

# Mastermind: How to Think Like Sherlock Holmes

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No fictional character is more renowned for his powers of thought and observation than Sherlock Holmes. But is his extraordinary intellect merely a gift of fiction, or can we learn to cultivate these abilities ourselves, to improve our lives at work and at home?

We can, says psychologist and journalist Maria Konnikova, and in *Mastermind* she shows us how. Beginning with the "brain attic"--Holmes's metaphor for how we store information and organize knowledge--Konnikova unpacks the mental strategies that lead to clearer thinking and deeper insights. Drawing on twenty-first-century neuroscience and psychology, *Mastermind* explores Holmes's unique methods of ever-present mindfulness, astute observation, and logical deduction.

In doing so, it shows how each of us, with some self-awareness and a little practice, can employ these same methods to sharpen our perceptions, solve difficult problems, and enhance our creative powers. For Holmes aficionados and casual readers alike, Konnikova reveals how the world's most keen-eyed detective can serve as an unparalleled guide to upgrading the mind.

"A delightful tour of the science of memory, creativity, and reasoning, illustrated with the help of history's most famous reasoner, Sherlock Holmes himself. Maria Konnikova is an engaging and insightful guide to this fascinating material, which will help you master your own mind." (Steven Pinker, Harvard College Professor of Psychology, Harvard University, and author of *How the Mind Works* and *The Stuff of Thought*)

"Far from elementary, Maria Konnikova's new book is a challenging and insightful study of the human mind, illustrated with cases from the career of Sherlock Holmes. Holmes himself would have been proud to author this fine work!" (Leslie S. Klinger, New York Times-best-selling author/editor of *The New Annotated Sherlock Holmes*)

"Maria Konnikova's bright and brilliant new book is nothing less than a primer on how to be awake, a manual on how to work ourselves free of our unconscious biases, our habitual distractions, and the muddle of our everyday minds. Holmes fan or not, the reader will find *Mastermind* to be bracing, fascinating, and above all -- and most important -- hopeful." (Daniel Smith, author of *Monkey Mind: A Memoir of Anxiety*)

"'You know my methods,' Sherlock Holmes once said to Dr. Watson. 'Apply them!' Science writer Maria Konnikova has made those instructions the inspiration for what turns out to be a delightfully intelligent book. Using Holmes and Watson as both muse and metaphor, she shows us some of modern psychology's most important lessons for using our minds well. I probably won't be able to solve murders after having read *Mastermind*, but I will have much to reflect on." (Carl Zimmer, author of *Soul Made Flesh* and *Parasite Rex*)

Maria Konnikova writes the "Literally Psyched" column for *Scientific American* and formerly wrote the popular psychology blog "Artful Choice" for Big Think. Her writing has appeared in *The Atlantic*, *Slate*, *The Paris Review*, *The Observer*, *Scientific American Mind*, and *Scientific American*, among other publications. She graduated from Harvard University and is currently pursuing her doctoral candidacy in psychology at Columbia University. She lives in New York City.

#### Other Books

*Your Inner Golf Guru*. Lower your handicap and revamp your swing as you become your own best golf instructor. Conventional methodologies, which emphasize ball-striking dictated mostly by bio-mechanics and kinesiology, have failed to enhance the competencies of worn, weary, and wishful golfers. To diagnose and correct your dysfunctional swing, you must understand how your mind, brain, muscles, and club function.

Your Inner Golf Guru—a new way of solving a very old problem—applies the domains of cognitive neuroscience and systems thinking to teaching and learning the game. These unlikely and overlooked domains govern your development far more than you can ever imagine. Dr. James Ragonnet offers a crash course in the following: Sharpening your thinking Rewiring your brain Developing expert movement patterns Practicing deliberately Improving rapidly Individualizing your learning Competing under pressure And that's just the tip of the iceberg Since there's no prescribed or ready path for all golfers, you must become a Golf Academy of one. You must think and learn on your own terms. Before you sacrifice any more time, energy, and money on dated, conventional, and narrow golf methodologies, buy and read the innovative and scientific approach in Your Inner Golf Guru—a practical guide that will change your game.

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