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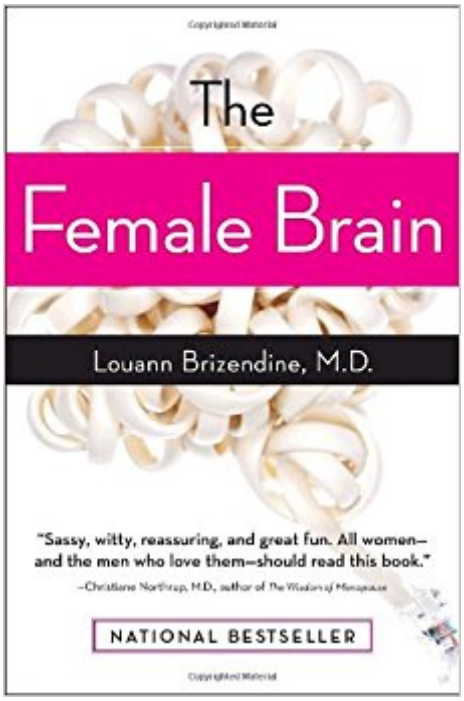
The Female Brain



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Synopsis

Why are women more verbal than men? Why do women remember details of fights that men canâ ™t remember at all? Why do women tend to form deeper bonds with their female friends than men do with their male counterparts? These and other questions have stumped both sexes throughout the ages. Now, pioneering neuropsychiatrist Louann Brizendine, M.D., brings together the latest findings to show how the unique structure of the female brain determines how women think, what they value, how they communicate, and who they love. While doing research as a medical student at Yale and then as a resident and faculty member at Harvard, Louann Brizendine discovered that almost all of the clinical data in existence on neurology, psychology, and neurobiology focused exclusively on males. In response to the overwhelming need for information on the female mind, Brizendine established the first clinic in the country to study and treat womenâ ™s brain function. In The Female Brain, Dr. Brizendine distills all her findings and the latest information from the scientific community in a highly accessible book that educates women about their unique brain/body/behavior. The result: women will come away from this book knowing that they have a lean, mean, communicating machine. Men will develop a serious case of brain envy.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I really, really wanted to like this book. I've studied cognitive, perceptual and developmental neuroscience for 25+ years, and I'm also a clinical psychologist. I've been interested in gender

differences for just as long. I teach undergrad and grad courses on neuroscience, cognition, emotion, behavior, learning, and sensation and perception. I make a point of covering what is known about sex differences. I think the issues are really important and I've found that it is very important to get facts right because this controversial issue is a lightning rod for anger, frustration, tension and malevolent personal biases. My strong belief, shared by many, is that competent clinical psychologists and other clinicians must work hard to understand and manage their gender biases in order to manage "counter-transference" and help their clients. I know what good science is, including good neuroscience, good cognitive science, and good clinical psychology. There are plenty of women who conduct high-quality research on mind and brain, and make huge contributions. I've witnessed this personally, repeatedly. Over the years, I've worked for and with a large number of women, and I've trained a fair number too. Among first rate scientists and scientific thinkers there are plenty of women. I imagine that they will be just as disappointed in this book as I am.Some observations:1) The author begins the book by emphasizing her credentials and her influences in the acknowledgements section. The academic pedigree is impressive: UC Berkeley, UCSF, Harvard Med School, Yale Med School, University College, London. She thanks a long list of great scientists, teachers and students who have influenced her thinking. It is an impressive collection of names and places.

I have created an award, named for the 1986 Newsweek story that told a generation of smart women that they were more likely to be killed by a terrorist than marry after thirty, which Newsweek retracted this year after all the damage had been done."The Female Brain" by Louann Brizendine is the first winner of the award.Here's why:In The Female Brain, Brizendine, a San Francisco Bay area psychiatrist, who runs a clinic she started to help women who think their mental problems are caused by their hormones, describes the life cycle of a contemporary American educated, neurotic, urban, privileged professional in a culture in which science is just another option, as if she had discovered Lucy, the mother of all mankind. Behavior familiar to many of us only from the wonderful bad Heather literature is presented as hard-"wired" into the female brain. Brizendine's description of the hard-"wired" cervix and brain-softening, uncontrollable urge to mate with one's newborn baby, which makes wholesale desertion of the work place is as irresistible as the law of gravity, is the closest thing to soft porn I've seen emerging from the San Francisco Medical Center in a long time. For the many women who would find Brizendine's transparently autobiographical description of the stages of a woman's life almost entirely unfamiliar, the possibility that the book is false seems immediately obvious. If it were true, The Female Brain would be a scary book indeed. But of course

it’s not.Insecure readers might coubt their own sanity when reading the thing, because the short book is supplemented by mind-numbing pages of citations to scientific journals. But happily as far as I know the articles Brizendine cites bear essentially no relationship to the propositions in the text of the book.

XXXXXI bet you didn’t know these facts:(1) "Men use about seven thousand words per day. Women use about twenty-thousand."(2) "Girls arrive already wired as girls, and boys arrive already wired as boys."(3) "Men are on average twenty times more aggressive than women."(4) "Girls are motivated--on a molecular and neurological level--to ease and prevent social conflict."(5) "85% of twenty- to thirty-year-old males think about sex every fifty-two seconds and women think about it once a day--up to three or four times on fertile days."(6) "Men pick up the subtle signs of sadness in a female face only 40 percent of the time, whereas women can pick up these signs 90 percent of the time."(7) "65 percent of divorces after the age of fifty are initiated by women."These seven facts are some of the interesting information that you’ll learn in this book by Louann Brizendine M.D., a neuropsychiatrist at the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF) and founder of the Women’s and Teen Girls’ Mood and Hormone Clinic.The thesis of this book is that the female brain sees the world differently and reacts differently than the male brain in every stage of life from newborn to old age. A women’s behavior is radically different from that of a man due to mainly hormonal differences. This book is quite easy to read and, in fact, reads like a novel.However, I found the book to have minimal neuroscience (as suggested by the book’s title). It was comprised mainly of anecdotes (some autobiographical) that exaggerate the differences between women and men thus reinforcing gender stereotypes. As well, I found many contradictions throughout. In places of her book, Brizendine is also surprisingly naÃƒÂ ve.

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