



Chance: A Guide to Gambling, Love, the Stock Market, and Just About Everything Else

By Amir D. Aczel

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In *Chance*, celebrated mathematician Amir D. Aczel turns his sights on probability theory—the branch of mathematics that measures the likelihood of a random event. He explains probability in clear, layman's terms, and shows its practical applications. What is commonly called luck has mathematical roots and in *Chance*, you'll learn to increase your odds of success in everything from true love to the stock market. For thousands of years, the twin forces of chance and mischance have beguiled humanity like none other. Why does fortune smile on some people, and smirk on others? What is luck, and why does it so often visit the undeserving? How can we predict the random events happening around us? Even better, how can we manipulate them? In this delightful and lucid voyage through the realm of the random, Dr. Aczel once again makes higher mathematics intelligible to us.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

The baffling, for some, subject of chance and luck is demystified in this sketchy but engaging treatise. Mathematician Aczel (*Fermat's Last Theorem*) includes some equations, but mostly sticks to grade-school arithmetic and a few easy story problems in explicating the mathematics of probability. He untangles a number of urgent conundrums, including why buses always seem to run late, why any group of 31 people will include two with the same birthday and why random walks can model the stock market. The book abounds in counterintuitive life lessons. You shouldn't gamble, he says, but if you do then you are better off, probability-wise, if you blow your whole wad on a single spin of the roulette wheel than if you parcel it out in smaller bets. And the lovelorn can take comfort in knowing that, if you just keep dating, the odds are surprisingly good that your soul mate will turn up. Indeed, "[y]ou will maximize your probability of finding the best spouse if you date thirty-seven percent of the available candidates in your life, and then choose to stay with the next candidate who is better than all previous ones." Aczel's treatments of some topics, like game theory, are so perfunctory as to barely register, but his light touch generally makes probability come alive.

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From [Booklist](#)

People, as a rule, perform poorly when it comes to estimating risk and chance. Casinos profit from this ignorance about probability, and statistics in the news tend not to be well understood by the public. Aczel takes on the noble mission of enlightening readers with the theory behind everyday probability, indulging in amusing whimsies along the way. If you wish to get married, for example, Aczel advises you to reject the first 37 percent of your dating pool, after which you propose to the first date you like. He shows why one should not marvel that in a random collection of 20 people, it's likely 2 will have the same birthday. In these examples as well as others drawn from worlds ruled by chance, such as cards and the stock market, Aczel describes the nature of randomness with simple formulas, showing the results of random trials, such as coin tosses. Extending his winning track record of popularizing science (e.g., *Pendulum*, 2003), Aczel entertains readers with ways to tame the guesswork. *Gilbert Taylor*

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Review

"Aczel entertains readers with ways to tame the guess work."

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Patricia Gross:

In this 21st centuries, people become competitive in most way. By being competitive at this point, people have do something to make these individuals survives, being in the middle of the particular crowded place and notice simply by surrounding. One thing that oftentimes many people have underestimated that for a while is reading. Sure, by reading a book your ability to survive improve then having chance to stand than other is high. For you personally who want to start reading a book, we give you this kind of Chance: A Guide to Gambling, Love, the Stock Market, and Just About Everything Else book as starter and daily reading

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Phyllis Ramirez:

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