

# Welcome to Your Brain: Why You Lose Your Car Keys but Never Forget How to Drive and Other Puzzles of Everyday Life

By Sandra Aamodt, Sam Wang

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Does drinking really kill brain cells? Does listening to Mozart make your baby smarter? For all the mileage we've gotten from our own brains, most of us have essentially no idea how they work. We're easily susceptible to myths (like the "fact" that we use only 10% of our brains) and misconceptions (like the ones perpetrated by most Hollywood movies), probably because we've never known where to turn for the truth.

But neurologists Sandra Aamodt and Sam Wang are glad to help. In this funny, accessible book, we get a guided tour of our own minds, what they're made of, how they work, and how they can go wrong. Along the way, we get a host of diagrams, quizzes, and "cocktail party tips" that shed light on the questions we nag each other about. (Can a head injury make you forget your own name? Are dolphins smarter than chimpanzees?)

Fun and surprisingly engrossing, *Welcome to Your Brain* shows you how your brain works, and how you can make it work better.

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### Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Neuroscientists Aamodt, editor-in-chief of *Nature Neuroscience*, and Wang, of Princeton University, explain how the human brain—with its 100 billion neurons—processes sensory and cognitive information, regulates our emotional life and forms memories. They also examine how human brains differ from those of other mammals and show what happens to us during dreams. They also tackle such potentially controversial topics as whether men and women have different brains (yes, though what that means in terms of capabilities and behavior, they say, is up in the air) and whether intelligence is shaped more by genes or environment (genes set an upper limit on people's intelligence, but the environment before birth and during childhood determines whether they reach their full genetic potential). Distinguishing their book are sidebars that explode myths—no, we do not use only 10% of our brain's potential but nearly all of it—and provide advice on subjects like protecting your brain as you get older. The book could have benefited from a glossary of neurological terms and more illustrations of the brain's structure. Still, this is a terrific, surprisingly fun guide for the general reader. B&w illus. (Mar.)

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### Review

“Welcome to Your Brain is a delightful and engaging romp through neuroscience by two of its leading lights -- a marvelous collection of facts and findings that answer the questions we all have about our own minds. If the human brain came with an owner's manual, it might well look like this.” —**Daniel Gilbert, author of Stumbling on Happiness**

“Welcome To Your Brain is a lucid and fascinating journey into the inner life of the mind, an essential manual for one of nature's most amazing technologies. You'll never think about yourself -- or think about thinking -- quite the same way again.” —**Steven Johnson, author of Mind Wide Open and The Ghost Map**

“People need to know how the brain works. How else can you competently serve on a jury, or vote for what the government should spend money on, or decide what to make of your child having trouble learning to read? But here's the problem: lots of people find science difficult. Welcome to Your Brain is a great solution. Written by two top neuroscientists, it's great on the facts—accurate, up to date, focuses on all the important topics—AND it's crystal clear and witty and irreverent and wonderfully written. This is a terrific book.” —**Robert Sapolsky, Why Zebras Don't Get Ulcers**

“If all scientists could write like this, professional science writers would be out of a job. Welcome to Your Brain is clear, understandable, entertaining and fascinating. A description of how, in a noisy room, to hear a caller on your cell phone is just one of the many good reasons to buy this book.” —**Sandra Blakeslee, co-author, The Body Has a Mind of its Own**

### About the Author

**Sandra Aamodt** is the editor in chief of *Nature Neuroscience*, the leading scientific journal in the field of brain research. She lives in California with her husband. **Sam Wang** is an associate professor of neuroscience and molecular biology at Princeton University. He has published over forty articles on the brain

in leading scientific journals, including *Nature*, *Nature Neuroscience*, and others. He lives in Princeton, NJ with his wife and daughter.

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