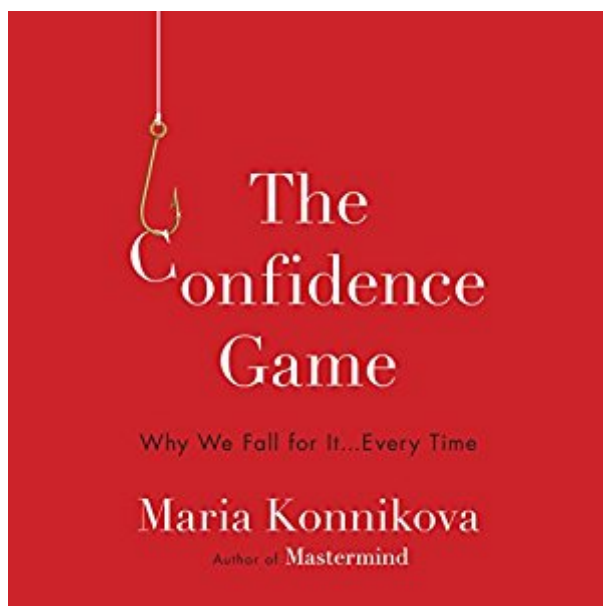


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The Confidence Game: Why We Fall For It...Every Time



Synopsis

From the New York Times best-selling author of *Mastermind: How to Think Like Sherlock Holmes*, a compelling investigation into the minds, motives, and methods of con artists - and the people who fall for their cons over and over again. While cheats and swindlers may be a dime a dozen, true conmen - the Bernie Madoffs, the Jim Bakkers, the Lance Armstrongs - are elegant, outsized personalities, artists of persuasion, and exploiters of trust. How do they do it? Why are they successful? And what keeps us falling for it over and over again? These are the questions that journalist and psychologist Maria Konnikova tackles in her mesmerizing new book. From multimillion-dollar Ponzi schemes to small-time frauds, Konnikova pulls together a selection of fascinating stories to demonstrate what all cons share in common, drawing on scientific, dramatic, and psychological perspectives. Insightful and gripping, the book brings listeners into the world of the con, examining the relationship between artist and victim. *The Confidence Game* not only asks why we believe con artists but also examines the very act of believing and how our sense of truth can be manipulated by those around us.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Konnikova promises a lot in the titles to her books. I read *Mastermind: How to Think Like Sherlock Holmes* and was disappointed. I did not learn to think like Sherlock Holmes; not by a long shot. In this book, Konnikova has come closer to delivering the "Why We Fall for It . . . Every Time" but I disagree with her observations and conclusions. As a former prosecutor of elder abuse crimes (both physical and financial), I have a lot of experience with people who "fall for it." But that certainly

doesn't mean everyone does. Nor does it mean that the ones who don't "fall for it" are more cynical, less humane, less open to true friendship, etc. In fact, Konnikova's description of victims of con artists as being more open and in touch with their humanity sounds like the manipulation of a con artist. Not that I think Konnikova is a con artist. She is just a very ambitious young woman and a self-promoter. I have read a lot of her magazine articles and have enjoyed many of them.

Unfortunately, her organizational and analytical skills as a writer do not make her a good writer of books. Viewed as a series of magazine articles with the inevitable repetitions this book holds up fairly well. But as a book, it lacks a great deal. It certainly deserves 3 stars, but its failure to respond to bigger questions with bigger answers makes it fall short. For me, it was an uneven, often repetitious, fairly shallow approach to a fascinating subject. Until she matures as a thinker and researcher, Konnikova does better when she sticks to the magazine articles that she handles so well.

A truly excellent read! As a practicing therapist consulting to the Court system, I often run into the patterns described in the book. A cliché regarding addiction Q: How can you tell when an addict is lying? A. His/her lips are moving! I particularly liked the sequential breakdown of the process of the con; step by step by step... It has been said that "...you cannot con an honest person." Much truth in the statement; if something seems too good to be true, it probably is not true. I could go on at length but you get the idea - practice critical thinking (another book by the same author).

Interesting read with lots of examples on how con artists set up the mark and use their own desires (greed all the way through altruism) to make them blind to the fact that they are the mark. Similar to how a judo master will use their opponents weight as a weapon against them. The author gives religious cults as examples of cons for the same reasons (and I think by extension all religion fall under the auspices of a con). I wish she would have gone down that road a little further. I have been the victim of a few minor cons in my life so I can completely agree with her assessment of how people usually react after they hear the truth (denial ain't just a river in Egypt).

The book is very topical, given recent Ponzi schemes (Madoff), possible Ponzi schemes (Herbalife), other recent cases (Theranos, Lance Armstrong), and accusations that the leading GOP presidential candidate is a con man. It manages to tie in many of the psychological concepts that come to the fore in recent years, and paints a forgiving picture of victims of con artists, who can get sucked into the con and stay committed to it for so long. At the minimum, it provides a guide to our

psychological blind spots. A more generous view is that it provides an explanation for many real world phenomenon beyond just con artists, including how soft skills translate into higher success and earnings.

Rather than simply describing common cons and tactics, Ms Konnikova takes us into our own, surprisingly gullible, receptive minds, to better understand the true nature of an effective con and our vulnerabilities. While it's tempting to think that this book might better prepare the reader to cope with con artists, the underlying warning is to avoid being lured in. Once you've entered the con, you and I may be equally incapable of escape.

The Confidence Game is a fascinating deep look at the psychology of the con artist---and the mark---through historical cons and cults. I'd heard a few of these stories before, but not in such great detail as provided by Maria Konnikova due to her journalistic research. There is wisdom to be gained by understanding this psychology and reading through these tales of deception and psychological manipulation. I would only add: selling false hope to the willingly self-deluded provides no real hope at all."Remember Red, hope is a good thing, maybe the best of things, and no good thing ever dies." ("Andy Dufresne", The Shawshank Redemption)

Excellent collections of con games and scams over a long, long period of time. She does a superb job of showing what "fools these mortals be." Good writing and entertaining from start to finish. The best "treadmill" book I've yet to read. On the other hand, when I had finished, I was very disappointed in the unavoidable conclusion. Our chances of avoiding sure catastrophe seem increasingly unlikely.

Loved it! An unusually thorough look into the world of con artists, with a mix of anecdotes of famous con men and their cons, and insights into the psychological workings that make their marks fall for them. Equal parts tall tales and a serious look into the minds of con artists and their marks alike, the book is built around the steps of a classic con; the setup, the play, the rope, and so on. Very interesting read for anyone interested in the art of the con, with one overshadowing message: we can all be conned. And those of who believe we can't are in fact the best marks there are.

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