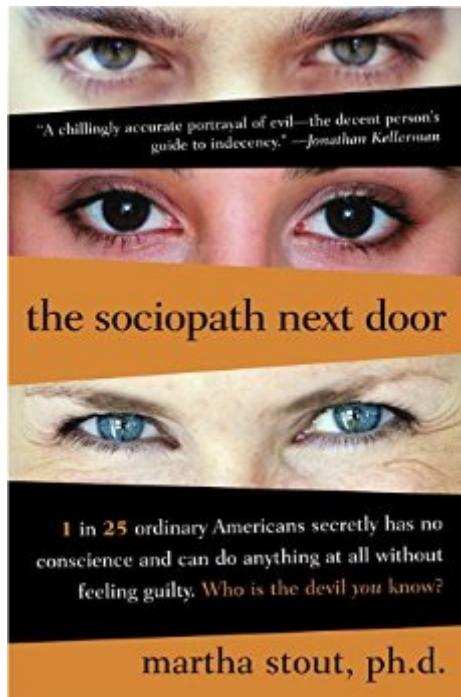


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The Sociopath Next Door



Synopsis

Who is the devil you know? Is it your lying, cheating ex-husband? Your sadistic high school gym teacher? Your boss who loves to humiliate people in meetings? The colleague who stole your idea and passed it off as her own? In the pages of *The Sociopath Next Door*, you will realize that your ex was not just misunderstood. He's a sociopath. And your boss, teacher, and colleague? They may be sociopaths too. We are accustomed to think of sociopaths as violent criminals, but in *The Sociopath Next Door*, Harvard psychologist Martha Stout reveals that a shocking 4 percent of ordinary people—“one in twenty-five”—has an often undetected mental disorder, the chief symptom of which is that that person possesses no conscience. He or she has no ability whatsoever to feel shame, guilt, or remorse. One in twenty-five everyday Americans, therefore, is secretly a sociopath. They could be your colleague, your neighbor, even family. And they can do literally anything at all and feel absolutely no guilt. How do we recognize the remorseless? One of their chief characteristics is a kind of glow or charisma that makes sociopaths more charming or interesting than the other people around them. They're more spontaneous, more intense, more complex, or even sexier than everyone else, making them tricky to identify and leaving us easily seduced. Fundamentally, sociopaths are different because they cannot love. Sociopaths learn early on to show sham emotion, but underneath they are indifferent to others' suffering. They live to dominate and thrill to win. The fact is, we all almost certainly know at least one or more sociopaths already. Part of the urgency in reading *The Sociopath Next Door* is the moment when we suddenly recognize that someone we know—“someone we worked for, or were involved with, or voted for”—is a sociopath. But what do we do with that knowledge? To arm us against the sociopath, Dr. Stout teaches us to question authority, suspect flattery, and beware the pity play. Above all, she writes, when a sociopath is beckoning, do not join the game. It is the ruthless versus the rest of us, and *The Sociopath Next Door* will show you how to recognize and defeat the devil you know.

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Customer Reviews

I've written many five-star reviews, but never have I been so motivated to try to convince everyone to read the book. Here's why: one in twenty-five Americans is a sociopath, a figure psychologist Martha Stout obtained from three journal articles and a U.S. government source. Assuming this premise of The Sociopath Next Door is correct, or even if the figure is say one in 50, odds are you know at least one sociopath. He or she could be an abusive partner, the person in the next cubicle at work, your landlord, or the person your teenager is dating. Even if you can't think of sociopath you know, you have high odds of encountering one. Given the havoc even one sociopath can wreak in one's life, this book provides a sort of insurance that you'll be able to identify him or her and deal with that person so they don't harm you emotionally, financially, or in any other way. This is a well-written and well-researched book that I think will benefit the 96% of you who are not sociopaths. To gain the benefits of "sociopath insurance" there are three portions of the book I believe are crucial for you to read: (1) the discussion of what is a sociopath along with her stories illustrating the different types of sociopaths, (BTW, those stories would make fine literary short stories with Stout's descriptive language and suspense building.) (2) Stout's "Thirteen Rules For Dealing With Sociopaths in Everyday Life", and (3) the discussion of how good people with consciences end up allowing sociopathic leaders to rise to power and do horrific acts. If you read just these sections and skip all the philosophical discussions about sociopaths, you will still gain a lot from this book. One of the first topics covered is what a sociopath is.

This text is a lucid study of those individuals who seem to be born without a moral conscience, and as Stout elegantly points out throughout this narrative, one in twenty-five Americans are considered

sociopath, causing havoc, heartache, destroyed careers, and the death of many people either directly or indirectly. The single argument in this highly accessible thesis, the one that is down-right astonishing, (though not so after reading the reasons why) is that most of us "instinctively" know when there is a sociopath in our midst, but more often refuse to intellectually or rationally call them for what they are...why? The reason is that we would prefer to believe that the human being is fundamentally good, and pure evil is something rare or something beyond our day to day reality. On the contrary, there are people who move through their lives without a hint of guilt for their acts of harm. The sociopath's motivation is ultimately selfish and life for them is one big game, a contest about winning at any cost. This is a frightening notion, but after reading this book, you will more than likely recognize someone in your past or currently in your life that has all the characteristics of a sociopath, and come to understand how and why your life is not the way it should be going and the reason for your general unhappiness. Martha Stout's "composite" case histories are enlightening as she presents us with varied 'types' of sociopaths from the homicidal & verbally abusive to the dead beat and covert destroyer of many lives. One of the more interesting sociopath profiles is the case of "Dr." Doreen Littlefield, a psychologist working at a reputable hospital. Doreen isn't beautiful but has a good body and uses it to her advantage.

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