

How Social Science Can Help Us Make Better Choices

Optimal Rationality in Action

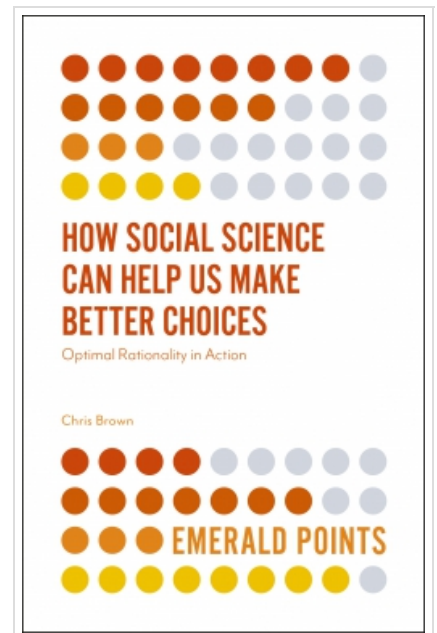
Emerald Points

Chris Brown

About the Book

In a world beset with problems, how can we encourage people to act differently? It seems almost daily that new studies emerge telling us how human action is causing planetary degradation, how changes to our diets could lead to us living longer healthier lives, or that financially we are in danger of returning to the debt related crises of the previous decade. At the same time how many of us adjust our behaviour in response to such information?

In this new book Professor Chris Brown explores people's reactions to Optimal Rational Positions: propositions that set out requirements for change. For example the need to reduce carbon emissions to minimize the impacts of climate change is an Optimal Rational Position; as is the need to engage in 30 minutes of exercise a day, to eat more healthily or to drink less alcohol. It seems obvious that we should want to pursue Optimal Rational Positions because they espouse the types of behaviours that will enable us to live healthier, happier or more productive lives; that can improve the lives and outcomes of others; or that can help us ensure social and environmental sustainability. Yet at the same time we often fail to change our behaviours to those which might be most optimal. Outlining an exciting and innovative route forward, and with real-life case studies from education, *How Social Science Can Help Us Make Better Choices* provides a new way to think about why people make the choices they make and, vitally, the role social science can play in response.



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