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Respect pentru oameni si cărți

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Think Like a Freak

*How to Think Smarter about
Almost Everything*



PENGUIN BOOKS

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Respect yourself! Țu respectu pe tine!
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THINK
LIKE A
FREAK

CHAPTER 1

What Does It Mean to Think Like a Freak?

After writing *Freakonomics* and *SuperFreakonomics*, we started to hear from readers with all sorts of questions. *Is a college degree still “worth it”?* (Short answer: yes; long answer: also yes.) *Is it a good idea to pass along a family business to the next generation?* (Sure, if your goal is to kill off the business—for the data show it’s generally better to bring in an outside manager.*) *Whatever happened to the carpal tunnel syndrome epidemic?* (Once journalists stopped getting it, they stopped writing about it—but the problem persists, especially among blue-collar workers.)

Some questions were existential: *What makes people truly happy?* *Is income inequality as dangerous as it seems?* *Would a diet high in omega-3 lead to world peace?*

* Family firms in Japan have a long-standing solution to this problem: they find a new CEO from outside the family and legally adopt him. That is why nearly 100 percent of adoptees in Japan are adult males.

People wanted to know the pros and cons of: autonomous vehicles, breast-feeding, chemotherapy, estate taxes, fracking, lotteries, “medicinal prayer,” online dating, patent reform, rhino poaching, using an iron off the tee, and virtual currencies. One minute we’d get an e-mail asking us to “solve the obesity epidemic” and then, five minutes later, one urging us to “wipe out famine, right now!”

Readers seemed to think no riddle was too tricky, no problem too hard, that it couldn’t be sorted out. It was as if we owned some proprietary tool—a Freakonomics forceps, one might imagine—that could be plunged into the body politic to extract some buried wisdom.

If only that were true!

The fact is that solving problems is hard. If a given problem still exists, you can bet that a lot of people have already come along and failed to solve it. Easy problems evaporate; it is the hard ones that linger. Furthermore, it takes a lot of time to track down, organize, and analyze the data to answer even one small question well.*

So rather than trying and probably failing to answer most of the questions sent our way, we wondered if it might be better to write a book that can teach anyone to think like a Freak.

What might that look like?

* See Notes on page 215 for all underlying research citations and other background information.