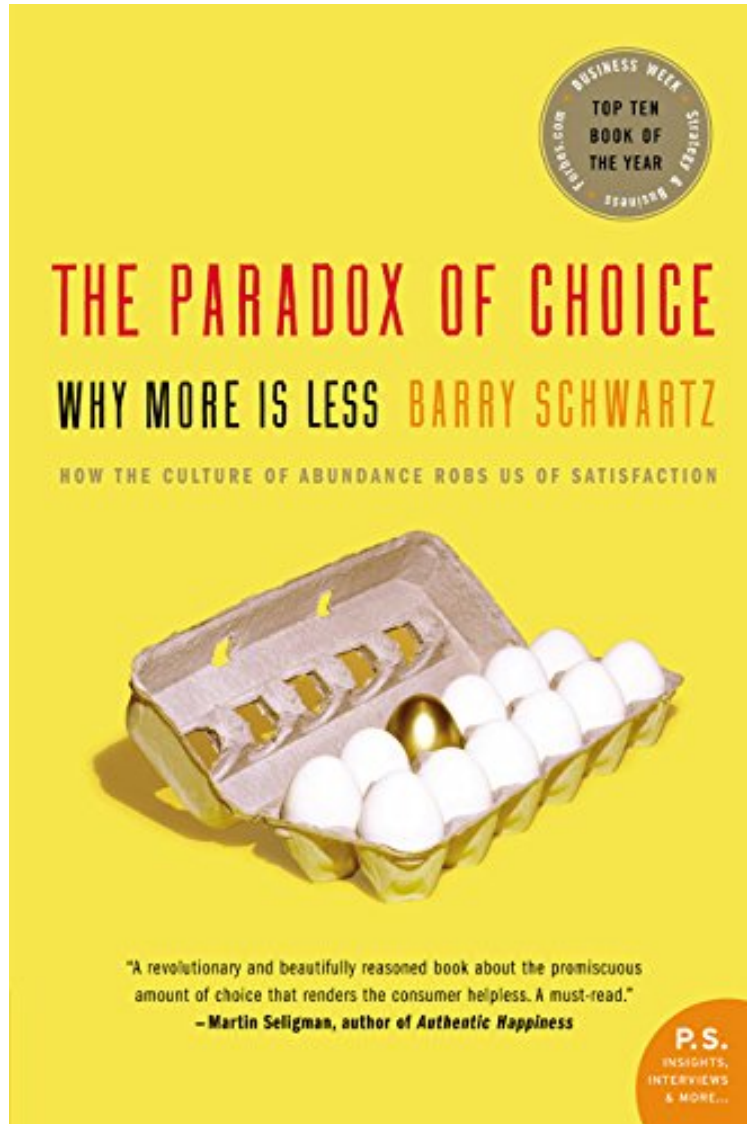


The Paradox of Choice: Why More Is Less

Barry Schwartz

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#230435 in Books Barry Schwartz 2005-01-18 2005-01-18Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 8.00 x .68 x 5.311, .59 #File Name: 0060005696304 pagesParadox of Choice Why More is Less | File size: 18.Mb

Barry Schwartz : The Paradox of Choice: Why More Is Less before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Paradox of Choice: Why More Is Less:

11 of 11 people found the following review helpful. This book is packed with Big Ideas on how, as the sub-title suggests, "the culture of abundance robs us of satisfaction."By Brian Johnson[[VIDEOID:fb87893ec1b7fd559c8f503791918955]] "The fact that some choice is good doesn't necessarily mean that more choice is better. As I will demonstrate, there is a cost to having an overload of choice. As a culture, we are enamored of freedom, self-determination, and variety, and we are reluctant to give up any of our options. But

clinging tenaciously to all the choices available to us contributes to bad decisions, to anxiety, stress, and dissatisfaction-- even to clinical depression." ~ Barry Schwartz from *The Paradox of Choice* Barry Schwartz is a Professor of Social Theory and Social Action at Swarthmore College and this book is packed with Big Ideas on how, as the sub-title suggests, "the culture of abundance robs us of satisfaction." In short, we now have so many options that we're suffering. "I believe we make the most of our freedoms by learning to make good choices about the things that matter, while at the same time unburdening ourselves from too much concern about the things that don't." "We can imagine a point at which the options would be so copious that even the world's most ardent supporters of freedom of choice would begin to say, "enough already." Unfortunately, that point of revulsion seems to recede endlessly into the future." Here are some of the Big Ideas: 1. Gratitude = happy with choices 2. Being Seduced - By branding. We all are. 3. Maximizers vs. Satisficers - Huge idea. 4. Perfectionism - Tends to go with maximizing. 5. Domain Specificity - Maximizing is domain specific. To find 250+ more reviews visit <http://bit.ly/BrianReviews3> of 3 people found the following review helpful. Learn what you really want By Adam Cohen A brilliant view of our complex world. We think we want more choice, but we are better off without it. If you enjoyed *Freakonomics*, you will enjoy this one too. 3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Help for the perfectionist By Janet L. Helfand My organizer recommended this book. She said that she had to read it also. I wanted to learn how to make faster decisions about getting rid of things and not spending so much time researching everything before I make my choice. My organizer kept asking me if it was worth my time. I am only into the first chapter; but, I believe it is going to help me make choices without the fear that I might be making a mistake. The book talks about real freedom and I would love to make a mistake or make a decision and then move on without thinking about it any more. That's real freedom.

