

THE USER'S GUIDE TO THE HUMAN MIND

Why Our Brains Make Us Unhappy, Anxious, and Neurotic and What We Can Do About It

SHAWN T. SMITH, PSYD

"You've been using the tool between your ears your whole life, but how often have you considered what it is and what it is good for? No user's manual came with it, but this book helps make up for that shipping mistake. You would not use your dishwasher without cracking the manual. Come on. Time to take a look!"

—Steven C. Hayes,
Foundation Professor of
Psychology, University of
Nevada & Author of
*Get Out of Your Mind & Into
Your Life*



About
the
Author

Shawn T. Smith, PsyD,

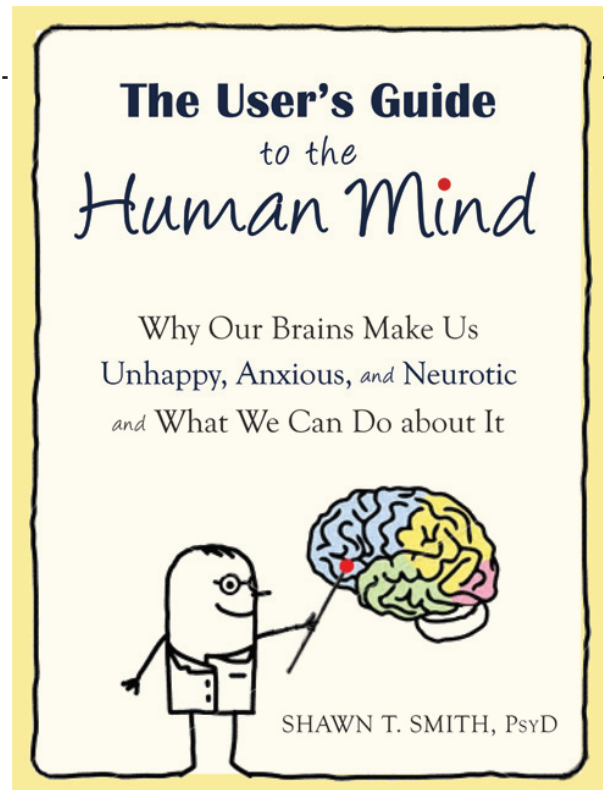
specializes in the treatment of anxiety, depression, and other problems in living. He earned his doctorate in clinical psychology at the University of Denver where he focused on cognitive behavioral interventions, including Acceptance and Commitment Therapy. Dr. Smith is the author of *Surviving Aggressive People*. He lives in Denver with his wife and daughter, and their dog, Hachi.

Your mind is not built to make you happy; it's built to help you survive. So far, it has done a great job! But in the process, it may have developed some bad habits, like avoiding new experiences or scrounging around for problems where none exist. Is it any wonder that worry, bad moods, and self-criticism keep us from enjoying life?

The User's Guide to the Human Mind

is a road map to our puzzling inner workings. It is filled with exercises for overriding the mind's natural tendency toward worry, anxiety, pessimism, jealousy, bad moods, and self-criticism.

Written by psychologist and blogger Dr. Shawn Smith, this lighthearted and informative guide offers solutions for overcoming these common problems. Readers learn to use cognitive strategies to override unhelpful yet natural emotional responses and create better interpersonal relationships, greater confidence, and peace of mind. The book's goal-setting, prioritizing, and goal-tracking guidance helps readers notice their progress as they gradually prod their brains toward a twenty-first-century compatible way of processing and dealing with emotions.



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Shawn T. Smith, PsyD

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Excerpt

"If I were your mind, I would be worried sick about you. Not because you are reckless, but because the world is a dangerous place. It always has been.

"If I were your mind, I would carry the experience of a thousand generations who have come and gone. They learned many hard lessons about survival. I would use that wisdom to push you toward safety, even though you might not understand my motives.

"If I were your mind, I would be at your side every moment of your life, talking copious indelible notes each time your body or soul was injured. I wouldn't let you forget about those things.

"If I were your mind, I would do everything in my power to protect you. I would insist that you heed my warnings.

"But if I were *you*, I wouldn't always listen to my mind."

—From Part 1:
The Worry Machine

Angle ideas

- Why thoughts are not facts (and why not even emotions can change that) (Pg. 39)
- Breaking the mind's rules: Tips for living a values-driven life (Pg. 87)
- The up-side of pessimism (Pg. 134)
- Delayed gratification: Breaking the quick-fix habit (Pg. 134)
- Why you can't trust every mood you meet (Pg. 163)
- Rebel with a cause: Learn how to disobey your mood (Pg. 191)

PART ONE • The Worry Machine

Protection with a Price • My Mind, My Bodyguard • The Argument Trap • The Paradox of Thought Suppression • A Day in the Life of a Mind • What is the Mind? • Why the Mind Worries • How the Mind Speaks • Anxiety & Depression: Ancient Tools for Modern Times • The Mind is Always Rational, From a Certain Point of View • Letting the Mind Do Its Job • From the Mind's Point of View, Survival Matters Most • Thoughts are Not Facts • Observing Your Thoughts • Observing Your Emotions

PART TWO • Happiness is Not Your Mind's Job

How the Mind Uses History • The Past is Not the Problem • The Mind's False Dilemmas • The Mind's Skewed View and Biased Memories • What the Mind Fears and How it Responds • The Survival Value of Biased Recall • How the Mind Makes Rules to Keep Us Safe • Values and Action • Training the Mind to Tolerate the Pursuit of Values • The Higher Mind • Finding Your Values • Control Your Life, Not Your Mind • The Trap of Waiting for Thoughts and Feelings to Change • Take Your Mind with You on the Road to Valued Living

PART THREE • Four Ways Our Minds Coerce Us - And What We Can Do About Them

That Was Then and This is Then • Why Our Minds Rely on History • Trump Cards and Double Standards • Responding to Trump Cards • Staying Observant and Maintaining Distance • Pessimistic Thinking • It Isn't Pessimism - It's Error Management • Pessimism: The Ancient Cure for Modern Times • Living with a Pessimistic Mind • Quick Fixes • How the Mind Competes with Itself • Breaking the Quick-Fix Habit • Managing the Drive for Quick Fixes

PART FOUR • Mood, Lifestyle, and Psychological Flexibility

Welcome to Your State of Mind • Don't Trust Every Mood You Meet • My Mind Might be Wrong • Opposite Action: Moving Toward Values • To Medicate or Not to Medicate? • Mind the Basics • How Healthy Habits Insulate Us From the Mind • Increasing Psychological Flexibility for a Lifetime

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