

Simple Heuristics That Make Us Smart invites readers to embark on a new journey into a land of rationality that differs from the familiar territory of cognitive science and economics. Traditional views of rationality see decision makers as possessing superhuman powers of reason, limitless knowledge, and all of eternity in which to ponder choices. However, decisions in the real world require a different, more psychologically plausible notion of rationality, and this book provides it. It is about fast and frugal heuristics—simple rules for making decisions when time is pressing and deep thought an unaffordable luxury. These heuristics facilitate smart choices, classifications, and predictions through the use of bounded rationality.

“How do people cope in the real, complex world of confusing and overwhelming information and rapidly approaching deadlines? This important book starts a new quest for answers. Here, Gigerenzer, Todd, and their lively research group show that simple heuristics are powerful tools that do surprisingly well. The field of decision making will never be the same again.”

—Donald A. Norman, Nielsen Norman Group, Professor Emeritus,
University of California, San Diego, and author of
Things That Make Us Smart and *The Invisible Computer*

“In the past few years, the theory of rational (‘sensible’) human behavior has broken loose from the illusory and empirically unsupported notion that deciding rationally means maximizing expected utility. Research has learned to take seriously and study empirically how real human beings... actually address the vast complexities of the world they inhabit. *Simple Heuristics*... offers a fascinating introduction to this revolution in cognitive science, striking a great blow for sanity in the approach to human rationality.”

—Herbert A. Simon, Nobel Laureate in Economics and Professor of
Computer Science and Psychology at Carnegie Mellon University

“This book is a major contribution to the theory of bounded rationality. It illustrates that the surprising efficiency of fast and simple procedures is due to their fit with the structure of the environment in which they are used. The emphasis on this ‘ecological rationality’ is an advance in a promising and already fruitful new direction of research.”

—Reinhard Selten, Nobel Laureate in Economics and
Professor of Economics at the University of Bonn

“Gigerenzer & Todd’s volume represents a major advance in our understanding of human reasoning, with many genuinely new ideas on how people think and an impressive body of data to back them up. *Simple Heuristics* is indispensable for cognitive psychologists, economists, and anyone else interested in reason and rationality.”

—Steven Pinker, Professor of Psychology at MIT and
author of *How the Mind Works* and *Words and Rules*