

'Redirect' by Timothy D. Wilson and 'Who's in charge?' by Michael S. Gazzaniga

November 28, 2011

The Boston Globe:

Common sense has a lot to say about human behavior and the human brain. Recent empirical research, though, strongly suggests that a good deal of what it has to say is wrong. This is both unfortunate and serious, since many of the practices and policies we choose as a society are based on our beliefs about human behavior and how to change it. Two new books from eminent brain researchers aim to apply these recent findings to questions of behavior, free will, and responsibility.

In "Redirect: The Surprising New Science of Psychological Change," Timothy D. Wilson surveys a variety of social programs and policies that, it turns out, have been based on false assumptions about the way we think. He begins with the example of Critical Incident Stress Debriefing, whose premise is "that when people have experienced a traumatic event they should air their feelings as soon as possible, so that they don't bottle up these feelings and develop post-traumatic stress disorder." This might sound reasonable, but according to Wilson, it simply doesn't work: In fact, empirical testing strongly suggests that CISD has a tendency to increase anxiety and depression by retraumatizing people, delaying any healing.

Read the full story: [*The Boston Globe*](#)