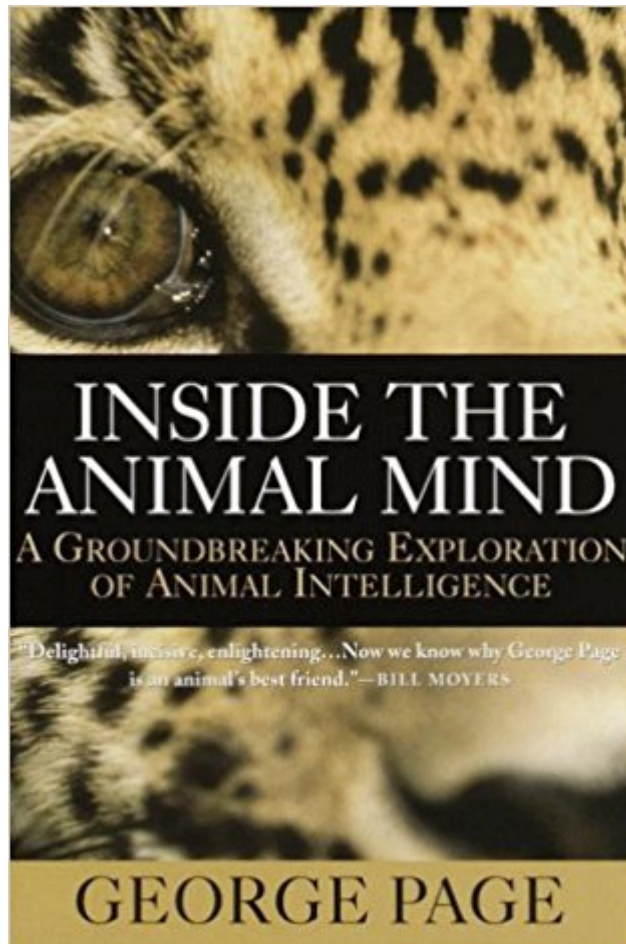




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# Inside The Animal Mind



## Synopsis

In the past, scientists have refused to acknowledge that animals have anything like human intelligence. But a growing body of research reveals otherwise. We've discovered ants that use leaves as tools to cross bodies of water, woodpecker finches that hold twigs in their beaks to dig for grubs, and bonobo chimps that can use sticks to knock down fruit or pole-vault over water. Not only do animals use tools--some display an ability to learn and problem-solve, as well. Based on the latest scientific and anecdotal evidence culled from animal experts in the field and in the labs, *Inside the Animal Mind* is an engrossing look at animal intelligence, cognitive ability, problem solving, and emotion. George Page, originator and host of the long-running PBS series *Nature*, offers us an informed, entertaining, and humanistic investigation of the minds of predators and scavengers, birds and primates, rodents, and other species. In the bestselling tradition of *The Hidden Life of Dogs*, *When Elephants Weep*, and *Dogs Don't Lie About Love*, *Inside the Animal Mind* is a fascinating narrative explaining the nature and depth of animal intelligence.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

George Page, creator and long-time host of television's *Nature*, knows animals well. He has written *Inside the Animal Mind*, a broad look at how birds, apes, and others solve problems without the advantages of the human brain, as a companion to the three-episode series covering the world of animal intelligence. Exploring the natural world and the laboratory, he comes up with some

interesting insights into intelligence and (more importantly) how we see it. Though the reader occasionally wishes for greater depth, Page's breadth offers interconnections that we would never find elsewhere (moving from the Sun King's gamekeeper to Stephen Jay Gould is beyond most writers). Page is clearly sympathetic to his subjects, speaking for them where most of them cannot. Investigating tool use and language, he finds the competition not so barren as we had once thought, with finches and gorillas merely heading the lists of nonhuman animals learning clever tricks. Interwoven with his descriptions of bright animals is a story of our own species' long, slow coming to terms with our non-unique status. Perhaps intelligence is not distributed equally, even among humans, but it seems fair to say that we've lost our monopoly. Page's warm, gentle prose also reminds us of our responsibilities to those whose capacity for suffering has been quietly ignored for centuries. Inside the Animal Mind ends with a call to treat animals with respect. --Rob Lightner

Do cats get depressed? "Does the beaver have the dam in mind?" Can we say animals think and feel as we do? If so, which animals? If not, why not? Such questions, and the relations among them, prompt the wide-ranging essays in this volume, which condense and synthesize, in language meant for laypeople, research on intellection, emotion and learning in species from pigeons to porpoises to people. Following in particular Donald Griffin's *Animal Minds*, Page also brings in Elizabeth Marshall Thomas's compelling if anecdotal writings on dogs; hummingbirds' "intentional planning

I was hoping to read more on cats and dogs; domestic animals. However, I learned a lot and saddened even more than before (I read the book) by the inhumane and insensitivity of humans toward animals. Wendy

