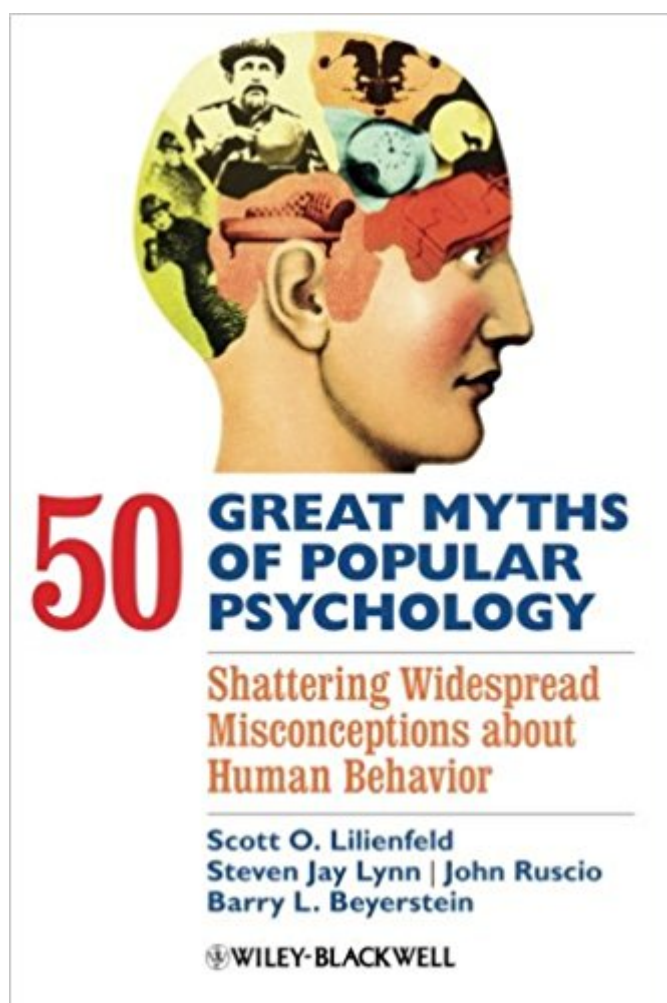**The book was found**

50 Great Myths Of Popular Psychology: Shattering Widespread Misconceptions About Human Behavior

Synopsis

50 Great Myths of Popular Psychology uses popular myths as a vehicle for helping students and laypersons to distinguish science from pseudoscience. Uses common myths as a vehicle for exploring how to distinguish factual from fictional claims in popular psychology Explores topics that readers will relate to, but often misunderstand, such as 'opposites attract', 'people use only 10% of their brains', and 'handwriting reveals your personality' Provides a 'mythbusting kit' for evaluating folk psychology claims in everyday life Teaches essential critical thinking skills through detailed discussions of each myth Includes over 200 additional psychological myths for readers to exploreContains an Appendix of useful Web Sites for examining psychological myths Features a postscript of remarkable psychological findings that sound like myths but that are true Engaging and accessible writing style that appeals to students and lay readers alike

