Two things changed that. The first was moving to the capital to be raised by his aunt, and the second was winning a scholarship to study medicine in Manchester. After years of surgical training and marrying his wife Catherine, a staff nurse at Hammersmith Hospital, Sellu had it all: four successful children, one of whom was reading medicine at his *alma mater*, a happy marriage, and a thriving NHS and private practice.

John Hughes, a private inpatient, was seen by Sellu late one Thursday evening. Hughes was 5 days post-total knee replacement but had developed abdominal pain. Sellu's plan included antibiotics, bloods, and an urgent CT scan. At home later that evening Sellu called the hospital several times to enquire about available anaesthetists. Shockingly, unlike NHS hospitals, many private hospitals do not have 24-hour anaesthetic cover. Sellu also called the residential medical officer to enquire about the results of the tests and to advise on antibiotics. The RMO reassured Sellu that the bloods were normal and the antibiotics prescribed. The bloods were never done and the antibiotics were never issued — Sellu was later blamed for both these failures. The following morning, Sellu called radiology to chase the CT scan but it was not done until later that afternoon and showed a perforation of the large bowel. Sellu would later be held responsible for the delay in the scan. Sellu tried to book the patient for theatre but the earliest he could secure both a theatre and an anaesthetist was 7.00 pm that evening. Unfortunately, the anaesthetist got delayed on another case. On a Friday evening with no 24-hour anaesthetic cover Sellu tried in vain to find another anaesthetist. Hughes was eventually operated on 3 hours later than planned and passed away 2 days later in the intensive care unit. The coroner later referred Sellu to the police, believing he had committed a crime, and Sellu was subsequently convicted of that crime — gross negligence manslaughter.

How could this happen? How could a surgeon who acted in accordance with what a body of his peers would have done at that time, with no access to an emergency anaesthetist, with no power to arrange a CT scan any earlier — be held culpable for systemic failures? How can a jury who openly expressed their confusion about exactly what issue they were deliberating on be allowed to determine the fate of a man? How can a judge be allowed to use a report commissioned by the hospital whose agenda was to exonerate itself at whatever cost instead of using the original case notes?

The conviction and incarceration of David Sellu is one of the biggest miscarriages of justice in British history; it is also a stark reminder of our own vulnerability — as clinicians whose decisions can be scrutinised in a vacuum devoid of the systemic context, for some as persons of colour who do not fit the establishment image, as law-abiding citizens who find ourselves on the wrong side of the law. Sellu's story is also a testament to the power of perseverance, determination, and faith — faith in family, justice, and the future. Sellu wryly observes, *'Prison taught me that whatever obstacles man can invent, man can circumvent.'*

Sellu's determination to maintain his sanity and sense of hope has taught me that, whatever circumstances befall a person, they can overcome them.

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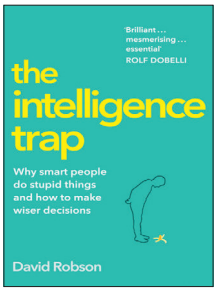
The Intelligence Trap: Why Smart People Do Stupid Things and How to Make Wiser Decisions
David Robson
Hodder & Stoughton, 2019, HB, 352pp, £20.00, 978-1473669833



BRAIN POWER

'A great many people think they are thinking, when they are merely rearranging their prejudices.' (William James, 19th-century psychologist)

The Intelligence Trap is written for anyone who wants to escape the above mistake — a user's guide to both the science and art of wisdom. The author asks three questions: why do smart people act stupidly? What skills and dispositions are they missing that can explain these mistakes? And, how can we cultivate those qualities that protect us from these errors? Robson is an award-winning science journalist working with BBC Future, where he specialises in psychology, neuroscience, and medicine. His skill as a journalist makes him readable and entertaining while his scientific approach makes him credible.

Robson engages us with stories; he reviews the scientific literature (notes and references of over 50 pages) and also describes his interviews with researchers exploring intelligence and wisdom.

Part 1 defines the problem. We explore the flaws in our understanding of intelligence and the ways that even the brightest of minds can backfire — from Arthur Conan Doyle's dogged beliefs in fairies to the FBI's flawed investigation into the Madrid bombings of 2004 — and the reasons why knowledge and expertise can exaggerate these errors.

Part 2 presents solutions to these problems by introducing the new discipline of 'evidence-based wisdom' (EBW), which outlines those other thinking dispositions and cognitive abilities crucial for good reasoning. It offers some practical techniques to cultivate EBW. We discover why our intuitions often fail and the ways we can correct those errors to fine-tune our instincts. We explore strategies to avoid falling for misinformation and fake news so that we can be sure that our choices are based on solid evidence rather than wishful thinking.

Part 3 turns to the science of learning and memory. Despite their brain power, intelligent people sometimes struggle to learn well, reaching a plateau in their abilities that fails to reflect their potential. EBW can help to break that vicious cycle by offering three rules for deep learning — rules that explain why East Asian education systems are so successful.

Part 4 explores the reasons why talented groups can act stupidly — from the failings of the England football team to the crises of huge organisations like BP, Nokia, and NASA.

There is a section on intuitive-based diagnostic errors by doctors, and how simple rational measures can reduce the rate of error. However, diagnostic errors take up only a few pages — this is a book that explores individuals and organisations from all areas of society.

The Intelligence Trap may help us not only make better decisions about patients, but also in our personal lives. It could be useful in our teaching by inspiring students to improve their thinking and learning skills. However, beyond being useful, I just found this book fascinating.

'Life is short, and the Art long; the occasion fleeting; experience fallacious; and judgement difficult'. (Hippocrates).

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