Book Reviews

Color Atlas of Ultrasound Anatomy. Second Edition. By Berthold Block. New York: Thieme; 2012. 315 pp. US $49.99 Paperback. ISBN: 978-3131390523.

Ultrasound is a fast, cost-effective, and noninvasive imaging modality increasingly being used as a diagnostic tool in emergency departments, at bedside, and in the clinic. Its portability and easy operation makes ultrasound accessible to medical professionals in all specialties and stages of training. However, the unique geometry and contrast of structures on ultrasound sections often appear confusing to the novice eye. This is where the Color Atlas of Ultrasound Anatomy by Berthold Block comes in handy.

Through sequences of more than 270 high quality sonograms with beautifully color-coded schematics, this pocket-sized atlas familiarizes the learner to the shape, size, texture, and anatomical relationships of the abdominal and pelvic organs as well as the thyroid gland. The multi-slice series are particularly helpful as they show how the organs and vessels change in shape and position as the ultrasound probe is moved across the body. Each slice is accompanied by an inset showing where the probe is placed, a three-dimensional model indicating the scanning plane, and a short text with clues to locating anatomical landmarks. The information is efficiently and perspicuously arranged in a quarter format on facing pages with the back flap of the book serving as the legend guide. In addition, the book includes an introductory section illustrating the common patient and sonographer positions and scanning directions used to survey each organ. The front and back covers also contain normal measurements of the key structures.

The first of its kind, the original edition of the atlas has been hailed as the primer to ultrasound techniques for medical students, residents, and technicians. The new edition has improved on the already ingenious layout and incorporated additional series of sonograms for the gallbladder, kidneys, stomach, and prostate. This book is a must-have for every ultrasound station.

There are a few shortcomings for consideration in future revisions. It would be great if the book had a brief section illustrating the echogenicity of common pathological conditions such as a cyst, a solid tumor, or an inflamed duct. A section using more advanced techniques such as doppler imaging to assess peripheral vascular flow would also be helpful. Lastly, a spiral bind edition that allows the book to lay flat when opened would greatly enhance its use as a reference during hands on learning.

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Making Sense of People: Decoding the Mysteries of Personality. By Samuel Barondes. Upper Saddle River, NJ: FT Press [Pearson Education, Inc]; 2012. 240 pp. US $24.99 Hardcover. ISBN: 978-0132172608.

Humans have long had an urge to neatly label and categorize everything in the mysterious and often chaotic natural world — including other humans. Given the countless personality types, is there a good way to identify key traits and classify personalities into a few broad yet descriptive categories? Besides relying on sheer intuition, is there a methodical and unbiased way of “sizing people up?” In Making Sense of People, Samuel Barondes attempts a systematic approach to the science of
evaluating people’s personalities. Referencing the works of modern researchers, Barondes, himself a professor of psychiatry, summarizes important findings in a guidebook intended for those outside the field. *Making Sense of People* is aimed at the general audience, and at 240 pages, it is a light and engaging read. The book is divided into three parts, each several chapters. Part One attempts to describe personality differences, Part Two gives an overview and brief explanation of those personality differences at the biological and physiological levels, and Part Three relates an individual’s personality to the context of the whole person and personal life story.

Barondes relies heavily on the “Big Five” factors of personality traits (Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism, and Openness) used in modern psychology. Introduced in the first chapter, the Big Five are referred back to regularly in subsequent chapters. The Big Five method is fleshed out with examples using famous individuals like Bill Clinton. Barondes uses evidence from media reports of Clinton as the basis for his personality analysis, but confounding factors such as possible media bias are ignored. Perhaps this is inevitable, since readers might only be able to recognize familiar, sometimes polarizing, public figures, but at the cost of the author not having a firsthand perspective of said public figure. In any case, the rest of the text is similarly peppered with diverse personalities from popular culture, from Steve Jobs to Oprah Winfrey.

Part One of the book is devoted to the Big Five framework and the history behind it. Part Two delves deeper into the mechanisms of the human brain, from gene expression to critical periods in brain development. Barondes also posits the age-old question of nature versus nurture. Finally, Part Three paints a bigger picture, examining personality alongside related notions of character and identity. Barondes acknowledges that any moral assessments of personality would need to consider differing cultural contexts, but notes the work of Peterson and Seligman, who maintain that there are certain core virtues shared by all cultures worldwide. At the end, Barondes consolidates techniques and offers a step-by-step guide to personality analysis. *Making Sense of People* is not a textbook and does not read like one. However, one drawback is its short length; without risk of sounding pedantic, several chapters could be further elaborated.

As stated in its introduction, the main aim of the book is “augmenting your pleasure in understanding and dealing with people, whether you like them or not,” and with this book, readers are indeed one step closer to better understanding others.

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*Color Atlas of Dermatology.* By Martin Rocken, Martin Schaller, Elke Sattler, and Walter Bargdorf. New York: Thieme; 2012. 424 pp. US $44.99 Paperback. ISBN: 978-3131323415.

*Color Atlas of Dermatology* is a comprehensive reference book for the clinical presentation, medical reasoning, and treatment guidelines of the dermatology discipline. It is packed with sleek illustrations and superb images of representative lesions, with detailed but succinct text. It features more than 300 different dermatological conditions intuitively categorized based on etiology, including cutaneous manifestations of systematic diseases. Each condition or group of similar afflictions is presented in a self-contained spread with illustrations on the right and text explaining the pathophysiology, epidemiology, clinical pearls, differential diagnosis, treatment, and prognosis on the left. In addition, the book includes an extended introductory section covering the physiological, embryological, and immunological principles of skin structure and function as well as diagnostic and therapeutic practices in dermatology. Considering that all of this is contained in a pocket-sized paperback, the density of information is simply impressive.