



Spent: Sex, Evolution, and Consumer Behavior

By Geoffrey Miller

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A leading evolutionary psychologist probes the unconscious instincts behind American consumer culture

Illuminating the hidden reasons for why we buy what we do, *Spent* applies evolutionary psychology to the sensual wonderland of marketing and perceived status that is American consumer culture. Geoffrey Miller starts with the theory that we purchase things to advertise ourselves to others, and then examines other factors that dictate what we spend money on. With humor and insight, Miller analyzes an array of product choices and deciphers what our decisions say about ourselves, giving us access to a new way of understanding-and improving-our behaviors to become happier consumers.

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Spent: Sex, Evolution, and Consumer Behavior By Geoffrey Miller Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Evolutionary psychologist Miller (*The Mating Mind*) examines conspicuous consumption in order to further his (not entirely complementary) goals—to rectify marketing's poor understanding of human spending behavior and critique consumerist culture. According to the author, our purchases are powerful indicators of our personality and are used to lure in suitable mates and friends. The book defends the current psychological view of personality as varying along six axes: intelligence, openness to new experiences, conscientiousness, agreeableness, emotional stability and extroversion. While there is significant support for the author's contention that variation in these basic categories reflect genetic inheritance, preferences for each of them vary from society to society, from historical moment to moment and even within individual lives (e.g., conscientiousness tends to increase over the course of our lives as mating strategies shift from attracting short-term partners to maintaining long-term relationships). Miller is an engaging writer, even if his attempts at humor fall flat. What remains troubling is his failure to account for how a full range of traits can coexist in the same cultural environment and continue to be perpetuated across generations. (*May*) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

From School Library Journal

Evolutionary psychologist Miller (*The Mating Mind*) digs deep into the primal past of humankind to discover the roots of...modern marketing? Actually, his focus is more on the makings of modern consumer culture—of which marketing is, he argues, a dominant force. Since evolutionary psychology seeks to examine how natural selection acts on psychological and mental traits, Miller applies this knowledge to help us understand what actually motivates us to buy. He pokes fun at popular culture and at the things we buy and flaunt to inflate our self-esteem and try to make ourselves more attractive. Personality research can inform the study of consumer behavior, and Miller shows us how having a better understanding of our own personalities will help us avoid the pitfalls of runaway consumerism. After all, millions of years of evolution have honed humans' natural abilities to win friends and mates, so why resort to expensive and ridiculous substitutes for our true identities and personalities? For both lay readers and academics, reading this book should be considered time well "spent."—Carol J. Elsen, Univ. of Wisconsin, Whitewater Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

From [Booklist](#)

Miller, an academic and evolutionary psychologist who studies the science of human nature, explores the American consumer culture of marketing and status seeking. We have a natural desire to look good in the eyes of others, and modern consumers persuade one another that they are healthy, clever, and popular by the goods and services they consume. Such goods and services acquired through education, work, and consumption advertise our personal traits to others, and since these factors are misleading, the author contends that others usually ignore them and judge us through personal interaction. This book concerns where we are today in this complicated world, which Miller calls consumerist capitalism, and where we go in the future. He states, "Humans may never give up their drives for status, respect, prestige, sexual attractiveness, and social popularity, but these drives can be channeled to yield a much higher quality of life than runaway consumerism offers." It is unclear if this well-researched, challenging academic tome will attract readers outside the classroom. --Mary Whaley

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Cinthia Beltran:

Do you among people who can't read satisfying if the sentence chained in the straightway, hold on guys this particular aren't like that. This Spent: Sex, Evolution, and Consumer Behavior book is readable by you who hate those straight word style. You will find the details here are arrange for enjoyable looking at experience without leaving actually decrease the knowledge that want to give to you. The writer regarding Spent: Sex, Evolution, and Consumer Behavior content conveys thinking easily to understand by many people. The printed and e-book are not different in the content material but it just different in the form of it. So , do you still thinking Spent: Sex, Evolution, and Consumer Behavior is not loveable to be your top listing reading book?

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John Dussault:

The actual book Spent: Sex, Evolution, and Consumer Behavior has a lot of knowledge on it. So when you read this book you can get a lot of advantage. The book was published by the very famous author. The author makes some research prior to write this book. This specific book very easy to read you will get the point easily after looking over this book.

Mildred Lyons:

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