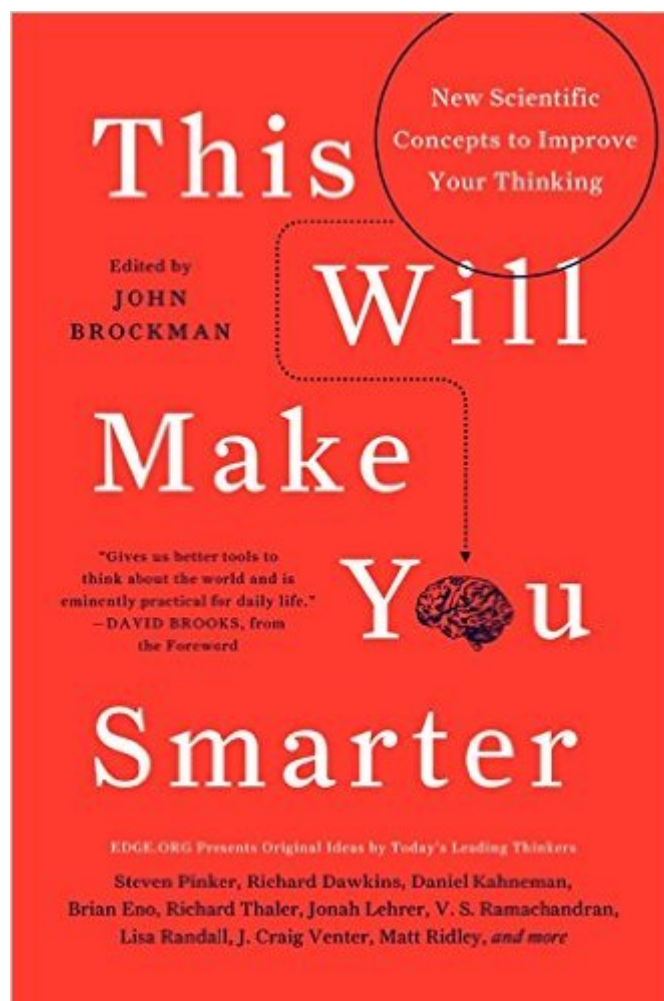


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# This Will Make You Smarter: New Scientific Concepts To Improve Your Thinking (Edge Question Series)



## Synopsis

Edge.org presents brilliant, accessible, cutting-edge ideas to improve our decision-making skills and improve our cognitive toolkits, with contributions by Nassim Nicholas Taleb, Richard Dawkins, Brian Eno, Steven Pinker, and more. Featuring a foreword by New York Times columnist David Brooks and edited by John Brockman, *This Will Make You Smarter* presents some of the best wisdom from today's leading thinkers "to make better thinkers out of the leaders of tomorrow.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The origin of this book is a simple one: The editor, John Brockman, tossed out the question "What scientific concept would improve everybody's cognitive toolkit?" to over 150 contemporary thought leaders, and recorded the results. Brockman has worked for decades to bring thinkers together, under the premise that great things happen when cross-disciplinary exchanges of brilliant thinking take place. Bacteria, because they are so profligate in exchanging genetic information across species, are astoundingly capable of arriving at new and adaptive solutions to environmental (including antibiotics) challenges. Brockman, I'm guessing, would be comfortable with the notion that in posing annual questions to leaders in the fields of many different disciplines he is increasing the adaptability, creativity, and problem solving capabilities of the human race. *This Will Make You Smarter* is excellent evidence that he may well be correct. Bacteria have something to teach us. Almost everyone gets a say here: astrophysicists, sociologists, environmentalists, historians,

microbiologists, newspaper columnists, particle physicists, philosophers, and a host of notables in other disciplines. The result is a truly provocative treasure heap of notions that just might do what the title of the book claims. The book is a bucket of pearls: succinct (for the most part!) notions with real punch are the order of the day. John Brockman's website, Edge.org, aims to represent cutting edge ideas, and the included authors often are forced to create neologisms or resurrect arcane vocabulary (e.g. Interbeing and apophenia) to express their thoughts fully. This book is not a quick read.

150 short essays. Some of them worthy of 10 stars, some - only of 1. If you are willing to invest some time and effort in order to search for real jewels, then definitely read this book! The most useful ideas/concepts for me: 1) a keener awareness that for the Universe "far more time lies ahead than has elapsed until now." "There is abundant time for posthuman evolution, here on Earth or far beyond, organic or inorganic, to give rise to far more diversity and even greater qualitative changes than those that have led from single-celled organisms to humans." "So humans are surely not the terminal branch of an evolutionary tree but a species that emerged early in cosmic history, with special promise for diverse evolution." [Martin Rees] 2) "the history of life on Earth doesn't support this evolution toward intelligence [...] Play the movie differently and we wouldn't be here [...]" [Marcelo Gleiser] 3) "No matter the domain of life, one's generation's verities so often become the next generation's falsehoods that we might as well have a pessimistic meta-induction from the history of everything. Good scientists understand this. They recognize that they are part of a long process of approximation. They know they are constructing models rather than revealing reality. [...] The idea behind the meta-induction is that all of our theories are fundamentally provisional and quite possibly wrong. If we can add that idea to our cognitive toolkit, we will be able to listen with curiosity and empathy to those whose theories contradict our own. We will be better able to pay attention to counterevidence - those anomalous bits of data that make our picture of the world a little weirder, more mysterious, less clean, less done.

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