



The Eureka Factor: Aha Moments, Creative Insight, and the Brain

John Kounios, Mark Beeman

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In a book perfect for readers of Charles Duhigg's *The Power of Habit*, David Eagleman's *Incognito*, and Leonard Mlodinow's *Subliminal*, the cognitive neuroscientists who discovered how the brain has aha moments—sudden creative insights—explain how they happen, when we need them, and how we can have more of them to enrich our lives and empower personal and professional success.

Eureka or aha moments are sudden realizations that expand our understanding of the world and ourselves, conferring both personal growth and practical advantage. Such creative insights, as psychological scientists call them, were what conveyed an important discovery in the science of genetics to Nobel laureate Barbara McClintock, the melody of a Beatles ballad to Paul McCartney, and an understanding of the cause of human suffering to the Buddha. But these moments of clarity are not given only to the famous. Anyone can have them.

In *The Eureka Factor*, John Kounios and Mark Beeman explain how insights arise and what the scientific research says about stimulating more of them. They discuss how various conditions affect the likelihood of your having an insight, when insight is helpful and when deliberate methodical thought is better suited to a task, what the relationship is between insight and intuition, and how the brain's right hemisphere contributes to creative thought.

Written in a lively, engaging style, this book goes beyond scientific principles to offer productive techniques for realizing your creative potential—at home and at work. The authors provide compelling anecdotes to illustrate how eureka experiences can be a key factor in your life. Attend a dinner party with Christopher Columbus to learn why we need insights. Go to a baseball game with the director of a classic Disney Pixar movie to learn about one important type of aha moment. Observe the behind-the-scenes arrangements for an Elvis Presley concert to learn why the timing of insights is crucial.

Accessible and compelling, *The Eureka Factor* is a fascinating look at the human brain and its seemingly infinite capacity to surprise us.

Praise for *The Eureka Factor*

“Delicious . . . In *The Eureka Factor*, neuroscientists John Kounios and Mark Beeman give many other examples of [a] kind of lightning bolt of insight, but back this up with the latest brain-imaging research.”—*Newsweek*

“An incredible accomplishment . . . [*The Eureka Factor*] is not just a chronicle of the journey that numerous scientists (including the authors) have taken to examine insight but is also a fascinating guide to how advances in science are made in general. Messrs. Kounios and Beeman examine how a parade of clever experiments can be designed to answer specific questions and rule out alternative possibilities. . . . Wonderful ideas appear as if out of nowhere—and we are delighted.”—*The Wall Street Journal*

“An excellent title for those interested in neuroscience or creativity . . . The writing is engaging and readable,

mixing stories of famous perceptions with explanations of how such revelations happen.”—*Library Journal* (starred review)

“A lively and accessible ‘brain’ book with wide appeal.”—*Booklist*

“[An] ingenious, thoughtful update on how the mind works.”—*Kirkus Reviews*

“*The Eureka Factor* presents a fascinating and illuminating account of the creative process and how to foster it.”—**James J. Heckman, Nobel laureate in economics**

From the Hardcover edition.

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