

## Why Brilliant People Believe Nonsense: A Practical Text for Critical and Creative Thinking

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*Why Brilliant People Believe Nonsense pairs a rich catalog of content with a friendly, amusing tone.*

*Why Brilliant People Believe Nonsense* is a comprehensive look at numerous logical fallacies and stumbling blocks that introduce and perpetuate false beliefs in people. This wide-ranging work manages to retain its focus even as chapters jump from topic to topic, all organized under reasons such as “Because They’re Comfortable with Existing Beliefs” and “Because They Misunderstand Statistics.”

“Smart people often form wrong opinions and make stupid decisions,” the book says, and promises to look at “the mental flaws that informed their decisions.” From this introduction, the work moves into a discussion of the different mental flaws that cause people to believe and act upon false information. The authors break down these reasons into pithy, bite-size sayings, such as in chapter 1 when they write that “the arrogant collect information, not so much to search for truth, but to reinforce their prejudices.” Offering models such as Socrates, Sam Walton, Martin Luther King Jr., and more, the authors move through their topics with quotes, examples, and neat wrap-ups that drive home each fallacy.

*Why Brilliant People Believe Nonsense* is especially enjoyable in its light approach and constant questioning of common beliefs. The quotes at the beginning of the chapter on underconfidence, for example, are an amusing look at some of the opinions on famous artists, writers, and singers that have been proven wrong over the decades.

The graphics are often simple and unadorned, such as a man holding a globe at the end of each chapter to represent curiosity and adventure. The book is organized into easy-to-follow sections, and the suggestions for further reads that end each chapter are helpful and welcome additions.

*Why Brilliant People Believe Nonsense* is an easy-to-read and inclusive assessment of the many logical fallacies that plague our thinking, using examples ranging from battles in the Revolutionary War to modern business leaders and artists. Unlike other similar books in the genre that reinforce main points but are skimpy on details, *Why Brilliant People Believe Nonsense* exhibits a rich catalog of content that is paired with a friendly, amusing tone.

STEPHANIE BUCKLIN (Winter 2016)

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