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Customer Reviews

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for examining psychological myths Features a postscript of remarkable psychological findings that sound like myths but that are true Engaging and accessible writing style that appeals to students and lay readers alike Five Big Myths of Popular Psychology -exclusive content from Scott O. Lilienfeld, Steven Jay Lynn, John Ruscio, and Barry L. Beyerstein, the authors of 50 Great Myths of Popular Psychology Virtually every day, the news media, television shows, films, and Internet bombard us with claims regarding a host of psychological topics: psychics, out of body experiences, recovered memories, and lie detection, to name merely a few. Even a casual stroll through our neighborhood bookstore reveals dozens of self-help, relationship, recovery, and addiction books that serve up generous portions of advice for steering our paths along lifeÃ¢â ¬â„¢s rocky road. Yet many popular psychology sources are rife with misconceptions. Indeed, in todayÃ¢â ¬â„¢s fast-paced world of information overload, misinformation about psychology is at least as widespread as accurate information. Self-help gurus, television talk show hosts, and self-proclaimed mental health experts routinely dispense psychological advice thatÃ¢â ¬â„¢s a bewildering mix of truths, half-truths, and outright falsehoods. Without a dependable tour guide for sorting out psychological myth from reality, weÃ¢â ¬â„¢re at risk for becoming lost in a jungle of Ã¢â ¬Å"psychomythology.Ã¢â ¬Â• In our new book, 50 Great Myths of Popular Psychology: Shattering Widespread Misconceptions About Human Nature, we examine in depth 50 widespread myths in popular psychology (along with approximately 250 other myths and Ã¢â ¬Å"mini-mythsÃ¢â ¬Â•), present research evidence demonstrating that these beliefs are fictional, explore their ramifications in popular culture and everyday life, and trace their psychological and sociological origins. Here, in David Letterman-like style, we present - in no particular order Ã¢â ¬â œ our own candidates for five big myths of popular psychology. Myth # 1: Most people use only 10% of their brain power There are several reasons to doubt that 90% of our brains lie silent. At a mere 2-3% of our body weight, our brain consumes over 20% of the oxygen we breathe. ItÃ¢â ¬â„¢s implausible that evolution would have permitted the squandering of resources on a scale necessary to build and maintain such a massively underutilized organ. Moreover, losing far less than 90% of the brain to accident or disease almost always has catastrophic consequences (Kolb & Whishaw, 2003). How did the 10% myth get started? One clue leads back about a century to psychologist William James, who once wrote that he doubted that average persons achieve more than about 10% of their intellectual potential. Although James talked in terms of underdeveloped potential, a slew of positive thinking gurus transformed Ã¢â ¬Å"10% of our capacityÃ¢â ¬Â• into Ã¢â ¬Å"10% of our brainÃ¢â ¬Â• (Beyerstein, 1999). Myth # 2: ItÃ¢â ¬â„¢s better to express anger than to hold it in If youÃ¢â ¬â„¢re like most people, you believe that releasing anger is

healthier than bottling it up. In one survey, 66% of undergraduates agreed that expressing pent-up anger--sometimes called "catharsis"--is an effective means of reducing one's risk for aggression (Brown, 1983). Yet more than 40 years of research reveals that expressing anger directly toward another person or indirectly (such as toward an object) actually turns up the heat on aggression (Bushman, Baumeister, & Stack, 1999; Tavris, 1988). Research suggests that expressing anger is helpful only when it's accompanied by constructive problem-solving designed to address the source of the anger (Littrell, 1998). Why is this myth so popular? In all likelihood, people often mistakenly attribute the fact that they feel better after they express anger to catharsis, rather than to the fact that anger usually subsides on its own after awhile (Lohr, Olatunji, Baumeister, & Bushman, 2007). Myth # 3: Low Self-Esteem is a Major Cause of Psychological Problems Many popular psychologists have long maintained that low self-esteem is a prime culprit in generating unhealthy behaviors, including violence, depression, anxiety, and alcoholism. The self-esteem movement has found its way into mainstream educational practices. Some athletic leagues award trophies to all schoolchildren to avoid making losing competitors feel inferior (Sommers & Satel, 2005). Moreover, the Internet is chock full of educational products intended to boost children's self-esteem. But there's a fly in the ointment: Research shows that low self esteem isn't strongly associated with poor mental health. In a painstakingly - and probably painful! - review, Roy Baumeister and his colleagues (2003) canvassed over 15,000 studies linking self-esteem to just about every conceivable psychological variable. They found that self-esteem is minimally related to interpersonal success, and not consistently related to alcohol or drug abuse. Perhaps most surprising of all, they found that "low self-esteem is neither necessary nor sufficient for depression" (Baumeister et al., 2003, p. 6). Myth # 4: Human memory works like a tape recorder or video camera, and accurately records the events we've experienced Despite the sometimes all-too-obvious failings of everyday memory, surveys show that many people believe that their memories operate very much like tape recorders, video cameras, or DVDs. It's true that we often recall extremely emotional events, sometimes called flashbulb memories because they seem to have a photographic quality (Brown & Kulik, 1977). Nevertheless, research shows that even these memories wither over time and are prone to distortions (Krackow, Lynn, & Payne, 2005-2006). Today, there's broad consensus among psychologists that memory isn't reproductive—it doesn't duplicate precisely what we've experienced—but reconstructive. What we recall is often a blurry mixture of accurate and inaccurate recollections, along with what jells with our beliefs and hunches. Rather than viewing our

