

Felt Time: The Psychology of How We Perceive Time (MIT Press)

By Marc Wittmann

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We have widely varying perceptions of time. Children have trouble waiting for anything. ("Are we there yet?") Boredom is often connected to our sense of time passing (or not passing). As people grow older, time seems to speed up, the years flitting by without a pause. How does our sense of time come about? In *Felt Time*, Marc Wittmann explores the riddle of subjective time, explaining our perception of time -- whether moment by moment, or in terms of life as a whole. Drawing on the latest insights from psychology and neuroscience, Wittmann offers a new answer to the question of how we experience time.

Wittmann explains, among other things, how we choose between savoring the moment and deferring gratification; why impulsive people are bored easily, and why their boredom is often a matter of time; whether each person possesses a personal speed, a particular brain rhythm distinguishing quick people from slow people; and why the feeling of duration can serve as an "error signal," letting us know when it is taking too long for dinner to be ready or for the bus to come. He considers the practice of mindfulness, and whether it can reduce the speed of life and help us gain more time, and he describes how, as we grow older, subjective time accelerates as routine increases; a fulfilled and varied life is a long life. Evidence shows that bodily processes -- especially the heartbeat -- underlie our feeling of time and act as an internal clock for our sense of time. And Wittmann points to recent research that connects time to consciousness; ongoing studies of time consciousness, he tells us, will help us to understand the conscious self.

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Editorial Review

Review

Reading Wittmann's refreshing book, one cannot do but take time -- digging deeply into the brain's neuronal basis of our sometimes illusory experiences of time while immersing oneself in the various philosophical conceptions of time. A must read in our time-stressed times.

(Georg Northoff, MD, PhD, FRCP, University of Ottawa, author of *Unlocking the Brain* and *Neuro-Philosophy and the Healthy Mind: Learning from the Unwell Brain*)

A fascinating and engaging tour of the psychology of time. The insights Wittmann provides into our complex relationship to time gradually build up to an intriguing and sometimes surprising picture, in which our experience of time holds the key to everything from making good decisions to living a fulfilled life.

(Christoph Hoerl, Professor of Philosophy, University of Warwick)

Time is a fundamental factor that shapes human life and behavior. In *Felt Time*, Marc Wittmann presents the topic of time and demonstrates its important role. This is done by discussing behavior, brain research, and philosophical dilemmas and by showing how they are connected to each other. *Felt Time* is a must for anyone, layman or expert, who wishes to better understand human behavior and its meaning. Wittmann has done a wonderful job in describing complex issues and making them simple and easy to understand.

(Dan Zakay, Professor, Department of Psychology, Tel-Aviv University)

Felt Time eloquently sketches out the importance of time, both in the darkness of the lab and in the full light of everyday behaviour.

(*Nature*)

... [A] fascinating inquiry into how our subjective experience of time's passage shapes everything from our emotional memory to our sense of self.

(Maria Popova *Brain Pickings*)

About the Author
Marc Wittmann is a Research Fellow at the Institute for Frontier Areas of Psychology and Mental Health, Freiburg, Germany.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Mary Stockton:

Have you spare time to get a day? What do you do when you have more or little spare time? That's why, you can choose the suitable activity with regard to spend your time. Any person spent their very own spare time to take a walk, shopping, or went to the Mall. How about open or perhaps read a book allowed Felt Time: The Psychology of How We Perceive Time (MIT Press)? Maybe it is for being best activity for you. You recognize beside you can spend your time along with your favorite's book, you can more intelligent than before. Do you agree with it has the opinion or you have some other opinion?

Danielle Deguzman:

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Evan Miller:

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Michael Green:

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