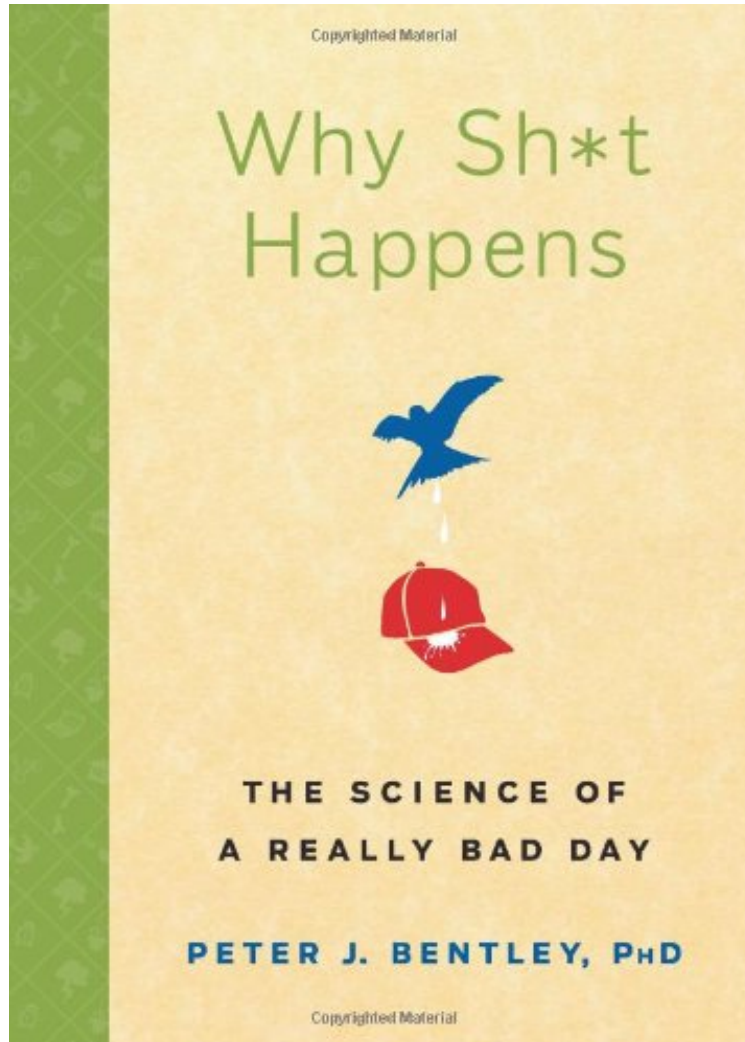


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Why Sh*t Happens: The Science of a Really Bad Day

Peter J. Bentley PhD

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Peter J. Bentley PhD : Why Sh*t Happens: The Science of a Really Bad Day before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Why Sh*t Happens: The Science of a Really Bad Day:

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Have you ever fallen victim to Murphy's law? Sometimes bad things just happen. In Why Sh*t Happens, esteemed British scientist Peter J. Bentley takes readers on an informative and amusing tour through the least lucky, most accident-prone day of their lives. From sleeping through the alarm clock and burning breakfast to getting caught in the

rain and navigating a slippery road, Bentley brilliantly explores disaster and mishap on a molecular level. In the process, he explains the science behind each accident, arming readers with the knowledge to understand what went wrong and how they can steer clear of future harm. Science is respected, trusted, and according to Bentley, largely misunderstood. *Why Sh*t Happens* urges readers to arm themselves with the power of science in order to better understand the world around them. When a car engine is damaged by the wrong gasoline or a computer is attacked by a virus, science is not to blame, but rather can provide an explanation of what happened. In a text that exudes charm and wit, Bentley reveals the causes behind a wide spectrum of mishaps, including why that razor nick won't stop bleeding, why metal sparks in the microwave, what makes chewing gum stick in hair, and why milk tastes sour when it goes bad. Sh*t will always happen, but now readers will know exactly why. Enter, if you dare, the world of everyday disasters.

From Publishers Weekly Everyone has one of those days when nothing seems to go right, but why? Unlike others who have broached the question, British computer science guru Bentley (*Digital Biology*) actually escorts readers through a really bad day, exploring the science behind all the little things that can go wrong: he looks at why you slept through the alarm (to explain the nature of sleep); why you then slipped on the spilled shampoo (a look at the nature of cleansers and lubricants); why that torrential downpour soaked you on your way to work (a look at the cycle of water in nature). This journey through the day, if sometimes strained (getting chewing gum stuck in one's hair on the bus), is a neat device for explaining the science behind everyday things such as how clothing is woven and why fabric is so strong (until it rips when you bend over) and how capsaicin in chilis fool the body and provoke a burning sensation. Each chapter ends with a brief tip on how to avoid future mishaps. Hopefully, readers and librarians won't be put off by the title and miss Bentley's reader-friendly explanations of the science behind everyday life. (Apr.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. About the Author PETER J. BENTLEY, PhD, is one of the most creative thinkers working in computer science today. A senior research fellow and professor at University College London, he is well known for his prolific research covering all aspects of evolutionary computation and digital biology. He is the author of the popular science books *Digital Biology* and *The Book of Numbers*, and is a regular contributor to BBC radio. From AudioFile The producers inserted an obnoxious noise to represent the second word of the title in this audiobook. Ultimately, the gimmicky title detracts from its accessible and engaging discussion of the science of everyday life, not just bad days. From the time people get up until they go to bed, the modern world is full of many scientific wonders about which most are ignorant. Bentley uses simple language and appropriate metaphors to reveal to listeners the scientific laws we all encounter routinely. Phil Gigante helps Bentley's prose with a deliberate delivery in the technical sections balanced by a more expressive tone in the less complex parts of the book. L.E. © AudioFile 2009, Portland, Maine