

Believing In Magic The Psychology Of Superstition

This book asserts that the better one understands the causes of behavior, the better one can apply that knowledge to produce a better world. Harcum begins with a description of the nervous system and continues with chapters on development, perception, internal states, learning, memory, and the ultimate selection of behaviors.

Over the last three decades, debt, bankruptcy, and home foreclosures have risen to epidemic levels. To make matters worse, the personal savings rate is at its lowest point since the Great Depression. Why, in the richest nation on earth, can't Americans hold on to our money? Winner of the prestigious William James Book Award for Believing in Magic and an authority on irrational behavior, Stuart Vyse offers a unique psychological perspective on the financial behavior of the many Americans today who find they cannot make ends meet, illuminating the causes of our wildly self-destructive spending habits. But unlike other authors, he doesn't entirely blame the victim. Bringing together fascinating studies of consumer behavior, he argues that the mountain of debt burying so many of us is the inevitable byproduct of America's turbo-charged economy and, in particular, of social and technological trends that undermine our self-control. *Going Broke* illuminates everything from the rise of the credit card, to the increase in state lotteries and casino gambling, to the expansion of new shopping opportunities provided by toll-free numbers, home shopping networks, big-box stores, and the Internet, revealing how vast changes in American society over the last 30 years have greatly complicated our relationship with money. Vyse concludes both with personal advice for the individual who wants to achieve greater financial stability and with pointed recommendations for economic and social change that will help promote the financial health of all Americans. Engagingly written, with startling insights into modern consumerism and with poignant human-interest stories of people facing financial failure, *Going Broke* offers a provocative new perspective on American economic behavior that is likely to stir controversy and serious debate.

_____ 'The Magicians is to Harry Potter as a shot of Irish whiskey is to a glass of weak tea . . . dark and dangerous and full of twists' – GEORGE R. R. MARTIN THE BESTSELLING BOOK BEHIND THE HIT SYFY SHOW

_____ In a secret world of forbidden knowledge, power comes at a terrible price... Quentin Coldwater's life is changed forever by an apparently chance encounter: when he turns up for his entrance interview to Princeton University, he finds his interviewer dead – but a strange envelope bearing Quentin's name leads him down a very different path. Instead of Princeton, he finds himself invited to study at Brakebills – a secret college of modern-day sorcerers. Quentin plunges deep into a secret world of obsession and privilege, a world of freedom and power; and for a while, it seems to answer all Quentin's desires. But the idyll cannot last. There are others powers than sorcery, powers that are as seductive as they are dangerous – and when the illusion of safety shatters, Quentin is drawn into a world far darker than he ever imagined. After all, power corrupts. No exceptions. THE FIRST BOOK IN LEV GROSSMAN'S CRITICALLY ACCLAIMED MAGICIAN TRILOGY

_____ Praise for the Magician Trilogy: 'Stirring, complex, adventurous . . . superb' –

JUNOT DIAZ, author of DROWN and THE BRIEF WONDROUS LIFE OF OSCAR WAO 'A sophisticated, subtle novel that is also magical fun' – THE TIMES 'Lev Grossman has conjured a rare creature: a trilogy that simply gets better and better as it goes along . . . Literary perfection.' – ERIN MORGENSTERN, author of THE NIGHT CIRCUS 'The Magicians ought to be required reading . . . Lev Grossman has written a terrific, at times almost painfully perceptive novel of the fantastic' – KELLY LINK 'The best fantasy trilogy of the decade' – CHARLES STROSS 'The Magicians is angst-ridden, bleak, occasionally joyous and gloriously readable. Forget Hogwarts: this is where the magic really is.' – SFX 'The Magicians is fantastic, in all senses of the word. It's strange, fanciful, extravagant, eccentric, and truly remarkable – a great story, masterfully told.' – SCOTT SMITH, author of THE RUINS

Motivational book for all athletes.

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Doing well with money isn't necessarily about what you know. It's about how you behave. And behavior is hard to teach, even to really smart people. Money—investing, personal finance, and business decisions—is typically taught as a math-based field, where data and formulas tell us exactly what to do. But in the real world people don't make financial decisions on a spreadsheet. They make them at the dinner table, or in a meeting room, where personal history, your own unique view of the world, ego, pride, marketing, and odd incentives are scrambled together. In *The Psychology of Money*, award-winning author Morgan Housel shares 19 short stories exploring the strange ways people think about money and teaches you how to make better sense of one of life's most important topics.

