



Choke: What the Secrets of the Brain Reveal About Getting It Right When You Have To

Sian Beilock

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Why do the smartest students often do poorly on standardized tests?

Why did you tank that interview or miss that golf swing when you should have had it in the bag?

Why do you mess up when it matters the most—and how can you perform your best instead?

It happens to all of us. You've prepared for days, weeks, even years for the big day when you will finally show your stuff—in academics, in your career, in sports—but when the big moment arrives, nothing seems to work. You hit the wrong note, drop the ball, get stumped by a simple question. In other words, you choke. It's not fun to think about, but now there's good news: This doesn't have to happen.

Dr. Sian Beilock, an expert on performance and brain science, reveals in *Choke* the astonishing new science of why we all too often blunder when the stakes are high. What happens in our brain and body when we experience the dreaded performance anxiety? And what are we doing differently when everything magically "clicks" into place and the perfect golf swing, tricky test problem, or high-pressure business pitch becomes easy? In an energetic tour of the latest brain science, with surprising insights on every page, Beilock explains the inescapable links between body and mind; reveals the surprising similarities among the ways performers, students, athletes, and business people choke; and shows how to succeed brilliantly when it matters most.

In lively prose and accessibly rendered science, Beilock examines how attention and working memory guide human performance, how experience and practice and brain development interact to create our abilities, and how stress affects all these factors. She sheds new light on counter-intuitive realities, like why the highest performing people are most susceptible to choking under pressure, why we may learn foreign languages best when we're not paying attention, why early childhood athletic training can backfire, and how our emotions can make us both smarter and dumber. All these fascinating findings about academic, athletic, and creative intelligence come together in Beilock's new ideas about performance under pressure—and her secrets to never choking again. Whether you're at the Olympics, in the boardroom, or taking the SAT, Beilock's clear, prescriptive guidance shows how to remain cool under pressure—the key to performing well when everything's on the line.

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Craig Chivers:

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Errol Garvin:

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Oliver Gerling:

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