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## Understanding Unconscious Intelligence and Intuition: “*Blink*” and Beyond

Lois Isenman

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### Abstract

The importance of unconscious intelligence and intuition is increasingly acknowledged by the scientific community. This essay examines and assesses the varied views on the topic presented in three books that bridge the scientific world and reading public: *Blink* by Malcolm Gladwell (2005), *Gut Feelings* by Gerd Gigerenzer (2008), and *How Doctors Think* by Jerome Groopman (2007). The analysis differentiates among kinds of unconscious intelligence and points towards a more complete understanding of the higher cognitive potential of the unconscious mind.

# UNDERSTANDING UNCONSCIOUS INTELLIGENCE AND INTUITION

*"Blink" and beyond*

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LOIS ISENMAN

**ABSTRACT** The importance of unconscious intelligence and intuition is increasingly acknowledged by the scientific community. This essay examines and assesses the varied views on the topic presented in three books that bridge the scientific world and reading public: *Blink* by Malcolm Gladwell (2005), *Gut Feelings* by Gerd Gigerenzer (2008), and *How Doctors Think* by Jerome Groopman (2007). The analysis differentiates among kinds of unconscious intelligence and points towards a more complete understanding of the higher cognitive potential of the unconscious mind.

THE IMPORTANCE OF UNCONSCIOUS COGNITION is seeping into popular consciousness. A number of recent books bridging the academic world and the reading public stress that at least a portion of decision-making depends not on conscious reasoning, but instead on cognition that occurs below awareness. However, these books provide a limited perspective on how the unconscious mind works and the potential power of intuition.

This essay is an effort to expand the picture. It is structured around the book that has garnered the most attention, Malcolm Gladwell's *Blink* (2005), but it also considers *Gut Feelings* by Gerd Gigerenzer (2007) and *How Doctors Think* by Jerome Groopman (2007). These books help deepen the discussion even as they highlight some widely held limiting perceptions of the intelligence of the unconscious and intuition.

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Women's Studies Research Center, MS 079, Brandeis University, Waltham, MA 02454.  
E-mail: [isenman@brandeis.edu](mailto:isenman@brandeis.edu)

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