Sleight of Mouth is about the magic of words and language. Language is one of the key representational systems from which we build our mental models of the world, and has a tremendous influence upon how we perceive and respond to the world around us. As Sigmund Freud pointed out, "Words and magic were in the beginning one and the same thing." The right words at the right time can be uplifting, changing the course of someone's life for the better; opening up new vistas and possibilities. Unfortunately, words can also confuse and limit us as easily as they can empower us. The wrong words at the wrong time can be hurtful and damaging. *Sleight of Mouth* patterns come from the study of how language has been, and can be, used to make an impact on people's lives and emotions. This book represents over twenty years of study and practice with respect to the influence of language and its potential to change our lives. Author Robert Dilts (whose other works include *Visionary Leadership Skills*, *Strategies of Genius*, *Dynamic Learning and Modeling With NLP*) has examined the language patterns of people such as Socrates, Abraham Lincoln, Mahatma Gandhi, Adolph Hitler, Milton Erickson and Jesus of Nazareth. *Sleight of Mouth* patterns are made up of verbal categories and distinctions by which key beliefs can be established, shifted or transformed through language. Generally, *Sleight of Mouth* patterns can be characterized as "verbal reframes" which influence beliefs, and the mental maps from which beliefs have been formed. These patterns provide a powerful tool for persuasion and conversational belief change. This book is about the power of words to be either helpful or harmful, the distinctions that determine the type of impact words will have, and the language

patterns through which we can transform harmful statements into helpful ones.

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Believing in Magic The Psychology of Superstition - Updated Edition Oxford University Press

Reproduction of the original: The Group Mind by William McDougall

Why do rational people buy notions that seem utterly incredulous? (And that includes you.) Everyone – even the most jaded and sceptical – believes in ‘magic’, in the form of luck, mind over matter, the power of similarities, jinxes, and destiny. In this wonderful exploration of psychology, Matthew Hutson takes us on a fascinating tour of magical thinking in everyday life, revealing the healing power of John Lennon’s piano; the reason gamblers kiss their tickets; and why admitting you have no free will staves off addiction. The best-selling author of *The God Delusion* and the artist of such award-winning graphic novels as *Wizard* and *Glass* address key scientific questions previously explained by rich mythologies, from the evolution of the first humans and the life cycle of stars to the principles of a rainbow and the origins of the universe. 150,000 first printing.

Max is sent to bed without supper and imagines sailing away to the land of Wild Things, where he is made king.

The Sunday Times bestseller ‘A monumental, gripping book ... Outstanding’ Sunday Times Wherever there is human judgement, there is noise.

Do people have free will, or this universal belief an illusion? If free will is more than an illusion, what kind of free will do people have? How can free will influence behavior? Can free will be studied, verified, and understood scientifically? How and why might a sense of free will have evolved? These are a few of the questions this book attempts to answer. People generally act as though they believe in their own free will: they don't feel like automatons, and they don't treat one another as they might treat robots. While acknowledging many constraints and influences on behavior, people nonetheless act as if they (and their neighbors) are largely in control of many if not most of the decisions they make. Belief in free will also underpins the sense that people are responsible for their actions. Psychological explanations of behavior rarely mention free will as a factor, however. Can psychological science find room for free will? How do leading psychologists conceptualize free will, and what role do they believe free will plays in shaping behavior? In recent years a number of psychologists have tried to solve one or more of the puzzles surrounding free will. This book looks both at recent experimental and theoretical work directly related to free will and at ways leading psychologists from all branches of psychology deal with the philosophical problems long associated with the question of free will, such as the relationship between determinism and free will and the importance of consciousness in free will. It also includes commentaries by leading philosophers on what psychologists can contribute to long-running philosophical struggles with this most distinctly human belief. These essays should be of interest not only to social scientists, but to intelligent and thoughtful readers everywhere.

Many of our questions about religion, says renowned anthropologist Pascal Boyer, are no longer mysteries. We are beginning to know how to answer questions such as "Why do people have religion?" Using findings from anthropology, cognitive science, linguistics, and evolutionary biology, *Religion Explained* shows how this aspect of human consciousness is increasingly admissible

to coherent, naturalistic explanation. This brilliant and controversial book gives readers the first scientific explanation for what religious feeling is really about, what it consists of, and where it comes from.