Received this book for xmas after adding it to my wishlist. I am just an average guy with no position within the field of biology or cognitive science, but would consider myself an armchair philosopher. My 'training' is limited to a few basic classes while in school which covered Cognitive Science and the Philosophy of Science. Those those were many moons ago. That said and done, I have always found cognition and intelligence, or more specifically how we learn, to be a fascinating subject and thought I would read a bit on the subject during my semester break from business courses. I chose this book based on some positive reviews and price. First of all, it's a relatively easy read. Science books can be daunting, especially ones on specific subjects which need to reference specific studies which the layman has little clue. The writer has a style which is accessible and readable for all with a basic left brain thinking. Kudos for that, Page avoided making the writing watery yet

maintained a scientific feel to the book. He does spend the first 50 pages or so bringing the reader up to speed on the history of outlooks in regards to animal intelligence, from Descartes to the behaviorists. While a bit long winded for the trained, it was a welcomed refresher for me. I was expecting to get to the meat of the argument but it never really presented itself; the book reads more like a bibliography while never committing to an actual thesis. While Page does admit to anthropomorphic leanings, he shies from ever taking a stance and seems to pander to the audience, in other words not wanting to alienate a buyer. Clues are in one passage where he has a discussion with a behaviorist who turns and walks away during a conversation. I think that left a mark on our writer. I understand the book comes from a TV series which I have not seen, but it seems as if the book should have developed upon the show a bit, rather than just provide the basis of their work. The book as a whole reads like a bibliography, with each chapter seeming like a long footnote or reference for what should have been a more in depth article. For those with a mild curiosity in animal thinking, or those from a complimentary field, I think this book serves as a very nice introduction to the topic. For those with deeper knowledge, I don't think there is much to gain here. You have probably read or even studied the work and tests presented and would find this to be a bit redundant. For where I stand, it was a solid choice which met my goals. I have already sought out some of the more detailed work which was referenced—many of the cited sources are books available on their own right.

George Page has taken on an enormous undertaking and has done an outstanding job. I made a point of reading "Inside the Animal Mind" before watching any of the television program, to see if the book would stand on its own. It does. Mr. Page presents an excellent overview of the issues of the animal mind, and presents a good representative selection (though not a comprehensive view) of the research and consciousness. Of the many animals whose minds have been studied, all are expertly described, including not just the well known such as Kanzi the bonobo, Alex the parrot, and the infamous Clever Hans the horse, but also many of the lesser known. The author also skillfully utilizes the work and personal comments of most of the recognized experts in the field. Especially commendable is the author's presentation of opposing viewpoints, which gives the reader enough information to critically assess the information and come to his or her own conclusions. I did find a number of weaknesses in the book, however. My main criticism is that the section on emotions is poorly organized and not fully developed. For example, on page 187 a paragraph begins with "Animals get bored and distracted", followed by no evidence or discussion of boredom in animals (for which there is, I might point out, an abundance of evidence). The discussion of the emotions of

social bonding and affiliation could be better organized, such that the power (and evolutionary logic) of these emotions is clearer to the reader. There is excellent evidence to show that social bonding is of such selective value that bonds are enforced by both strong negative emotions (feelings of loneliness, isolation, separation anxiety, and grief) and positive emotions (feelings of social companionship, friendship, and possibly love). Moreover, the evidence for the neurochemistry of the emotions of social bonding is limited to a discussion of the role of oxytocin, omitting the important findings regarding the role of endorphins. Although minor, certain factual inconsistencies detract from an otherwise well-written book. For example, on page 102 is the statement that "chimpanzees...are our closest relatives in the animal kingdom, sharing 98.7 percent of our genetic material." The bonobo, our closest relative in the animal kingdom, shares 98.7 percent of our human genetic material. A final criticism is that the author makes the error that many other writers on the subject do, and that is to use the term "instinct" as an equivalent to "mindless" or "thoughtless". This is evident by the repeated dichotomy of whether a certain behavior is conscious OR instinct. This occurs throughout the book (although he does include a brief comment on page 213 that acknowledges that instinct may have a conscious component). This dichotomy of instinct and conscious behavior is not only false, it is an impediment to the advancement of our understanding of the animal mind. The fact is, emotion IS instinct, and not only is there no mutual exclusivity between instinct and conscious behavior, but it is through emotions (instinct) that conscious behavior is motivated. The feeling of fear is instinct, the object of fear is part innate and part learned, and the feeling of fear motivates the individual to consciously opt for a certain course of action. To draw a line between conscious behavior and instinct forces a choice for any specific animal behavior to be on one side or the other, when in fact the evidence is strong for many animal behaviors (like human behaviors) to be BOTH conscious and instinct. The above-mentioned faults do not outweigh the positive attributes of the book. I recommend it strongly and commend the author on a valuable contribution to the literature on the animal mind. Frank McMillan, DVM

I just finished this book and I have to say that I thoroughly enjoyed it. The writing was smooth, and went quickly and the topic is fascinating. I often wonder what the future will hold for communication between species and *Inside the Animal Mind* helps to cement my belief that interspecies communication will be possible someday. The author makes a very good point in suggesting that our means of measuring animal intelligence are limited...after all we can only test them in ways that we understand. How well would most of us do if we were told to climb a tall tree and make a nest of leaves and, oh yes, raise our young in there as the squirrel does? Or given leave to roam the

African plains...without a written map to show us where water sources are,as the elephants do. Would we "pass" those tests? I have my doubts.Besides, beyond intelligence there is the point that he makes at the end of his book, "but can they suffer?" Yes, I think that is clear and for that reason alone they deserve better treatment than many of them have had at human hands over the centuries. Do unto others...the Golden Rule should not be limited to "other people." Or, as Emily Dickinson wrote, "If I can stop one heart from breaking/ I shall not live in vain/ If I can ease one life the aching/Or cool one pain, Or help a fainting robin/Unto his nest again; I shall not live in vain.

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