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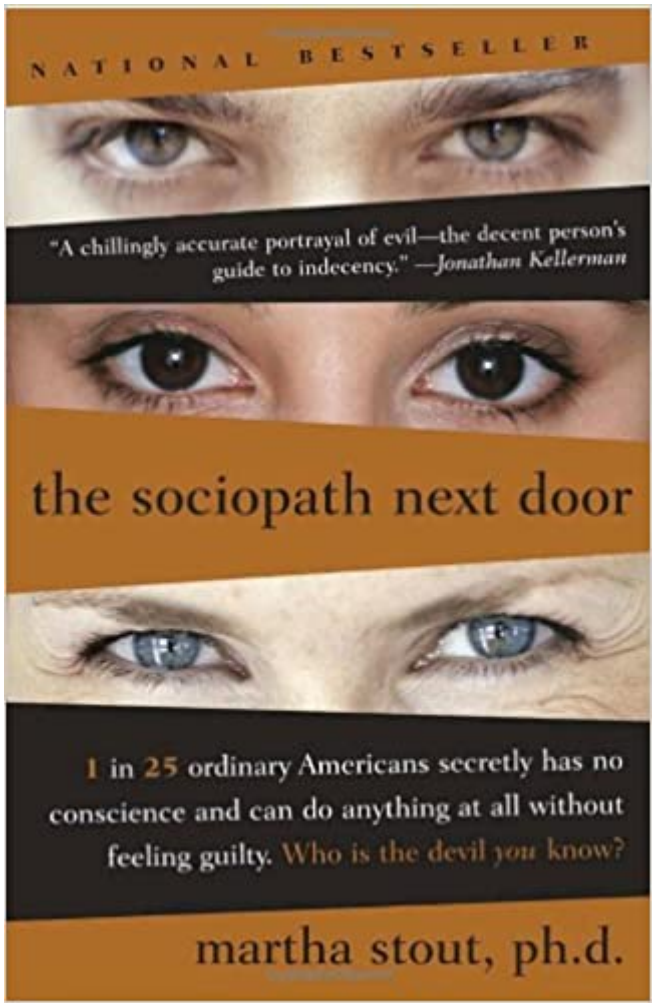

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Synopsis

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. HeÃ¢â ¬â„¢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 peopleÃ¢â ¬â •one in twenty-fiveÃ¢â ¬â •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. TheyÃ¢â ¬â„¢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 othersÃ¢â ¬â„¢ 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 knowÃ¢â ¬â •someone we worked for, or were involved with, or voted forÃ¢â ¬â •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

[Dr.] Stout says that as many as 4% of the population are conscienceless sociopaths who have no empathy or affectionate feelings for humans or animals. As Stout (The Myth of Sanity) explains, a sociopath is defined as someone who displays at least three of seven distinguishing characteristics, such as deceitfulness, impulsivity and a lack of remorse. Such people often have a superficial charm, which they exercise ruthlessly in order to get what they want. Stout argues that the development of sociopathy is due half to genetics and half to nongenetic influences that have not been clearly identified. The author offers three examples of such people, including Skip, the handsome, brilliant, superrich boy who enjoyed stabbing bullfrogs near his family's summer home, and Doreen, who lied about her credentials to get work at a psychiatric institute, manipulated her colleagues and, most cruelly, a patient. Dramatic as these tales are, they are composites, and while Stout is a good writer and her exploration of sociopaths can be arresting, this book occasionally appeals to readers' paranoia, as the book's title and its guidelines for dealing with sociopaths indicate. Copyright Ã Â© Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to the MP3 CD edition.