More than 6 million readers around the world have improved their lives by reading *The Magic of Thinking Big*. First published in 1959, David J Schwartz's classic teachings are as powerful today as they were then. Practical, empowering and hugely engaging, this book will not only inspire you, it will give you the tools to change your life for the better - starting from now. His step-by-step approach will show you how to: - Defeat disbelief and the negative power it creates - Make your mind produce positive thoughts - Plan a concrete success-building programme - Do more and do it better by turning on your creative power - Capitalise on the power of NOW Updated for the 21st century, this is your go-to guide to a better life, starting with the way you think.

This study examines the relationship between elite and popular beliefs in witchcraft, magic and superstition in England, analyzing such beliefs against the background of political, religious and social upheaval characteristic of the Civil War, Interregnum and Restoration periods. Belief in witchcraft received new impulses because of the general ferment of religious ideas and the tendency of participants in the Civil Wars to resort to imagery drawn from beliefs about the devil and witches; or to use portents to argue for the wrongs of their opponents. Throughout the work, the author stresses that deeply held superstitions were fundamental to belief in witches, the devil, ghosts, apparitions and supernatural healing. Despite the fact that popular superstitions were often condemned, it was recognized that their propaganda value was too useful to ignore. A host of pamphlets and treatises were published during this period which unashamedly incorporated such beliefs. Valletta here explores the manner in which political and religious authorities somewhat cynically used demonic imagery and language to discredit their opponents and to manipulate popular opinion.

The tenth-anniversary edition of the book that changed lives in profound ways, now with a new foreword and afterword. In 2006, a groundbreaking feature-length film revealed the great mystery of the universe—*The Secret*—and, later that year, Rhonda Byrne followed with a book that became a worldwide bestseller. Fragments of a Great Secret have been found in the oral traditions, in literature, in religions and philosophies throughout the centuries. For the first time, all the pieces of *The Secret* come together in an incredible revelation that will be life-transforming for all who experience it. In this book, you'll learn how to use *The Secret* in every aspect of your life—money, health, relationships, happiness, and in every interaction you have in the world. You'll begin to understand the hidden, untapped power that's within you, and this revelation can bring joy to every aspect of your life. *The Secret* contains wisdom from modern-day teachers—men and women who have used it to achieve health, wealth, and happiness. By applying the knowledge of *The Secret*, they bring to light compelling stories of eradicating disease, acquiring massive wealth, overcoming obstacles, and achieving what many would regard as impossible.

Astrology.

Have you ever known someone who expects the best of every situation and always seems to get it? That, according to author Claude Bristol, is the magic of believing. This self-help classic illustrates the timeless nature of Bristol's insights by bringing them to life through 52 modern case studies. Millions have benefited from these visualization techniques, which show how to turn your thoughts and dreams into effective actions that can lead to enhanced income, happier relationships, increased effectiveness, heightened influence and improved peace of mind. A *Telegraph* Book of the Year A remarkable, unprecedented account of the role of magic in cultures both ancient and modern -- from the first known horoscope to the power of tattoos. 'Fascinating, original, excellent' Simon Sebag Montefiore _____ Three great

strands of practice and belief run through human history: science, religion and magic. But magic - the idea that we have a connection with the universe - has developed a bad reputation. It has been with us for millennia - from the curses and charms of ancient Greek, Roman and Jewish magic, to the shamanistic traditions of Eurasia, indigenous America and Africa, and even today in the West when snapping wishbones or buying lottery tickets. Drawing on his decades of research, Professor Chris Gosden provides a history of human thought and how magic may help us rethink our understanding of the world. _____ 'This is an extraordinary work of learning, written with an exhilarating lightness of touch . . . It is essential reading.' Francis Pryor, author of Britain BC, Britain AD and The Fens 'Without an

unfascinating page' Scotsman 'Chris Gosden shows how magic explores the connections between human beings and the universe in ways different from religion or science, yet deserving of respect' Professor John Barton, author of A History of The Bible

The Book of Pleasure could be regarded as the central text among Austin Osman Spare's writings. It covers both mystical and magical aspects of Spare's ideas; as the modern ideas on sigils (as now have become popular in chaos magic) and Spare's special theory on incarnation are for the first time introduced in this book. There are some chapters in The Book of Pleasure that Spare has referred to within the text, but are omitted. It seems that they were destroyed during World War II

