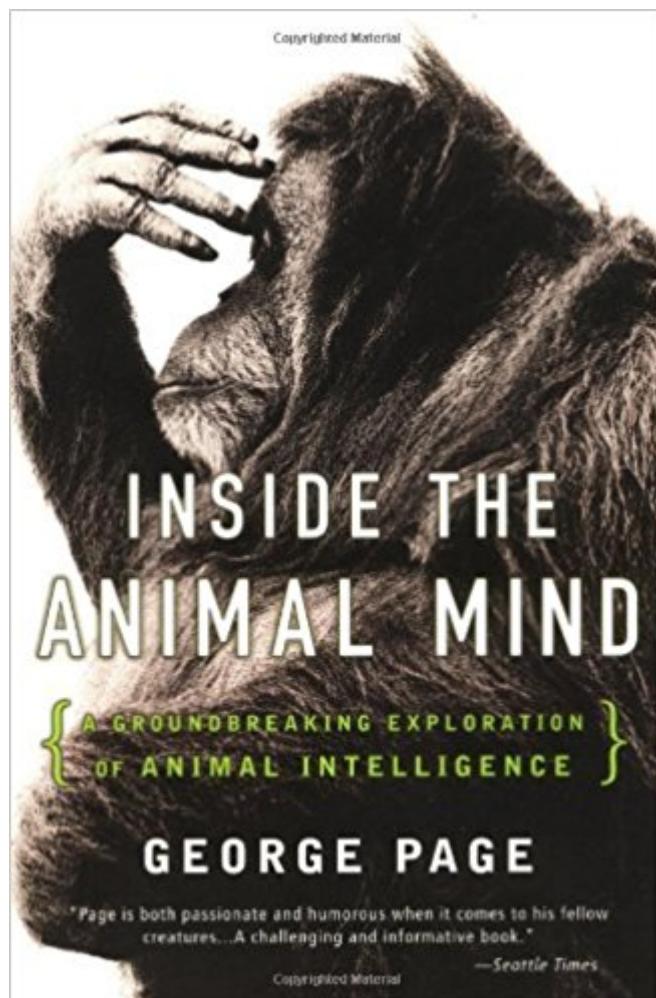


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Inside The Animal Mind: A Groundbreaking Exploration Of Animal Intelligence



Synopsis

In the bestselling tradition of *When Elephants Weep* and *Dogs Don't Lie About Love*, *Inside the Animal Mind* is a groundbreaking exploration of the nature and depth of animal intelligence. While in the past scientists have refused to acknowledge that animals have anything like human intelligence, a growing body of research reveals otherwise. We've discovered ants that use leaves as tools to cross bodies of water, woodpecker finches that hold twigs in their beaks to dig for grubs, and bonobo apes that can use sticks to knock down fruit or pole-vault over water. Not only do animals use tools—“some also display an ability to learn and problem-solve. Based on the latest scientific and anecdotal evidence culled from animal experts in the labs and the field, *Inside the Animal Mind* is an engrossing look at animal intelligence, cognitive ability, problem solving, and emotion. George Page, originator and host of the long-running PBS series *Nature*, offers us an informed, entertaining, and humanistic investigation of the minds of predators and scavengers, birds and primates, rodents and other species. Illustrated with twenty-four black-and-white photographs, the book is the companion to the three-part, hour-long show of the same name, hosted by Page.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

George Page has taken on an enormous undertaking and has done an outstanding job. I made a point of reading "Inside the Animal Mind" before watching any of the television program, to see if the book would stand on its own. It does. Mr. Page presents an excellent overview of the issues of the animal mind, and presents a good representative selection (though not a comprehensive view) of the research and consciousness. Of the many animals whose minds have been studied, all are

expertly described, including not just the well known such as Kanzi the bonobo, Alex the parrot, and the infamous Clever Hans the horse, but also many of the lesser known. The author also skillfully utilizes the work and personal comments of most of the recognized experts in the field. Especially commendable is the author's presentation of opposing viewpoints, which gives the reader enough information to critically assess the information and come to his or her own conclusions. I did find a number of weaknesses in the book, however. My main criticism is that the section on emotions is poorly organized and not fully developed. For example, on page 187 a paragraph begins with "Animals get bored and distracted", followed by no evidence or discussion of boredom in animals (for which there is, I might point out, an abundance of evidence). The discussion of the emotions of social bonding and affiliation could be better organized, such that the power (and evolutionary logic) of these emotions is clearer to the reader.

Received this book for xmas after adding it to my wishlist. I am just an average guy with no position within the field of biology or cognitive science, but would consider myself an armchair philosopher. My 'training' is limited to a few basic classes while in school which covered Cognitive Science and the Philosophy of Science. Those those were many moons ago. That said and done, I have always found cognition and intelligence, or more specifically how we learn, to be a fascinating subject and thought I would read a bit on the subject during my semester break from business courses. I chose this book based on some positive reviews and price. First of all, its a relatively easy read. Science books can be daunting, especially ones on specific subjects which need to reference specific studies which the layman has little clue. The writer has a style which is accessible and readable for all with a basic left brain thinking. Kudos for that, Page avoided making the writing watery yet maintained a scientific feel to the book. He does spend the first 50 pages or so bringing the reader up to speed on the history of outlooks in regards to animal intelligence, from Descartes to the behaviorists. While a bit long winded for the trained, it was a welcomed refresher for me. I was expecting to get to the meat of the argument but it never really presented itself; the book reads more like a bibliography while never committing to an actual thesis. While Page does admit to anthropomorphic leanings, he shies from ever taking a stance and seems to pander to the audience, in other words not wanting to alienate a buyer. Clues are in one passage where he has a discussion with a behaviorist who turns and walks away during a conversation. I think that left a mark on our writer.

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