

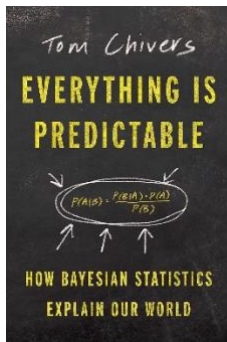


Everything Is Predictable: How Bayesian Statistics Explain Our World

Author: Tom Chivers

Publisher: Atria/One Signal

First Edition (May 2024), 384 pages



I must warn the readers that you need a good background in statistics to fully understand the content of *Everything Is Predictable* by Tom Chivers. The readers should be aware that Bayesian statistics provides a tool for making sense of data through probability.

Bayes' theorem helps explain such things as why highly accurate screening tests can lead to false positives, causing unnecessary anxiety for patients. A failure to account for it in court has put innocent people in jail. But its influence goes far beyond practical applications. Bayesian principles are used in modelling and forecasting.

The author explains that life is not a chess game. It's like poker, where we make decisions based on limited information. "The usual way to explain Bayes' theorem is with medical testing," writes the author. For example, does a woman with a positive mammogram have breast cancer? No test is perfect, but it must be nearly 100%, right? Wrong. Readers may be surprised to learn that a test that is 90% accurate (typical of a mammogram) isn't

the same as there being a 90% chance that it's correct.

Delving almost too deeply (for me at least), he delivers a history of scientific prediction as well as the ongoing controversy within the statistics community between pro- and anti-Bayesian factions. He also offers a marginally relevant but jaw-dropping account of the current state of science, where ignorance or deliberate manipulation of statistics by ambitious researchers has produced an epidemic of studies announcing results that often can't be reproduced.

The problem is that in science, we like to think that there is an objective truth out there, and the Bayesian model of perception is explicitly subjective. A probability estimate isn't some fact about the world, but my best guess of the world, given the information I have."

'Superforecasters', a group of expert predictors who outperform CIA analysts, use a Bayesian approach. And many argue that Bayes' theorem is not just a useful tool, but a description of almost everything – that it is the underlying architecture of rationality, and of the human brain.

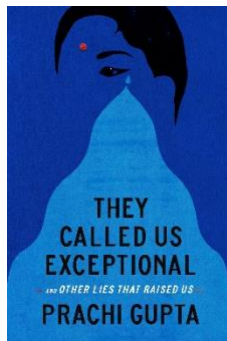
Though I was not able to grasp everything in this book, I found it very intriguing and worth reading. -
Reviewed by Anil Shrivastava 'Musafir'

They Called Us Exceptional: And Other Lies That Raised Us

Author: Prachi Gupta

Publisher: Crown Publishing, New York
First Edition (2023), 270 pages

In her memoir, *They Called Us Exceptional*, Prachi



Gupta depicts her life that is true of the most girls of Indian origin born to Indians emigrating to North America. Gupta always found herself torn between perfect minority image her father demanded of the family and the naturally messy behind-the-scenes family life shaped by

individuals with unique desires and troubles.

Gupta explores her Indian American culture, her parents' expectations, society's pressures, and the fiction that her family attempted to portray of being perfect despite conflict, messy moments, and Gupta's need to be seen for who she really was.

The book begins with Gupta's apology to her mother for airing the family's dirty laundry rather than writing the book as a novel. She explains that only by telling the truth in this way does she have any hope of allowing others to live their truths as well. The book itself is directed to Gupta's mother. Gupta explains to her mother the reality of past events, her points of view, and her reactions to various occurrences in a way that emphasizes her estrangement from her parents--and her particular pain in being distant from her mother.

Gupta's father has volatile whims and desire for Prachi to adhere to his stringent model minority myth and his will in all things. Prachi goes through intense stress of being forced--through verbal abuse,

violence, emotional blackmail to comply with her father's set ideas and hypocrisy.

Her father uses his mental illness to emotionally manipulate the family, then demands that no one outside the household know about it – false family prestige practiced by Indian parents. He lays out a history of familial depression and suicidal thoughts as though the occurrence is inevitable for his children, which haunts Prachi and seems to singularly take hold of her brother Yush who commits suicide.

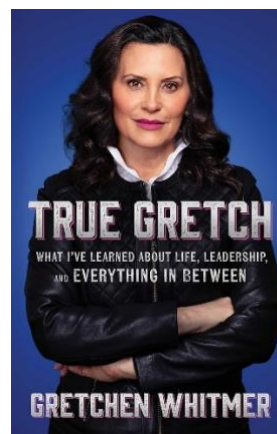
Being a first generation Indian immigrant to this country myself, I could relate to many of the idiosyncrasies and dysfunctions depicted by the characters of this book. In my opinion, *They Called Us Exceptional* should be mandated to all Indians emigrating to read before coming to America. -

Reviewed by Anil Shrivastava 'Musafir'

True Gretch: What I've Learned About Life, Leadership, and Everything in Between.

Author: Gretchen Whitmer

Publisher: Simon & Schuster
First Edition (July 2024), 291 pages



I am a resident of Michigan and I have lived through Gretchen Whitmer's ordeal described very honestly in her memoir, *True Gretch*. Gretchen is the third term governor of Michigan and a rising Democratic star. In her book Whitmer comes across as an unconventionally honest, personal, and funny personality full of insights

that guided her through a global pandemic, showdowns with high-profile bullies, and even a kidnapping and assassination plots.

When Gretchen Whitmer was growing up, her beloved grandmother Nino taught her that you can always find something good in other people. "Even the meanest person might have pretty eyes," she would say. Nino's words persuaded Whitmer to look for the good in any person or situation. Her grandmother also said, "never part your hair in the middle."

In this candid and inspiring book, Whitmer reveals the principles and instincts that have shaped her extraordinary career, from her early days as a lawyer and legislator and her 2018 election as governor of Michigan, to her bold and innovative actions as she led the state through a series of unprecedented crises. Her motto in politics, she writes, is to "get shit done."

Whitmer shares the lessons in resilience that steered her through some of the most challenging events in Michigan's history, such as the Covid-19 pandemic, a five-hundred-year flood, the rise of domestic terrorism, and the fierce fight to protect reproductive rights.

Along the way, she tells stories about the outsize characters in her family, her lifelong clumsy streak, the wild comments she's heard on the campaign trail, her self-deprecating social media campaigns and funny tactics she deploys to neutralize her opponents.

Written with Whitmer's trademark sense of humor and straight-shooting style, *True Gretch* is not only a compelling account of her remarkable journey, but also a blueprint for anyone who wants to make a difference in their community, their country, or the world. It's a very interesting book to read.