memory as a tape recorder, we can more aptly describe our memory as an ever-changing medium that highlights our ability to create fluid narratives of our experiences. Myth # 5: Hypnosis is a unique Ã¢â ¬Å"tranceÃ¢â ¬Â• state that differs in kind from wakefulness Popular movies and books portray the hypnotic trance state as so powerful that otherwise normal people will commit an assassination (The Manchurian Candidate); commit suicide (The Garden Murders); perceive only a personÃ¢â ¬â„¢s internal beauty (Shallow Hal); and our favorite, fall victim to brainwashing by alien preachers who use messages embedded in sermons (Invasion of the Space Preachers). But research shows that hypnotized people can resist and even oppose hypnotic suggestions (Lynn, Rhue, & Weekes, 1990; Nash, 2001), and wonÃ¢â ¬â„¢t do things that are out of character, like harming people they dislike. In addition, hypnosis bears no more than a superficial resemblance to sleep: Brain wave studies reveal that hypnotized people are wide awake. So thereÃ¢â ¬â„¢s no reason to believe that hypnosis differs in kind from normal wakefulness. Instead, hypnosis appears to be only one procedure among many for increasing peopleÃ¢â ¬â„¢s responses to suggestions. More information about each of these myths and a complete list of references are available in 50 Great Myths of Popular Psychology.

"Written in an accessible and entertaining style, the book examines a wide range of myths from all areas of psychology. . . Accordingly, the book is a much-needed antidote to the avalanche of misinformation that masquerades as psychology and should be required reading for anyone with a passing interest in psychology or, for that matter, the human condition." (Department of Psychology, 1 June 2011) "Not only does the book illustrate just how often our intuitions are wrong, it also shows us how - in comparison to the truth - uninteresting they are. Shallow judgments imply over-confidence, assumption and monotomy. Assuming that you know something prior to giving any consideration to where that knowledge comes from is a mistake for many reasons but perhaps most of all because such presumption precludes surprise. To be surprised - shocked, provoked, scandalized - is a pleasure. . . 50 Great Myths of Popular Psychology tells us that we need urgently to deal with our tendency to judge books by their covers. And just maybe, rather than considering any idealistic appeal to our rationalism, we should deal with this problem by considering an inversion similar to Kubrick's: for now at least, when it comes to presenting discoveries about the mind, we ought not to try in vain to change our nature - our tendency towards prejudice - but instead do something simpler: tell better stories, and design better covers." (The Skeptic, 2011) "As you can tell from my reactions above I found this a very informative book and I'm only touching on particular things with my comments. If you're a writer, this book should be read post-haste so you don't keep

repeating things you thought were true and obviously aren't. For everyone else, the revelations should make you sit up and take heed of what not to be taken in by." (SFCrowsnest.co.uk, 1 May 2011) "This would be an ideal book to have in offices where people have to spend some time waiting for appointments." (Education Digest, November 2010) "This book would suit educators involved in study skills and critical thinking courses who might be looking for some new angles with which to update or spruce up their courses. It should be equally digestible to the A-level student and the first-year undergraduate." Ã Â (PLATH, December 2010) "I love 50 Great Myths and used it in my winter seminar.Ã Â This should be on every psychologist's shelf." (Dartmouth Alumni Magazine, October 2010) "This is a refreshing and fun look at many of the concepts that have been accepted as fact by our popular culture." (Book End Babes, September 01, 2010) "At the end of each sub-section covering an individual myth is a list of anti-factoids about related matters and their factual antidotes. By this means a considerable range of topics is covered." (Education Review, July 2010) "Maybe we should pay more attention to books like 50 Great Myths of Popular Psychology: Shattering Widespread Misconceptions about Human Nature. The four psychology professors who authored this enlightening book are up against the roughly 3,500 self-help titles, a lot of them based on false premises, that are published in the U.S. every year." (Poe'sDeadly Daughters, April 2010) "Scott Lilienfeld and his team ... have a history in delving into the dark myths of science, and pseudoscience ... .They are back. As with their other works, these authors manage to write well for ease of reading so many facts, and do so with their characteristic humor and cutting edge science.Ã Â This book is [an] illumination, and vital reading for professionals and even laymen." (Metapsychology, June 2010) "Who should read this book? Anyone interested in psychology and or the scientific method.Ã Â The book is written in an easy to read fashion, is well referenced and includes a wide array of topics.Ã Â The book teaches the value of critical thinking, and tells us it's all right to question authority. In conclusion, 50 Great Myths of Popular Psychology is a must read for psychology majors, therapists and anyone who wishes to gain knowledge about the diverse field of psychology.Ã Â I wish this book was available when I was studying psychology in college." (Basil & Spice (Jamie Hale), May 2010) "Popular psychology is a prolific source of myths. A new book does an excellent job of mythbusting: 50 Great Myths of Popular Psychology. Some myths I had swallowed whole and the book's carefully presented evidence made me change my mind. They cover 50 myths in depth, explaining their origins, why people believe them, and what the published research has to say about the claims. Everything is meticulously documented with sources listed. The authors have done us a great service by compiling all this information in a handy, accessible form, by showing how science trumps common knowledge and common sense, and by teaching us

