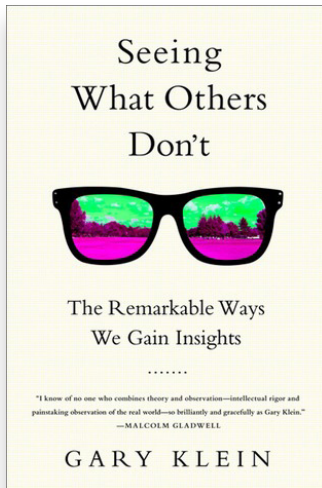


# EXECUTIVE BOOK SUMMARIES

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

### Gary Klein

*Gary Klein, PhD, was instrumental in founding the field of naturalistic decision making. Dr. Klein left academia to work as a research psychologist for the U.S. Air Force, founded Klein Associates, and is now a senior scientist at MacroCognition LLC.*

# Seeing What Others Don't

## THE NUTSHELL

Public Affairs 2013

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### PART I - HOW DO INSIGHTS GET TRIGGERED?

#### 1. Hunting for Insights

To improve performance, we need to do two things. We have to reduce errors. We have to increase insights. But if we eliminate all errors, we haven't created any insights.

#### 2. The Flash of Illumination

I have a working definition of insight: an unexpected shift to a better story. So what produces the flash of illumination? I collected a set of 120 incidents involving people who made an unexpected shift in their beliefs.

#### 3. Connections

Insights can come from "connecting the dots" and solving a problem by being exposed to more ideas. We get a new piece of information that combines with other information we already have, and, presto!

#### 4. Coincidences and Curiosities

Coincidences are chance concurrences that should be ignored except that every so often they provide us with an early warning about a new pattern.

# Seeing What Others Don't

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In connection insights, new pieces of information provide important details. In contrast, what matters for coincidence insights is the repetition.

## 5. Contradictions

Contradiction insights signal that there's something seriously wrong with the story we're currently telling ourselves. Curiosities make us wonder what's going on, whereas contradictions make us doubt: "That can't be right."

## 6. Creative Desperation: Trapped by Assumptions

Creative desperation is discovering a solution, the right answer, through a flash of illumination rather than steady analysis.

## 7. Different Ways to Look at Insight

The mystery of how insights originate turned up five candidates: connection, coincidence, curiosity, contradictions, and creative desperation.

## 8. The Logic of Discovery

Two out of five insight strategies worked in opposite directions. No wonder I couldn't synthesize the strategies. There are different paths to insight.

## PART II - WHAT INTERFERES WITH INSIGHTS?

### 9. Stupidity

I've had all the facts and knew my current situation differed from what I had originally intended, but I failed to see the implication. There have also been times when I failed to make obvious connections.

### 10. The Study of Contrasting Twins

To investigate my new mystery, the reason that people fail to have an insight even if they have all the necessary information, I could take advantage of natural comparison.

### 11. Dumb by Design

Software designers don't deliberately try to stifle our insights, but some of the methods they use have unintended consequences. Computer systems depend on order and structure, whereas insights are disorderly.

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## 12. How Organizations Obstruct Insights

Organizations inadvertently suppress the insights of their workers. They value predictability. Insight is the opposite of predictable. Insights are disruptive. They carry risks that can get you in trouble.

## 13. How *Not* to Hunt for Insights

There are at least nine research methods that we could use to study insights that would actually prevent us from learning anything valuable.

## PART III - HOW CAN WE FOSTER INSIGHTS?

### 14. Helping Ourselves

How can we gain more insights? Find ways to increase the density of ideas to which we are exposed and increase our contact with creative people.

### 15. Helping Others

Our challenge is very different when we shift from helping ourselves to helping others. It often means trying to correct their flawed beliefs, which in turn means we have to understand what those flawed beliefs are.

### 16. Helping Our Organizations

The organization problem: in many cases the problem isn't about having or noticing insights; it is about *acting* on them. Leaders know what they need to do, but are unable to overcome risk-adverse organizational forces.

### 17. Tips for Becoming an Insight Hunter

By this point, you are probably seeing more insights. That's the tracking part. Next comes the dissection, trying to understand how the person gained the insight. That's the unpacking part.

### 18. The Magic of Insights

Having an insight is an act of creation. Each insight is the creation of a new idea that didn't exist before, often in opposition to defective ideas that formerly prevailed. No matter how much we unpack insights and demystify them, we shouldn't discard the sense that something unusual has happened, something magical, something for which we can be grateful.