

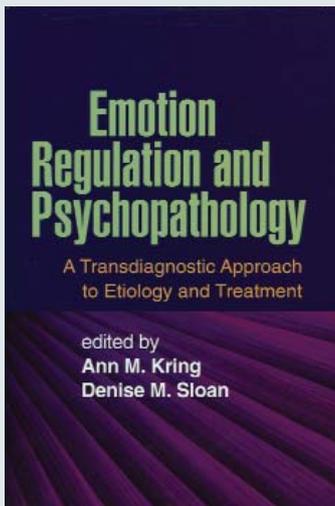
## Emotion regulation – problems of definition

A feeling of excitement when reading the title and editorial preface motivated me to write this review; however, by the end I was feeling deflated. The notion of a 'transdiagnostic' approach might have implied moving away from the current psychiatric nosology, so as to help people with their emotions directly. However, what the concept actually means in the various chapters is an overview, or generalisation, much like the approach of CBT itself, rather than a replacement of nosology.

Hence the hope for future treatments might lie in the idea that, rather than finding specific approaches to specific troublesome thoughts, it might be better to find a more systemic level of attack. Thus, it might be possible (e.g. see chapter 16) to make general alterations in a person's cognitive mechanisms of attention, irrespective of identified emotional disorder, or precise negative automatic thought.

In chapter 4, Bloch, Moran and Kring begin by stating:

Emotion regulation may be central to understanding the cause and pathogenesis of psychopathology. Although this study has burgeoned in recent years, the field continues to be plagued by definitional ambiguity surrounding emotion regulation. (p.88)



Emotion Regulation and Psychopathology: A Transdiagnostic Approach to Etiology and Treatment  
Ann M. Kring & Denise M. Sloan (Eds.)

Here is the problem in a nutshell, and the interested reader can pursue the history of how our understanding of emotion has been hollowed out, since science overtook religion as the major way of generating an understanding of ourselves (see Dixon, 2004). So the shortcomings of this text of 18 chapters lie less with the authors than with the subject of psychology itself — the problem is to regenerate a psychology that dares to go beyond its dominant paradigm, cognition.

One general and key example may suffice: there is little or no distinction made between motivating, or drive, aspects of emotion and the affective aspects. Behaviour, including that which may be pathological, is motivated, so we should ask whether disregulation, as happens in affective disorders, is mainly due to disregulation of arousal and motivation (drive) on the one hand, or to psychological mechanisms conventionally understood as underlying emotions and feelings on the other hand. Classical examples in psychology consist in studies of frustrative non-reward and conditioned fear in the 1960s and 1970s, which pre-date the full force of the cognitive revolution.

The final summary of chapter 4 concedes that 'the field still lacks clarity in the way that it defines and studies emotion regulation across mental disorders'. I suggest such a conclusion was inevitable and will remain so until we build a richer, functional psychology of the emotions and what it might mean to regulate an emotion, both successfully and unsuccessfully. In this text, there was a shared and implicit understanding amongst all the contributors that the purpose of regulation was to bring emotions back into control, so that

a person should no longer fall into one of the diagnostic subclasses of the category of affective disorders.

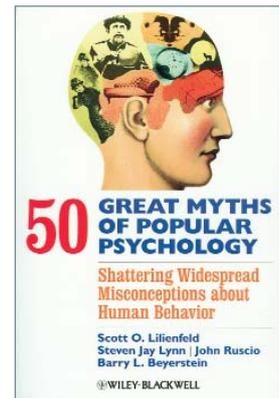
### Reference

Dixon, T. (2004). *From passions to emotions: The creation of a secular psychological category*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Guilford Press; 2010; Hb £37.00

Reviewed by Ralph Goldstein

who is a Chartered Psychologist in private practice in Bath



### Just common sense?

50 Great Myths of Popular Psychology: Shattering Widespread Misconceptions about Human Behavior  
Scott O. Lilienfeld, Steven Jay Lynn, John Ruscio & Barry L. Beyerstein

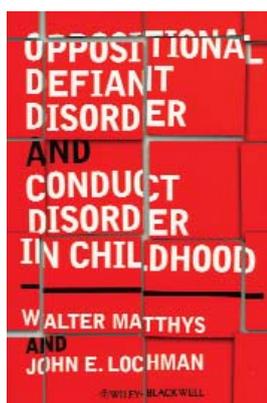
The term 'popular psychology' is often used to describe psychological concepts that appear oversimplified, out of date, unproven, misunderstood or misinterpreted. By definition therefore popular psychology is rife with myths such as 'Most people use only 10 per cent of their brain power', which is the common misconception that this book tackles first.

The origins of all 50 myths (a couple of which I, admittedly, believed myself) are explained with carefully presented and compelling evidence. The book is easily accessible to psychology novices as well as being well researched and informative enough to interest more experienced psychologists; according to the authors even psychology professors are duped by some of these myths.

The authors advocate the importance of acquiring evidence rather than blindly believing what you are told. It reminds us that psychology is not 'just common sense' and that with psychology, like an optical illusion, what you 'know' to be true is not always what you discover to be true.

