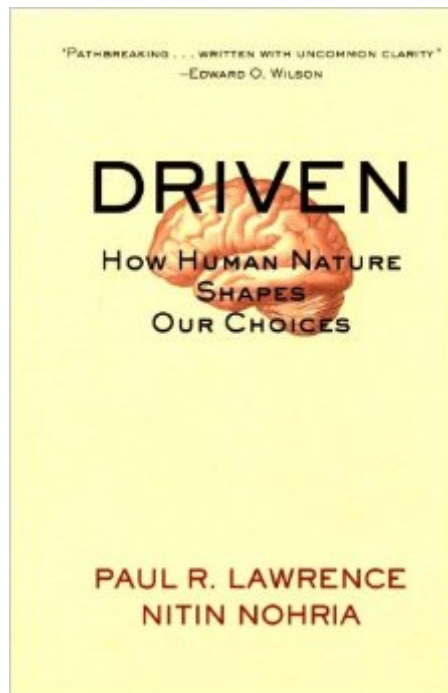


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Driven: How Human Nature Shapes Our Choices (J-B Warren Bennis Series)



Synopsis

A touchstone for understanding how we behave on the job "This is a stimulating and provocative book in bringing together important ideas from different fields, and, thereby, giving us a whole new slant on 'human nature.'" --Edgar H. Schein, Sloan Fellows Professor of Management Emeritus and Senior Lecturer, MIT In this astonishing, provocative, and solidly researched book, two Harvard Business School professors synthesize 200 years of thought along with the latest research drawn from the biological and social sciences to propose a new theory, a unified synthesis of human nature. Paul Lawrence and Nitin Nohria have studied the way people behave in that most fascinating arena of human behavior-the workplace-and from their work they produce a book that examines the four separate and distinct emotive drives that guide human behavior and influence the choices people make: the drives to acquire, bond, learn, and defend. They ultimately show that, just as advances in information technology have spurred the New Economy in the last quarter of the twentieth century, current advances in biology will be the key to understanding humans and organizations in the new millennium.

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Customer Reviews

This is evolutionary psychology as seen by two professors from the Harvard Business School (!). While some readers may be familiar with a lot of what is presented here, it is agreeable to get a perspective from another academic discipline and a new sense of application. It is especially pleasing because professors Lawrence and Nohria write well and have an appreciation of what an exciting time of biological discovery we are living in, a time when the convergence of knowledge and techniques from various disciplines is giving us the ability to look inside the black box of human nature previously closed. The authors' use of the term "drives" to designate the source of behaviors is familiar, but the idea that these drives come from modules in the brain, or a network of modules, is what is relatively new. Whether this is just another construct like Freud's ego, id, and superego is an open question. However--and this is important and at the very essence of what is going on in brain science today--unlike Freud's construct, the one presented here is based on something tangible in the brain's structure. As the authors report, recent advances in technology allow us to discern the brain's structure as it works. These observations provide a scientific basis for constructs attempting to explain human behavior. Whether there are four fundamental drives, as messrs. Lawrence and Nohria think, or some other number, or whether an entirely different construct is required, is also an open question. Personally, I find their array persuasive, and I think the idea of "drives" a valuable one. More important though is their understanding that we are motivated by more than rational self-interest, the so-called "invisible hand" from Adam Smith and the market place.

At first glance this book seems to be leaning too much toward the scientific/academic side. I was actually dreading to read the book, however the authors have done a magnificent job of livening up each academic part with real world case studies. The main theme of this text is how we base our decision making on four psychological drives that every person is born with regardless of religion, race or other factors: 1.) The Drive to Acquire (D1) - We all have it, it is normal but some have too much of it. Those who have an overdose of D1 tend to teeter on the edge of self-destruction and those around them. 2.) The Drive to Bond (D2) - Everybody likes to feel wanted and belong to some type of organisation (family, cultural, religion, hobby, etc., When a person engages in decision making, they will usually decide positive for the person who has something in common with them. 3.) The Drive to Learn (D3) - Learning is a part of life and when this drive is not satisfied in people they become aggressive and restless. Have you ever seen a highly intelligent well-paid co-worker leave a job although this person never had any problems with peer or superiors? Chances are that this person was in dire need of a cerebral orgasm i.e. The person was somebody

who needed to be mentally challenged.4.) The Drive to Defend (D4) - We have learned certain beliefs and take them to be true until proven otherwise. When somebody attacks or tries to show us otherwise we become agitated, angry or belligerent because deep down in our subconscious we have a defense mechanism that does not want to be proven wrong. This is an excellent book for markets, negotiators and employers. What makes us tick inside our cranium.

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