

[PDF] Brilliant Blunders: From Darwin To Einstein - Colossal Mistakes By Great Scientists That Changed Our Understanding Of Life And The Universe

Mario Livio - pdf download free book



Books Details:

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Author: Mario Livio

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Description:

From Publishers Weekly Astrophysicist and award-winning author Livio (*The Golden Ratio*) analyzes ruinous errors of five great scientific minds in the wake of their most prominent discoveries and how those errors have not only propelled scientific breakthroughs, but provide "insights...into the operation of the human mind." Summoning Charles Darwin, Lord Kelvin, Linus Pauling, Fred Hoyle, and Albert Einstein, Livio argues there is no progress without lessons in humility. These thinkers succumbed to moments of fear, pride, stubbornness, and doubt common to all "mere mortals"—to the benefit of elucidating the evolution of life and the universe. Two-time Nobel prize-winning chemist Pauling's flub of basic chemistry catalyzed the discoveries of Watson and Crick; Hoyle, a cosmologist who displayed "pigheaded, almost infuriating refusal" to give up his thoroughly refuted "steady state theory", energized advanced studies of how we exist in space with his controversial ideas; and Einstein, "the embodiment of genius", refused to give up on his cosmological constant, "the most famous fudge factor in the history of science." With humor and precision, Livio reminds us: "Even the most impressive minds are not flawless; they merely pave the way for the next level of understanding." (May) --This text refers to the edition.

Review "Mario Livio sets the discoveries of five great scientists who were also remarkable personalities in their social context, showing how they emerged from confusion and controversy. His archival research allows him to debunk several myths that have been given currency through less thorough biographies. You don't need to be a scientist to be fascinated by this scholarly, insightful and beautifully written book."

(Martin Rees, Astronomer Royal and author of *From Here to Infinity: A Vision for the Future of Science*)

"Scientists make mistakes all the time, but those bumps in the road are often smoothed out in the legends that surround the greatest discoverers. . . . Thoughtful, well-researched and beautifully written, *Brilliant Blunders* offers a distinctive — and far more truthful — perspective on the journey to scientific discovery."

(Marcia Bartusiak *The Washington Post*)

"Enlightening. . . . For many people, being a great scientist means being above error. . . . Livio's book is a valuable antidote to this skewed picture. . . . Thanks to his deep curiosity, Livio turns *Brilliant Blunders* into a thoughtful meditation on the course of science itself."

(Carl Zimmer *The New York Times Book Review*)

"It is said that genius is the ability to make all possible mistakes in the least amount of time. Livio's genius is to show us just how much those mistakes have taught us."

(Adam Riess, Thomas Barber Professor of Physics and Astronomy, Johns Hopkins University, Nobel Laureate in Physics 2011)

"Mario Livio wears many hats: scientist, sleuth, storyteller. In *Brilliant Blunders*, a delightful intellectual synthesis, he reminds us that he's also one of the best science writers in our galaxy."

(Steven Strogatz, professor of applied mathematics, Cornell University, and author of *The Joy of X*)

"In *Brilliant Blunders*, Mario Livio leaves no historical detail untold, as we re-walk the error-filled pathways along which human understanding of the universe slowly emerged."

(Neil deGrasse Tyson, Astrophysicist, American Museum of Natural History, and author of *Space Chronicles: Facing the Ultimate Frontier*)

Mr. Livio is a gifted storyteller. . . . [He] shows how science works partly by feeding on past mistakes:

Once recognized, the errors sparked creativity in other scientists. An incorrect view of the world is not simply a mistake; it's a catalyst that leads to better understanding."

(Samuel Arbesman *The Wall Street Journal*)

"One of the most important things that distinguishes science from religion is that in science we (eventually) are happy to change our minds. This is called learning. As Mario Livio eloquently describes in this far-reaching and thoroughly enlightening book, many famous scientific advances involved either false starts or dead ends. In my own field, Einstein is purported to have said that inserting the cosmological constant into his equations of General Relativity was his 'biggest blunder.' In hindsight, as we find ourselves living in a Universe whose future may be determined by this quantity, most of us would now pay our eye teeth to have made such blunder!"

(Lawrence M. Krauss, Director of the Origins Project at Arizona State University and Foundation Professor in the School of Earth and Space Exploration)

"Entertaining accounts of how five celebrated scientists went wrong. . . . An absorbing, persuasive reminder that science is not a direct march to the truth."

(*Kirkus Reviews*)

"Astrophysicist Livio unmaskes the flaws in the work of some of our greatest scientific minds in this meditation on the winding, unpredictable path of discovery."

(Anna Kuchment *Scientific American*)

"Livio's usual knack at making sophisticated concepts accessible has been brought to bear on his book. . . . What comes through clearly, as is one of the author's stated intentions, is that errors are part and parcel of the process and that science progresses, not always despite them, but also through them. . . . With its illustrious characters, interesting ideas and those blunders to marvel at, the book makes a fascinating read."

(Marianne Freiberger *Plus magazine*)

"Wide ranging and entertaining, *Brilliant Blunders* might be picked up by readers who have been fooled into doing so by the notion of blunders, but they will certainly enjoy it for its brilliance."

(Robert Schaefer *New York Journal of Books*)

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