How the scientific study of magic reveals intriguing—and often unsettling—insights into the mysteries of the human mind. What do we see when we watch a magician pull a rabbit out of a hat or read a person's mind? We are captivated by an illusion; we applaud the fact that we have been fooled. Why do we enjoy experiencing what seems clearly impossible, or at least beyond our powers of explanation? In *Experiencing the Impossible*, Gustav Kuhn examines the psychological processes that underpin our experience of magic. Kuhn, a psychologist and a magician, reveals the intriguing—and often unsettling—insights into the human mind that the scientific study of magic provides. Magic, Kuhn explains, creates a cognitive conflict between what we believe to be true (for example, a rabbit could not be in that hat) and what we experience (a rabbit has just come out of that hat!). Drawing on the latest psychological, neurological, and philosophical research, he suggests that misdirection is at the heart of all magic tricks, and he offers a scientific theory of misdirection. He explores, among other topics, our propensity for magical thinking, the malleability of our perceptual experiences, forgetting and misremembering, free will and mind control, and how magic is applied outside entertainment—the use of illusion in human-computer interaction, politics, warfare, and elsewhere. We may be surprised to learn how little of the world we actually perceive, how little we can trust what we see and remember, and how little we are in charge of our thoughts and actions. Exploring magic, Kuhn illuminates the complex—and almost magical—mechanisms underlying our daily activities.

Since the early nineteenth century, mesmerists, mediums and psychics have exhibited extraordinary phenomena. These have been demonstrated, reported and disputed by every modern generation. We continue to wonder why people believe in such things, while others wonder why they are dismissed so easily. *Extraordinary Beliefs* takes a historical approach to an ongoing psychological problem: why do people believe in extraordinary phenomena? It considers the phenomena that have been associated with mesmerism, spiritualism, psychical research and parapsychology. By drawing upon conjuring theory, frame analysis and discourse analysis, it examines how such phenomena have been made convincing in demonstration and report, and then disputed endlessly. It argues that we cannot understand extraordinary beliefs unless we properly consider the events in which people believe, and what people believe about them. And it shows how, in constructing and maintaining particular beliefs about

particular phenomena, we have been in the business of constructing ourselves.

Magical thinking and behavior have traditionally been viewed as immature, misleading alternatives to scientific thought that in children inevitably diminish with age. In adults, these inclinations have been labeled by psychologists largely as superstitions that feed on frustration, uncertainty, and the unpredictable nature of certain human activities. In *Magic and the Mind*, Eugene Subbotsky provides an overview of the mechanisms and development of magical thinking and beliefs throughout the life span while arguing that the role of this type of thought in human development should be reconsidered. Rather than an impediment to scientific reasoning or a byproduct of cognitive development, in children magical thinking is an important and necessary complement to these processes, enhancing creativity at problem-solving and reinforcing coping strategies, among other benefits. In adults, magical thinking and beliefs perform important functions both for individuals (coping with unsolvable problems and stressful situations) and for society (enabling mass influence and promoting social harmony). Operating in realms not bound by physical causality, such as emotion, relationships, and suggestion, magical thinking is an ongoing, developing psychological mechanism that, Subbotsky argues, is integral in the contexts of politics, commercial advertising, and psychotherapy, and undergirds our construction and understanding of meaning in both mental and physical worlds. *Magic and the Mind* represents a unique contribution to our understanding of the importance of magical thinking, offering experimental evidence and conclusions never before collected in one source. It will be of interest to students and scholars of developmental psychology, as well as sociologists, anthropologists, and educators.

An interdisciplinary investigation of the role of magic in human societies, past and present, asserts that magic remains an important element in contemporary civilizations

BESTSELLING BOOK In this inspirational guide, Wayne Dyer, the author of the phenomenal bestsellers *Wisdom of the Ages*, *Pulling Your Own Strings*, and *Your Erroneous Zones*, reveals seven beliefs central to working miracles in our everyday lives. When most of us think of magic, we picture a man in a black cape sawing a woman in half, or a sleight-of-hand card trick. But there's another kind of magic – real magic – that can enrich your life. According to Dyer, real magic means creating miracles in everyday life. Quitting smoking or drinking, achieving new Job success, or finding a happy relationship – these are all miracles because they transcend our perceived limitations. From "creating a miracle mind-set" and achieving change in the areas of personal health, prosperity, and fulfilling love relationships to believing in the magic of miracles on a global scale, Dyer shows us that miracles within our reach and within our own minds. In *Real Magic*, Dyer teaches us how to achieve a higher level of consciousness. He asks us to imagine what would make us happy, then offers specific strategies for attaining these goals. In every aspect of our individual lives – physical health, finances, intimate relationships, and personal identity – there is always room for a miracle or two. And with Dyer's help, each and every one of us can be a miracle worker.