Wiley-Blackwell; 2010;  
Pb £14.99

Reviewed by Caroline Flurey  
who is a PhD student at the University of the West of England



### Thorough discussion

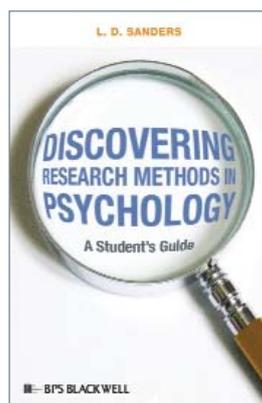
Oppositional Defiant Disorder and Conduct Disorder in Childhood  
Walter Matthys & John E. Lochman

This book provides a unique overview of the characteristics and interventions associated with the disruptive behaviour disorders, oppositional defiant disorder (ODD) and conduct disorder (CD). The authors appropriately address the relationship between ODD and CD and the frequently comorbid ADHD, which hitherto has been separated and their relationship largely ignored in the literature.

An early chapter is devoted to developmental perspectives and is appropriately followed up in relevant areas of the book. For example age-related assessment issues and targeted early prevention and later intervention programmes are addressed at relevant points. A broad scope and systematic approach to the literature is apparent and results in a thorough discussion of the available literature throughout.

The book is of particular relevance to clinicians and academics interested in discovering more about the aetiology, assessment and interventions for disruptive behaviour disorders but the clear language and use of point summaries at the end of each chapter ensure that this book would also serve as an excellent introductory text for students or clinical trainees new to the area.

| Wiley-Blackwell; 2010; Pb £29.99  
**Reviewed by Sinéad Rhodes**  
*who is a lecturer in psychology at the University of Strathclyde*



### A discovery for students

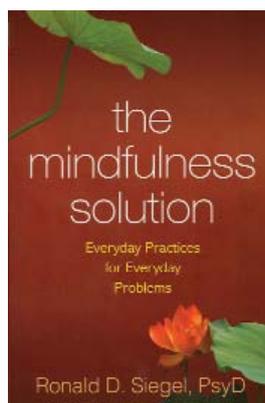
Discovering Research Methods in Psychology: A Student's Guide  
Lalage D. Sanders

Sifting through the multiple and diverse range of psychological research methods currently in use, this book neatly presents 20 different methods covering the three main types of research: observation, survey and experiment. Each method is explained through a systematic examination of its application to a contemporary piece of research.

The research examples come from a range of disciplines including clinical, health and social psychology, so the reader is treated to a variety of interesting studies along the way. What I particularly liked about this book was that it is clearly aims to help students in not only selecting the most appropriate method, but in really understanding why certain methods are used in particular circumstances. It also provides useful tips on writing research reports and the most up-to-date BPS ethical principles of working with human participants.

Throughout the book key terms are highlighted in bold and conveniently summarised in a comprehensive glossary at the end, which I found very useful. Lalage Sanders provides an engaging and supportive introduction to different research methods that is suitable for undergraduate study.

| BPS Blackwell; 2010; Pb £16.99  
**Reviewed by Robert Watts**  
*who is an assistant psychologist for NHS Fife*



### Full of useful tips

The Mindfulness Solution: Everyday Practices for Everyday Problems  
Ronald D. Siegel

This book joins the already crowded field of self-help mindfulness books, but does manage to offer some new ideas. The style is engaging and chatty, and the author recounts some surprisingly personal anecdotes. This makes the book easy to read if you can relax into it, although I wonder if someone reading it looking for the 'solution' that it promises might be tempted to skip ahead looking for the instructions.

Although it is peppered with written exercises, it doesn't have any kind of summaries to help the reader who is new to the concepts and needs reminding of what has been covered. When the practical advice does come, it is extremely thorough and clearly draws on the author's extensive personal and clinical experience of mindfulness practice.

It is full of useful tips, such as suggesting variations to particular practices to make them more calming or more energising. The author devotes chapters to discussions of different situations – depression, ageing, parenting, and so on – and introduces some specific practices that could be used. Each chapter ends with advice on seeking further help, and with a menu of suggested practices.

In my view, this thorough menu of practices for different circumstances is where the book will be most useful to clinicians; for clients, its highlight may be the accompanying website with audio versions of many of the practices, to overcome the classic problem of reading instructions that begin 'First close your eyes...'

| Guilford Press; 2010; Hb £24.00  
**Reviewed by Emma Taylor**  
*who is a clinical psychologist (currently on maternity leave)*

just in

Sample titles just in:

**The Psychology of Environmental Problems** Susan M. Koger and Deborah Du Nann Winter  
**Agnes's Jacket: A Psychologist's Search for the Meanings of Madness** Gail A. Hornstein  
**Memory, War and Trauma** Nigel C. Hunt  
**Counselling Ideologies: Queer Challenges to Heteronormativity** Lyndsey Moon (Ed.)  
**Forgetting** Sergio Della Salla (Ed.)  
**Teaching Psychology in Higher Education** Upton & Trapp (Eds.)

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