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The Why of Things: Causality in Science, Medicine, and Life

Peter V. Rabins

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Why was there a meltdown at the Fukushima power plant? Why do some people get cancer and not others? Why is global warming happening? Why does one person get depressed in the face of life's vicissitudes while another finds resilience?

Questions like these?questions of causality?form the basis of modern scientific inquiry, posing profound intellectual and methodological challenges for researchers in the physical, natural, biomedical, and social sciences. In this groundbreaking book, noted psychiatrist and author Peter Rabins offers a conceptual framework for analyzing daunting questions of causality. Navigating a lively intellectual voyage between the shoals of strict reductionism and relativism, Rabins maps a three-facet model of causality and applies it to a variety of questions in science, medicine, economics, and more.

Throughout this book, Rabins situates his argument within relevant scientific contexts, such as quantum mechanics, cybernetics, chaos theory, and epigenetics. A renowned communicator of complex concepts and scientific ideas, Rabins helps readers stretch their minds beyond the realm of popular literary tipping points, blinks, and freakonomic explanations of the world.

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