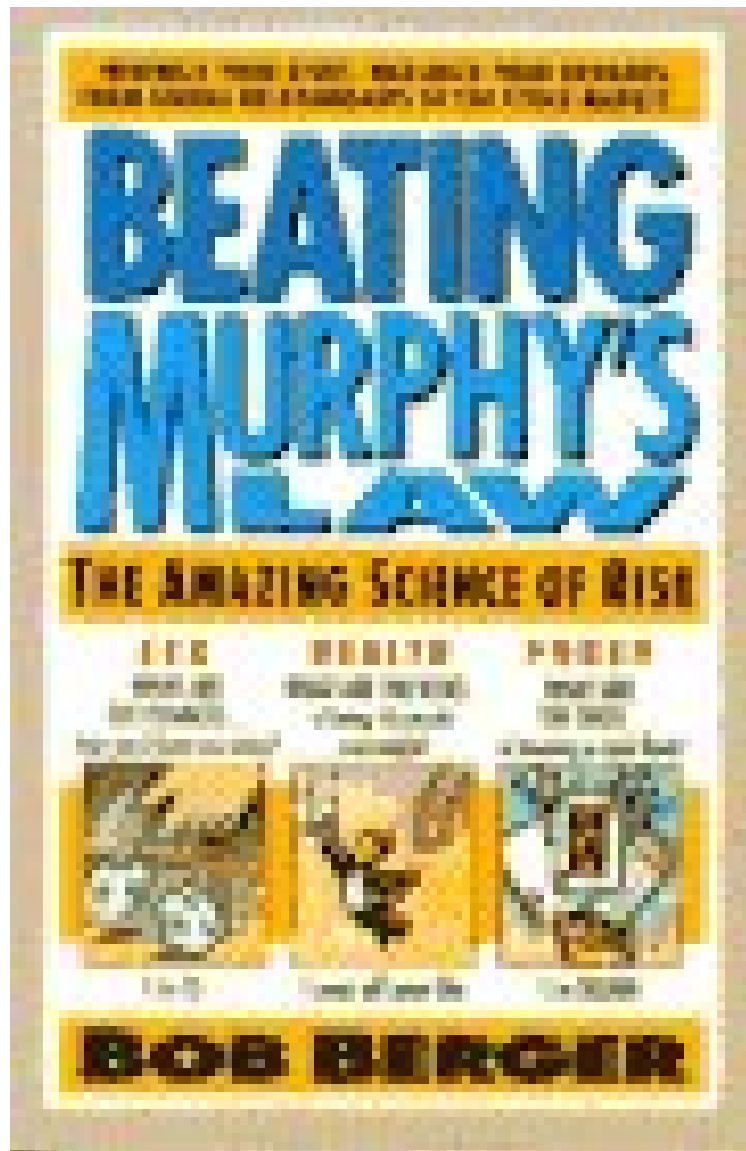


Beating Murphy's Law

Bob Berger

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#4922966 in Books 1994-09-01 1994-09-01 Original language: English PDF # 2 8.25 x 5.50 x .751, #File Name: 0385313179221 pages | File size: 50.Mb

Bob Berger : Beating Murphy's Law before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Beating Murphy's Law:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. a good casual read
By James Mackay
I enjoyed the book after I settled in and realized the math was going to be absent or broadly generalized. At first I was concerned with the overgeneralizations of statistics but what the heck, I already knew that stuff. The author takes you through his life experiences as a risk analyst and his anxiety about dating and meeting women. When he finally does meet someone

you just want to hit him and say "shut up; you're ruining a great opportunity to meet someone nice"; but he doesn't stop and somehow gets through it all. 3 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Good topic, poor treatment
By A Customer
This is one of the worst armchair / recreational mathematics books I've read. The author takes a casual tone that becomes flippant and annoying. Moreover, the mathematics and real numbers work are present enough to drive away non-mathematically minded readers but completely lacking in enough detail to hold the remaining readers. I found myself skimming through the chapters desperately seeking a few nuggets of information without having to subject myself to too much of the surrounding patter. This was not at all enjoyable. 3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. a great armchair read
By Dapper Dan
This is the sort of book that continually makes you stop and go, "hmmmm... I wouldn't have thought of that. But it makes sense." Is it a mathematical treatise on probability theory? No. Nor does it claim to be. It is a really fun read though.

In the first book to offer an overview of risk theory for the layman--its applications, its funny and startling statistics, and how to use it to optimize our lives--Berger has devised an easy way to apply the age-old concept of risk calculation in areas as diverse as sports, gambling, relationships, and the environment. Line art.

From Library Journal
Writing in a breezy pseudo-anecdotal style, Berger, a contributor to Omni magazine, introduces the reader to the science of risk analysis. Using virtually no mathematics, he tells us what the statistics show are the risks to life and limb that we encounter in our everyday lives. By comparing apparently disparate activities (for example, living next to a nuclear power plant vs. eating peanut butter sandwiches), he shows us how "common sense" and preconceived notions can lead us to quite irrational evaluations. He also explains what is meant statistically by a statement like, "Doing x will take y years off your life." This book can be easily read and understood by a general reader, but whether it will change anyone's behavior is questionable. For popular science collections.
Harold D. Shane, Baruch Coll., CUNY
Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc.
From Booklist
Among recent volumes intended to help readers interpret statistics about life's routine risks, this one is notably accessible and entertaining. Berger, a "risk communicator" whose articles have appeared in Esquire, Omni, and the New York Times, weaves probability and game theory, two-by-two matrices and sample bias, and the calculation of odds and of lost life expectancy around the tale of his courtship of a woman he meets at a New York City bus stop. Sarah, a graphic designer with a five-year-old daughter, is a very patient woman; she tolerates the intrusion of risk analysis into all aspects of her life, from smoking and STDs to whether she should agree to work overtime for nothing and the best form of pension for her aging parents. Some recent works on risk science have had a pro-business, anti-environmental, anti-litigation agenda; Berger is more evenhanded, clarifying the logical and mathematical bases for the common risk assessment techniques and urging readers to evaluate the risk estimates they are given more critically. Ignorance about risk science has been a major component of our national "innumeracy"; Beating Murphy's Law offers a relatively painless and enlightening corrective. Mary Carroll
From the Publisher
What are the chances of losing a sock in the dryer? Or getting hit by a car while crossing the street? Of being murdered by a stranger? Which is more hazardous, staying unmarried or smoking a pack of cigarettes a day? Eating peanut butter or living next to a nuclear power plant? Author Bob Berger, obsessed with these kinds of questions, has devised an easy way to apply the age-old concept of risk calculations--in areas as diverse as sports, gambling, relationships, and the environment. By personalizing the facts and statistics of risk theory--used by Wall Street to maximize profits, the EPA to keep the air clean, the military to help in its strategy to win at war, the FDA to test for carcinogens in food, and the American Heart Association to research exercise and diet--Berger shows the layman how to use modern probability theory and game theory to get the edge in nearly every decision he or she makes. With its light tone but serious content, the odds are good that Beating Murphy's Law can help the average, nonscientific person make the best possible choices in life, and avoid having bad things happen, too.