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By Jeffrey S Rosenthal

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From lotteries, opinion polls and insurance to worries about murder rates, natural disasters and terrorism, probability plays a major part in our everyday lives—a part that is frequently and needlessly misunderstood. Jeffrey S. Rosenthal, a math professor and improvisational comedian, comes to the rescue with this irreverent, bestselling exploration of the odds and oddities of randomness. Looking at such familiar topics as poker hands, e-mail spam, political elections and game shows, *Struck by Lightning* puts probability into perspective and has fun along the way.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Statistics and probability made fun, easy and useful for everyday life? Rosenthal does just that by explaining common uses of statistics (such as polling), demonstrating how probability can lead to better decision making (should you ask your cute co-worker out on a date?) and getting downright silly (chapter nine is a noir mystery). The author maintains that our fear of untoward events can be eased with the logic of probability and knowing how to evaluate what the real odds are of such an event occurring. A multitude of applications of "the Probability Perspective" are laid out: calculating average losses at gambling, deciding which coincidences are truly surprising, understanding studies that show that a new drug reduces fatalities from a given disease, playing silly party games and using uncertainty for one's own benefit.

Anecdotes—some personal stories, some universal situations—illustrate ways that the probability perspective can set one's mind at ease and help in navigating all aspects of life. The lighthearted presentation ensures that readers will not feel burdened by all the knowledge they are gaining and the concluding summary—disguised as a final exam—is sure to deliver an A to everyone, which is what Rosenthal deserves for this clever book. (*Mar.*)

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About the Author

JEFFREY S. ROSENTHAL is a professor in the Department of Statistics at the University of Toronto. At 24, he received his Ph.D. in mathematics from Harvard. He has written two textbooks on probability theory and is also an amateur musician and computer-game programmer. He lives in Toronto. Visit him online at www.struckbylightning.ca.

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