A useful manual for any magician or curious spectator who wonders why the tricks seem so real, this guide examines the psychological aspects of a magician's work. Exploring the ways in which human psychology plays into the methods of conjuring

rather than focusing on the individual tricks alone, this explanation of the general principles of magic includes chapters on the use of misdirection, sleight of hand, and reconstruction, provides a better understanding of this ancient art, and offers a section on psychics that warns of their deceptive magic skills.

Part I of this book explains the nature of consciousness and how the mind works. Part II is a practical handbook on how to apply the theory, with chapters on self-hypnosis, affirmations to attract love and financial success, self-healing techniques, and guided visualizations.

In this fully updated edition of *Believing in Magic*, renowned superstition expert Stuart Vyse investigates our tendency towards these irrational beliefs.

A forefront neuroscientist identifies a high prevalence of belief in supernatural phenomena and superstition while explaining why people are innately subject to such beliefs, in an account that explores why superstitions promote societal bonding.

With a thorough and systematic review of investigations into the bases of belief in paranormal phenomena, this discussion explores the four main theoretical approaches relating to the nature of such beliefs. Objective and well-researched, this account addresses different points of view on the topic--while some commentators depict paranormal believers as foolish, others propose that paranormal beliefs must be understood as necessities that serve certain psychodynamic needs. The foundations and shortcomings of each approach are also documented, and a new comprehensive theory attempts to explain the development of scientifically unsubstantiated beliefs.

AS HEARD ON THE CHRIS EVANS SHOW 'This book is going to fundamentally change some of the most important conversations in your life-the ones you have with yourself.' - Adam Grant, bestselling author of *Give and Take* Malcolm Gladwell, Susan Cain, Adam Grant, and Daniel H. Pink's Next Big Idea Club Winter 2021 Winning Selection One of the best new books of 2021 - BBC Science Focus Magazine, The Washington Post, CNN Underscored, USA Today, Shape, Behavioral Scientist, People, PopSugar * Kirkus Reviews, Publishers Weekly, and Shelf Awareness starred reviews *

Turn your inner voice from critic to coach We all have a voice in our head. We tune into its endless chatter to look for guidance, ideas and wisdom. Except sometimes, this voice leads us down a rabbit hole of negative self-talk and endless rumination. These silent conversations are so powerful they can sink our mood, trip us up and even impact our health. How can we take back control? This is the question award-winning psychologist Ethan Kross set out to answer twenty years ago when he began an audacious mission - to study the conversations we have with ourselves. In *Chatter*, Kross interweaves cutting-edge science with real-world case studies to explain how these inner conversations shape our work and relationships. Then he reveals the tools you need to harness your own voice so that you can be happier, healthier and more productive. Brilliantly argued and expertly researched, *Chatter* will explain how the conversations we have with

ourselves shape our lives, and will give you the power to change them.

Magicians have dazzled audiences for many centuries; however, few researchers have studied how, let alone why, most tricks work. The psychology of magic is a nascent field of research that examines the underlying mechanisms that conjurers use to achieve enchanting phenomena, including sensory illusions, misdirection of attention, and the appearance of mind-control and nuanced persuasion. Most studies to date have focused on either the psychological principles involved in watching and performing magic or “neuromagic” - the neural correlates of such phenomena. Whereas performers sometimes question the contributions that modern science may offer to the advancement of the magical arts, the history of magic reveals that scientific discovery often charts new territories for magicians. In this research topic we sketch out the symbiotic relationship between psychological science and the art of magic. On the one hand, magic can inform psychology, with particular benefits for the cognitive, social, developmental, and transcultural components of behavioural science. Magicians have a large and robust set of effects that most researchers rarely exploit. Incorporating these effects into existing experimental, even clinical, paradigms paves the road to innovative trajectories in the study of human behaviour. For example, magic provides an elegant way to study the behaviour of participants who may believe they had made choices that they actually did not make. Moreover, magic fosters a more ecological approach to experimentation whereby scientists can probe participants in more natural environments compared to the traditional lab-based settings. Examining how magicians consistently influence spectators, for example, can elucidate important aspects in the study of persuasion, trust, decision-making, and even processes spanning authorship and agency. Magic thus offers a largely underused armamentarium for the behavioural scientist and clinician. On the other hand, psychological science can advance the art of magic. The psychology of deception, a relatively understudied field, explores the intentional creation of false beliefs and how people often go wrong. Understanding how to methodically exploit the tenuous twilight zone of human vulnerabilities – perceptual, logical, emotional, and temporal – becomes all the more revealing when top-down influences, including expectation, symbolic thinking, and framing, join the fray. Over the years, science has permitted magicians to concoct increasingly effective routines and to elicit heightened feelings of wonder from audiences. Furthermore, on occasion science leads to the creation of novel effects, or the refinement of existing ones, based on systematic methods. For example, by simulating a specific card routine using a series of computer stimuli, researchers have decomposed the effect and reconstructed it into a more effective routine. Other magic effects depend on meaningful psychological knowledge, such as which type of information is difficult to retain or what changes capture attention. Behavioural scientists measure and study these factors. By combining analytical findings with performer intuitions, psychological science begets effective magic. Whereas science strives on parsimony and

