

How to Turn Down the Noise That Mars Our Decision-Making

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A friend of mine was suffering such severe back pain that it was difficult for him to walk or stand. He consulted three doctors about the best course of treatment. The first was adamant that he needed surgery right away. The second advised my friend that he didn't need surgery and that if he continued physical therapy, his condition would improve gradually over the coming months. The third prescribed strong steroids and recommended that, if his condition didn't improve in a month, then he should have surgery. My friend followed the third doctor's guidance, and it seems to be working. But he was mighty upset and confused by all those clashing perspectives. And he is still unsure whether that third doctor's approach is the right one.

This undesirable variability in professional judgment is an example of noise, the ubiquitous and often-ignored human failing that is the focus of this well-researched, convincing and practical book. "[Noise: A Flaw in Human Judgment](#)" was written by the all-star team of psychologist and Nobel Prize winner Daniel Kahneman, former McKinsey partner and management professor Olivier Sibony, and productive legal scholar and behavioral economist Cass Sunstein. Kahneman won the Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences for his pathbreaking work with Amos Tversky on systematic biases in judgment. It prompted armies of psychologists and behavioral economists (including Sibony and Sunstein) to study the causes and remedies for many such faults, including overconfidence, stereotyping and confirmation bias — or seeking, remembering and placing excessive weight on information that supports our beliefs.

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