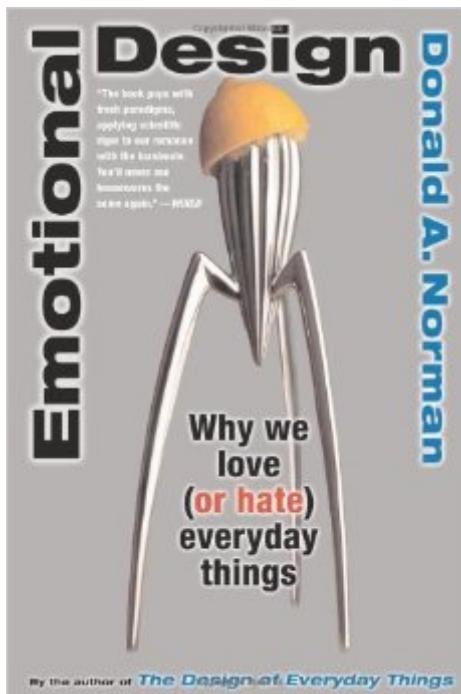


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# Emotional Design: Why We Love (or Hate) Everyday Things



## **Synopsis**

Did you ever wonder why cheap wine tastes better in fancy glasses? Why sales of Macintosh computers soared when Apple introduced the colorful iMac? New research on emotion and cognition has shown that attractive things really do work better, as Donald Norman amply demonstrates in this fascinating book, which has garnered acclaim everywhere from Scientific American to The New Yorker. Emotional Design articulates the profound influence of the feelings that objects evoke, from our willingness to spend thousands of dollars on Gucci bags and Rolex watches, to the impact of emotion on the everyday objects of tomorrow. Norman draws on a wealth of examples and the latest scientific insights to present a bold exploration of the objects in our everyday world. Emotional Design will appeal not only to designers and manufacturers but also to managers, psychologists, and general readers who love to think about their stuff.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

I love Donald Norman. I love the work he does, and I love what he's taught me. I got so much from The Design of Everyday Things. I got something out of Things That Make Us Smart. I didn't get much out of this one at all. I think this is because I'm an impatient reader. For example, I don't read fiction. I want to read facts about things I can apply in a practical way. This book is much more about theory than practical applications. I'm sure some people love reading theory, and they will love this book. But if you're like me and really want a book to deliver information you can use on every page, you should buy The Design of Everyday Things instead, if you haven't already.

If you're looking for a fairly practical discussion of the ways that people interact with products and how more than just behavioral qualities are measured by your customers, the first half of the book will prove quite useful. It expands and ties nicely into common practices of market segmentation and usability studies, providing both concrete advice for optimizing your product for whatever your adoption goals are, as well as a theoretical framework for understanding user behavior. There's also a large section near the end about robotics and the future. While it's interesting, it reads more like science fiction or the typical discussions that you have in either a mobile robot at a university or a AAAI conference. I personally think the book could've stood just as well without it.

As I get older, I begin to see that designing is really about seeing, hearing, thinking and understanding at a higher level. If you're looking for an easy how-to for making your website or product punchier, this isn't for you. For me, the book was a perfect read. I am always hunting and gathering for the meaning of art and design, to push my own work forward, and to gain an advantage over my competitors in terms of design. Thus, Norman's book was right up my alley. His deconstruction of design into its visceral, behavioral and reflective aspects was powerful and compelling, and I believe this book is actually a manifesto that will eventually launch a new school of thought in design. The second half of the book delves into even more complex and forward-thinking issues, and I found it useful for FORCING myself to read and think out of the box. It's an absolute must-have book for anyone interested in understanding the structure of the new design revolution and transforming their perspective on the art of designing at an emotional level.

There is nothing in this book that changed my perception of the world like the content of "The Design of Everyday Things" but it was still interesting and entertaining, a light-hearted companion to the earlier groundbreaking book. I enjoyed the way the theories were broken down even if I didn't always buy into them and there were plenty of good examples every step of the way. It's food for thought, just not the main course.

I'm a huge fan of Donald A. Norman, and I'm working on reading every book he ever wrote. I'm now getting down to the very old and obscure ones like "Attention and Memory" (1968!). This new book combines the ideas of his previous work with some fascinating new psychological knowledge, so it is definitely worthwhile. One thing that makes Norman such a good author is that he gives very graphic analogies to explain his ideas. One sentence that really made me think was that if robots had no idea whether something was safe or not, they could possibly just sit there, afraid to do

anything - he likens this to confidence in humans. So it seems like thinking about how robots should work can only help figure out more about humans. That's why I think his new work on robotics adds yet another useful dimension to the work of a man whose focus has been a great blend of academia and business. Now he is tying more and more of those ideas together, blending them with collaboration and new research, so I hope he stays a prolific writer. Unfortunately I was not overwhelmed by the book, but it is all very sensible and useful. I wish he had gotten more into the passion we feel when something is just superb. I have had that feeling when reading many similar books, like "The Tipping Point", "Don't Make Me Think", and even Norman's own "The Design of Everyday Things". So come to think of it, maybe writing one of those great books plus many other very good books is plenty to ask of a human being.

Donald Norman has always written "usable" books. Easy to read and full of anecdotes and examples that nearly everyone can relate to. His classic work, The Design of Everyday Things, still sits proudly on my bookshelf; I pull it down a couple times a year when I need a mental refreshment. This book, like its predecessors, is a fast read. It is written at a low level and nothing in it is too hard to grasp. However, it is too long. I found myself skipping whole paragraphs simply because Normas was repeating something he had written just a few sentences back. I feel the book could be half its length and not lose any content. It's also not as inspirational as his previous books. There were none of the "a ha!" insights that permeated The Design of Everyday Things or Turn Signals Are the Facial Expressions of Automobiles. Still, it's a good read. The next time I'm in the store, I'll be more cognizant of the reasons why I prefer one brand over another of otherwise identical products.

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