



Why We Snap: Understanding the Rage Circuit in Your Brain

Douglas Fields

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The startling new science behind sudden acts of violence and the nine triggers this groundbreaking researcher has uncovered

We all have a rage circuit we can't fully control once it is engaged as R. Douglas Fields, PhD, reveals in this essential book for our time. The daily headlines are filled with examples of otherwise rational people with no history of violence or mental illness suddenly snapping in a domestic dispute, an altercation with police, or road rage attack. We all wish to believe that we are in control of our actions, but the fact is, in certain circumstances we are not. The sad truth is that the right trigger in the right circumstance can unleash a fit of rage in almost anyone.

But there is a twist: Essentially the same pathway in the brain that can result in a violent outburst can also enable us to act heroically and altruistically before our conscious brain knows what we are doing. Think of the stranger who dives into a frigid winter lake to save a drowning child.

Dr. Fields is an internationally recognized neurobiologist and authority on the brain and the cellular mechanisms of memory. He has spent years trying to understand the biological basis of rage and anomalous violence, and he has concluded that our culture's understanding of the problem is based on an erroneous assumption: that rage attacks are the product of morally or mentally defective individuals, rather than a capacity that we all possess.

Fields shows that violent behavior is the result of the clash between our evolutionary hardwiring and triggers in our contemporary world. Our personal space is more crowded than ever, we get less sleep, and we just aren't as fit as our ancestors. We need to understand how the hardwiring works and how to recognize the nine triggers. With a totally new perspective, engaging narrative, and practical advice, *Why We Snap* uncovers the biological roots of the rage response and how we can protect ourselves—and others.

From the Hardcover edition.

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