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I got this book on a whim, because it was mentioned in another book I had just read. I am so glad I did. The Sociopath Next Door changed my mindset. I had not realized how affected I had been by a lifetime of interaction with people who were sociopathic or on the fringe of such, and who imposed undue pressures on my own life. Stout adeptly describes the precise and exact attributes of the sociopath, the anti-social personality, I felt as if she was talking to me. I cannot even say how many such people I have encountered, maybe it is even less than I thought, but their effects, the murky tendrils of pernicious and guiltless people, have definitely reached me and affected me. As she says

in the book, the best way to avoid complications in one's life is to simply avoid getting involved with the 4 percentile o sociopathic people - but unfortunately, it doesn't always work that way, not when the sociopath is your boss and disassociating with him or her means jeopardizing one's career. Or maybe even your Church leader is a complete amoral tyrant who turns a spiritual journey into a nightmare of insane moralities. Or maybe it is the political leader of one's country, or a neighboring one, who, through claims of terrorism and fear, is pushing for war and violence or hacking away at the constitutional rights or shaking the economic stability upon which your children's future depend. Sociopaths and their effects are all around us. We can avoid them, but should we? Isn't better to KNOW them, to be able to SPOT them, and then, either navigate around them, or in the best interests of all, find ways to expose them entirely so that they cannot destroy the lives of others who cannot see them so clearly? I believe it is the last, and this book is the manual of how to spot the person who can, or is, quietly, ruining one's happiness and success. This should be mandated reading in schools, because it is a book about how to know who NOT to be associated with, who not to marry, who not to pick as a friend, and certainly, which persons will have no other interest in you than in controlling and manipulating you to their advantage. I have experienced enough of these people in my life to say unequivocally that Martha Stout has hit it on the head in this book. If you want some relief, some insight into who may have been in the background, quietly stabbing you in the back with a knife in their hand and a smile on their face, read this book.

Dr. Stout has written an easy to read, interesting explanation of sociopaths. The case histories were fascinating. (I always want more case histories.) Not only is this a good research tool for understanding the madness of sociopaths, it demonstrates how they can be all around us and we, as trusting individuals, won't recognize them for what they are. Common lore has led us to believe that to be a sociopath one must be violent and abusive, obviously abusive, but Dr. Stout shows this belief to be a fallacy. A sociopath may be those things, but may also abuse others in more subtle ways, stealthily, the victim realizing it too late. It doesn't matter how educated one is or how experienced or how rich or beautiful or poor or whatever, it's no easy task to recognize when one is being taken in by a sociopath. This book really opened my eyes. I will use it in my fiction writing. Pity my poor characters who won't know what hit them until it's too late.

In The Sociopath Next Door, Martha Stout writes about what a sociopathÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s motives and characteristics are. Stout tells the reader, "This is how you spot a sociopath." She gives the reader different techniques on how to look for them. Stout tells us what we should do when we

become an acquaintance or friend of a sociopath. Stout expresses how common sociopaths are. Therefore, she is addressing anyone who is affected by sociopaths. Stout uses personal stories and experiences to give the reader a clearer idea of what a sociopath is thinking. 4% of the worldÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s population has no conscience. I, personally, loved this book. I think Stout is able to capture not only what a sociopath's motives are, but break the sterotypical murdering sociopath. Stout makes the reader realize that in fact, a scoiopath can live next door, and you may not even know it. I would recommend this book to anyone who is interested in what drives the human conscience and what it is like to not have one. This includes a sociologist, psychologist, or anyone who is at all interested in how the human brain works. This book is a short interesting read. Anyone who wants to know why their crazy neighbor acts a certain way should read this book.

There have been a few people that have been or are in my life that are like jello. No matter how hard you try to work with them, play a fair game etc, it just goes sideways, falls apart or has a twist. While I had learned some of the lessons in this book along the way, Martha Stout does an excellent job of putting a bow on understanding what a sociopath looks like (many different faces), how to spot one quickly and how to deal with the situation once you understand who you are dealing with. If 4% of the population has this personality type, you WILL run into one in your lifetime if you haven't already. And I say RUN for the hills! The toughest part is having a family member, a spouse or an ex of your new spouse or anyone else who can make your life a living hell by their lack of conscience (the people that are much more difficult to get rid of). My recommendation is that everyone read this book so save yourself years of heartache, thinking it's you, when all you really are is one of the people that they play their game with. Until you quit playing "their" game and then they move on to someone else that is.....

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