how to question and think about what we hear. I highly recommend it." (Dr. Harriet Hall for Skeptic Magazine, February 2010, and ScienceBasedMedicine.org, November 2009) "50 Great Myths of Popular Psychology is written in an engaging style and is valuable for both professionals and the general public. I highly recommend it." (Skeptical Inquirer, February 2010) "Delightful and important book ... .This is a fine tool for teaching critical thinking. 50 Great Myths of Popular Psychology is much more than an entertaining put-down of popular misconceptions. Any psychologist can putÃ Â [this book]Ã Â to good use. Certainly teachers can use it as a supplement to aid in teaching critical thinking and to suggest ideas for research on other myths.We can give it to family members and friends who are curious about what psychology has to contribute and might themselves engage in some myth busting." (PsycCritiques, January 2010) "If you are familiar with other books by the same authors, you know that the writing style is incredibly engaging and easy-to-read, making the book accessible to those with little knowledge of psychology and well as those with considerable education in the field. While we certainly won't stop combating clinical psychology myths here at PBB, it's always exciting to come across like-minded folks also providing valuable material!" (Psychotherapy Brown Bag, October 2009) "50 Great Myths of Popular Psychology is a fascinating book, and while reading, I cheered the authors on. If you have questioned science as some of us have, this book will reassure you that your thinking was perfectly logical and correct. 50 Great Myths of Popular Psychology clarifies things about which I have always wondered, but never challenged. Myths about aging, memory, learning, emotions and motivation, and mental illness are among the subjects covered.Ã Â The reading is enlightening, refreshing and interesting.You don't have to be a Ph.D, or even a student of psychology to enjoy this book.Ã Â It's is written in language all can understand and the information is easily digested." (Basil & Spice, October 2009) "Scott Lilienfeld and his coauthors explore the gulf between what millions of people say is so and the truth. Some of these myths are just plain fascinating." (US News and World Report, October 2009) Ã Â

Here are some myths I had always assumed had some truth in them: some people are left-brained, others right-brained; adolescence is always a time of psychological turmoil; when dying, or when loved ones die, people pass through five stages of grief (denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance); intelligence tests are biased against certain groups of people; men and women communicate in very different ways (Mars vs. Venus); most people who were sexually abused as children develop personality disturbances in adulthood; adult children of alcoholics display distinctive symptoms; the incidence of autism has increased; abstinence is the only realistic option for alcoholics; shock therapy is physically dangerous and immoral. It turns out that there is no good

evidence for any of these.The method of this book is to describe a myth, to give survey evidence that most people believe it, to trace the source of the myth and to give experimental evidence showing that the myth is not true. All of us read or hear such myths, and because we hear them so often, and because they are so often the basis of television shows and movies, we come to believe there is some truth in them. But unfortunately most of the time they are nothing more than folk tales. I was pleased to learn that there is a whole industry dedicated to finding out whether they are true or false. But I kept wondering what measures I could take to avoid assimilating false information, other than to forswear all television, movies, newspapers and the internet. I also kept wondering whether it is possible to know anything much about the psychology of human beings.This book is measured, insightful, thorough and enlightening. One annoyance is that on virtually every page you will find words separated arbitrarily by spaces: gen erate, par ents, dis entangling, experi ment, uni versity, person ality, astonish ment, advant age, etc. I cannot imagine why this got through.

