evidence for the mind's penchant for seeing patterns in disconnected events and cultivating sacred values that bind humans together. Hood's treatise provides a much-needed counterbalance to hard-core skeptics by arguing that supersense, while not exactly grounded in rationality, ultimately gives our lives meaning. --Carl Hays

Review

In an account chock full of real-world examples reinforced by experimental research, Hood's marvelous book is an important contribution to the psychological literature that is revealing the actuality of our very irrational human nature. (Science)

[A] fascinating, timely and important book. . . . Hood's presentation of the science behind our supersense is crystal clear and utterly engaging. (New Scientist)

An intriguing look at a feature of the human mind that is subtle in its operation but profound in its consequences. (Steven Pinker, Professor of Psychology, Harvard University, and author of *How the Mind Works* and *The Stuff of Thought*)

Reading SuperSense is like having lunch with your favorite professor--the conversation spans religion, biology, psychology, philosophy, and early childhood development. One thing is for sure, you'll never see the world in the same way again. (Ori Brafman, New York Times bestselling author of *Sway*)

In recent years, there has been a lot written about religion, superstition, and faith, but there has never been a book like this. . . . SuperSense is a joy to read--beautifully written, deeply clever and funny, replete with brilliant insights and observations. (Paul Bloom, Professor, Department of Psychology, Yale University Author of "Descartes' Baby: How the science of child development explains what makes us human")

Dr. Hood, a world-class scholar in the field of cognitive science, explains the many weird and wonderful ways that we humans naturally view the world as ruled by supernatural phenomena. Bruce Hood's SuperSense is sensational. (Susan A. Gelman, Susan A. Gelman, Susan A. Gelman, author of *The Essential Child*)

Read this beautifully written book, and you will lose some childhood innocence about how the world works. But, it will leave you wiser about yourself, and what it is to be human. (Guy Claxton, author of *Hare Brain, Tortoise Mind: How Intelligence Increases When You Think Less*)

Magical thinking is a defining feature of the human mind – the source of all that is sublime and absurd about our species. In this timely exploration of the psychology of irrational belief Bruce Hood pulls off the rare feat of being both authoritative and wonderfully entertaining. Brilliant. (Paul Broks, author of *Into the Silent*)

Land: Travels in Neuropsychology)

A compelling account of how beliefs in the supernatural world spring from the natural way our minds make sense of our experiences. (Daniel M. Wegner, Harvard Professor of Psychology, author of *The Illusion of Conscious Will*)

If we understood our own irrationality, and why so many people believe in ghosts, spirits, and invisible powers, then we might be able to improve the way we think. With quirkily fun examples and fascinating experiments Bruce Hood explains why we can't always escape our Supersense. (Dr. Susan Blackmore, author of *Conversations on Consciousness*)

Supersense is a terrifically fun read. But it is much more: though we may forever believe in ghosts, goblins and the beneficent deities, with a dose of skeptical scientific realism, à la Hood, there is hope that sanity will prevail. (Marc Hauser, Harvard College Professor, author of *Moral Minds*)

"...a fun and illuminating book." (Newsweek)

"Hood's treatise provides a much-needed counterbalance to hardcore skeptics by arguing that supersense, while not exactly grounded in rationality, ultimately gives our lives meaning." (Booklist)

From the Back Cover

The majority of the world's population is religious or believes in supernatural phenomena. In the United States, nine out of every ten adults believe in God, and a recent Gallup poll found that about three out of four Americans believe in some form of telepathy, déjà vu, ghosts, or past lives. Where does such supernatural thinking come from? Are we indoctrinated by our parents, churches, and media, or do such beliefs originate somewhere else? In *SuperSense*, award-winning cognitive scientist Bruce M. Hood reveals the science behind our beliefs in the supernatural.

Superstitions are common. Many of us cross our fingers, knock on wood, step around black cats, and avoid walking under ladders. John McEnroe refused to step on the white lines of a tennis court between points. Wade Boggs insisted on eating a chicken dinner before every Boston Red Sox game. President Barack Obama played a game of basketball the morning of his victory in the Iowa primary and continued the tradition on every subsequent election day.

Supernatural thinking includes loftier beliefs as well, such as the sentimental value we place on photos of loved ones, wedding rings, and teddy bears. It also includes spiritual beliefs and the hope for an afterlife. But in this modern, scientific age, why do we hold on to these behaviors and beliefs?

It turns out that belief in things beyond what is rational or natural is common to humans and appears very early in childhood. In fact, according to Hood, this "super sense" is something we're born with to develop and is essential to the way we learn to understand the world. We couldn't live without it!

Our minds are designed from the very start to think there are unseen patterns, forces, and essences inhabiting the world, and it is unlikely that any effort to get rid of supernatural beliefs, or the superstitious behaviors that accompany them, will be successful. These common beliefs and sacred values are essential in binding us together as a society because they help us to see ourselves connected to each other at a deeper level.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Alan Coleman:

Do you have favorite book? In case you have, what is your favorite's book? E-book is very important thing for us to find out everything in the world. Each publication has different aim as well as goal; it means that guide has different type. Some people experience enjoy to spend their a chance to read a book. They are really reading whatever they consider because their hobby is definitely reading a book. What about the person who don't like examining a book? Sometime, particular person feel need book after they found difficult problem as well as exercise. Well, probably you should have this SuperSense: Why We Believe in the Unbelievable.

Donald Fujita:

The particular book SuperSense: Why We Believe in the Unbelievable has a lot details on it. So when you make sure to read this book you can get a lot of profit. The book was compiled by the very famous author. Mcdougal makes some research just before write this book. This particular book very easy to read you will get the point easily after looking over this book.

Richard Powe:

SuperSense: Why We Believe in the Unbelievable can be one of your starter books that are good idea. All of us recommend that straight away because this e-book has good vocabulary that will increase your knowledge in words, easy to understand, bit entertaining but delivering the information. The author giving his/her effort to get every word into pleasure arrangement in writing SuperSense: Why We Believe in the Unbelievable nevertheless doesn't forget the main position, giving the reader the hottest in addition to based confirm resource data that maybe you can be considered one of it. This great information could drawn you into brand new stage of crucial considering.

Willie Bergeron:

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