Whether we're buying a pair of jeans, ordering a cup of coffee, selecting a long-distance carrier, applying to college, choosing a doctor, or setting up a 401(k), everyday decisions both big and small have become increasingly complex due to the overwhelming abundance of choice with which we are presented. As Americans, we assume that more choice means better options and greater satisfaction. But beware of excessive choice: choice overload can make you question the decisions you make before you even make them, it can set you up for unrealistically high expectations, and it can make you blame yourself for any and all failures. In the long run, this can lead to decision-making paralysis, anxiety, and perpetual stress. And, in a culture that tells us that there is no excuse for falling short of perfection when your options are limitless, too much choice can lead to clinical depression. In *The Paradox of Choice*, Barry Schwartz explains at what point choice the hallmark of individual freedom and self-determination that we so cherish becomes detrimental to our psychological and emotional well-being. In accessible, engaging, and anecdotal prose, Schwartz shows how the dramatic explosion in choice from the mundane to the profound challenges of balancing career, family, and individual needs has paradoxically become a problem instead of a solution. Schwartz also shows how our obsession with choice encourages us to seek that which makes us feel worse. By synthesizing current research in the social sciences, Schwartz makes the counter intuitive case that eliminating choices can greatly reduce the stress, anxiety, and busyness of our lives. He offers eleven practical steps on how to limit choices to a manageable number, have the discipline to focus on those that are important and ignore the rest, and ultimately derive greater satisfaction from the choices you have to make.

From Publishers Weekly Like Thoreau and the band Devo, psychology professor Schwartz provides ample evidence that we are faced with far too many choices on a daily basis, providing an illusion of a multitude of options when few honestly different ones actually exist. The conclusions Schwartz draws will be familiar to anyone who has flipped through 900 eerily similar channels of cable television only to find that nothing good is on. Whether choosing a health-care plan, choosing a college class or even buying a pair of jeans, Schwartz, drawing extensively on his own work in the social sciences, shows that a bewildering array of choices floods our exhausted brains, ultimately restricting instead of freeing us. We normally assume in America that more options ("easy fit" or "relaxed fit"?) will make us happier, but Schwartz shows the opposite is true, arguing that having all these choices actually goes so far as to erode our psychological well-being. Part research summary, part introductory social sciences tutorial, part self-help guide, this book offers concrete steps on how to reduce stress in decision making. Some will find Schwartz's conclusions too obvious, and others may disagree with his points or find them too repetitive, but to the average lay reader, Schwartz's accessible style and helpful tone is likely to aid the quietly desperate. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Booklist Who woulda thunk it? Here we are, in the early years of the twenty-first century, being driven bonkers by the staggering array of consumer goods from which we must choose. Choosing something as (seemingly) simple as shampoo can force us to wade through dozens, even hundreds, of brands. We are, the author suggests, overwhelmed by choice, and that's not such a good thing. Schwartz tells us that constantly being asked to make choices, even about the simplest things, forces us to "invest time, energy, and no small amount of self-doubt, and dread." There comes a point, he contends, at which choice becomes debilitating rather than liberating. Did I make the right choice? Can I ever make the right choice? It would be easy to write off this book as merely an extended riff on that well-worn phrase "too much of a good thing," but that would be a mistake. Despite a

tendency toward highfalutin language ("the counterfactuals we construct can be tilted upward"), Schwartz has plenty of insightful things to say here about the perils of everyday life. David Pitt Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved Brilliant.... The case Schwartz makes... is compelling, the implications disturbing.... An insightful book. (Christian Science Monitor) An insightful study that winningly argues its subtitle. (Philadelphia Inquirer) Schwartz lays out a convincing argument.... [He] is a crisp, engaging writer with an excellent sense of pace. (Austin American-Statesman) Schwartz offers helpful suggestions of how we can manage our world of overwhelming choices. (St. Petersburg Times) Wonderfully readable. (Washington Post) Schwartz has plenty of insightful things to say about the perils of everyday life. (Booklist) With its clever analysis, buttressed by sage New Yorker cartoons, The Paradox of Choice is persuasive. (BusinessWeek)