Lilienfeld, Lynn, Ruscio and Beyerstein (2010) set out to debunk what many people view as "common sense " in their book 50 Great Myths of Popular Psychology. If you have ever thought that people only use 10% of their brain or most mentally ill people are violent, this book is a must read. The authors provide strong, research evidence debunking what most of society believes is common sense. As a psychology student studying Clinical Psychology, I found this book to be well written for those who have never studied psychology. The authors do a great job describing statistical terms and research in a way that anyone can understand them. I enjoyed how they describe where many of these myths may have originated and why. While reading this book, I felt the authors where able to explain why so many people believe a statement, such as, ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å"most people experience a midlife crisis in their 40s or early 50s", and then show the reader, with valid research, why this statement is not true. This book is not only a great read for the psychology community, also a great read for anyone. I would strongly suggest 50 Great Myths of Popular Psychology anyone in hopes that more people will begin to understand common psychological myths.

The authors state in the Preface to this 2010 book, "Our book is the first to survey the full landscape of modern popular psychology, and to place common misconceptions under the microscope of scientific evidence. By doing so, we hope to both dispel prevalent but false beliefs and arm readers with accurate knowledge... We've made particular efforts to make our book accessible to beginning students and laypersons, and we presume no formal knowledge of psychology... the book can be enjoyed equally by specialists and nonspecialists alike." (Pg. xv)As an example of misleading

film/media portrayals, they note about the movie Â Rain Man Â that Dustin Hoffman's character is "characterized by remarkable mental abilities, such as 'calendar calculation' (the ability to name the day of a week given any year and date), multiplication and division of extremely large numbers, and knowledge of trivia, such as the batting averages of all active major league baseball players. Yet at most 10% of autistic adults are savants." (Pg. 17)After pointing out the "we only use 10% of our brains" myth, they ask, "if the 10% myth is so poorly supported, how did it get started?... One stream leads back to pioneering American psychologist William James... James said he doubted that average persons achieve more than about 10% of their INTELLECTUAL POTENTIAL... '10% of our capacity' gradually morphed into '10% of our brain'... Undoubtedly, the biggest boost ... came when journalist Lowell Thomas attributed the 10% brain claim to William James... in the 1936 preface to ... Dale Carnegie's Â How to Win Friends & Influence People. The myth has never lost its steam since." (Pg. 24)About "subliminal advertising," they note, "Vance Packard popularized this view of the unconscious in his 1957 smash bestseller, Â The Hidden Persuaders. Packard accepted uncritically the story of marketing consultant James Vicary, who supposedly conducted a successful demonstration of subliminal advertising at a ... movie theatre. Vicary claimed that during a movie, he ... exposed cinema patrons to messages flashed on the screen for a mere 1/3,000 of a second, urging them to buy popcorn and Coca-Cola. He proclaimed that although movie-goers were unaware of these commands, sales of popcorn and Coca-Cola skyrocketed during the six-week duration of his 'experiment'... Vicary finally admitted is 1962 that he'd made up the whole story in an effort to revive his failing consulting business." (Pg. 38-39)Of the so-called Â Mozart Effect Â [which was originally based on an article in the respected science journal 'Nature'], they state, "Several investigators who tried to replicate the original Nature findings reported either no effect or a miniscule one... multiple studies revealed that the Mozart Effect was trivial in magnitude ... and of trivial duration... Moreover, none of the published studies examined children, let alone infants, who were the supposed beneficiaries of the Mozart Effect... parents hoping to transform their babies into genuises by exposing them to the soundtrack of Â Amadeus Â are best advised to save their money." (Pg. 47-48)Of the famous "five stages of death" in Elizabeth KÃƒÂ bler-Ross's book Â On Death and Dying, they point out, "her research was based almost entirely on potentially biased samples... subjective observations, and unstandardized measurements of people's emotions across time... research evdence suggests that many dying people don't pass through her stages in the same order... many skip KÃƒÂ bler-Ross stages, or even pass through them in reverse order... Moreover, the boundaries among KÃƒÂ bler-Ross's stages are often blurry, and there's minimal evidence for sudden 'jumps' from one stage to another."

(Pg. 61)This book is a vastly informative, well-documented, and surprisingly thorough critique of such "folk beliefs." They also include citations from popular culture (movies, books, TV shows, etc.) showing the influence of these ideas. Almost ANYONE could benefit from reading this book (even if it skewers a few of one's own "favorite" misconceptions).

I enjoyed this book and was surprised by how many myths I thought were true. The disturbing thing is many people make personal and political judgements based on untruths.

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