independent replication of results, magic thrives on reproducing the same effect with multiple methods to obscure parsimony and minimise detection. This Research Topic explores the seemingly orthogonal approaches of scientists and magicians by highlighting the crosstalk as well as rapprochement between psychological science and the art of deception.

The award-winning New York Times bestseller that inspired BTS's K-pop song 'Magic Shop'. The day that 12-year-old James Doty walked in to his local magic shop is the day that changed his life. Once the neglected son of an alcoholic father and a mother with chronic depression, he has gone on to become a leading neurosurgeon, based at Stanford University. He credits Ruth for this incredible turnaround: the remarkable woman he met at the Cactus Rabbit Magic Shop, who devoted the summer to transforming his mind and opening his heart. In this uplifting memoir, Jim explains the visualisation techniques Ruth taught him that gave him the self-esteem to imagine a new future for himself. He examines the science behind mindfulness and why the skills he learned - of focus and attention - now help him to think fast and keep calm in the operating theatre. And he shows us what is possible when you start to change your brain and your heart. Into the Magic Shop imparts some powerful life lessons about how to live better, and inspires us to believe that we all have inside us the capacity to change our own destiny. 'I'm sure many readers will be moved by this inspiring story to open their hearts and see what they too can do for others' - His Holiness the Dalai Lama

The God Instinct explores how people's everyday thoughts, behaviours and emotions betray an innate tendency to reason as though God were deeply invested in their public lives and secret affairs. In this entertaining and thought-provoking book, Jesse Bering unravels the evolutionary mystery of why we grapple for meaning, purpose and destiny in life. He argues that God is not merely an idea to be entertained or discarded based on the evidence. Nor is God a cultural invention, an existential band-aid, an opiate of the masses. Instead, Bering proposes, God is a way of thinking - one that evolved through our ancestors, millions of years ago, to keep us in check and give us the edge on our competitors. While a belief in higher forces may seem ridiculous to some, The God Instinct shows that it is hardwired into our genetic make-up, and carries with it massive evolutionary benefits.

Do you touch wood for luck, or avoid the number 13? Despite the dominance of science in today's world, superstitious beliefs - both traditional and new - remain surprisingly popular. From black cats to lucky pennies, Stuart Vyse explores the history of our deepest superstitions, and the psychological reasons behind why they persist today.

Do you touch wood for luck, or avoid hotel rooms on floor thirteen? Would you cross the path of a black cat, or step under a ladder? Is breaking a mirror just an expensive waste of glass, or something rather more sinister? Despite the dominance of science in today's world, superstitious beliefs - both traditional and new - remain surprisingly popular. A

recent survey of adults in the United States found that 33 percent believed that finding a penny was good luck, and 23 percent believed that the number seven was lucky. Where did these superstitions come from, and why do they persist today? This Very Short Introduction explores the nature and surprising history of superstition from antiquity to the present. For two millennia, superstition was a label derisively applied to foreign religions and unacceptable religious practices, and its primary purpose was used to separate groups and assert religious and social authority. After the Enlightenment, the superstition label was still used to define groups, but the new dividing line was between reason and unreason. Today, despite our apparent sophistication and technological advances, superstitious belief and behaviour remain widespread, and highly educated people are not immune. Stuart Vyse takes an exciting look at the varieties of popular superstitious beliefs today and the psychological reasons behind their continued existence, as well as the likely future course of superstition in our increasingly connected world. ABOUT THE SERIES: The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly. Our expert authors combine facts, analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable.

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