

## Review from Amazon.com

This is a short (306 page) and important book. The subtitle, *The Ignorance of Certainty and the Ghost of Montaigne*, tells you that it is about philosophy and decision making, not some arcane medical disorder. Premature factulation refers to making decisions on the basis of inadequate information or biases and the author provides many examples, using the field of drug interactions (in which he is a world expert) and political decisions (in which everyone feels he or she is an expert).

The book is divided into three main sections: *Certainty Traps*, in which the the major causes of bad decisions are discussed; *Weapons of Dogmatism*, in which we are told how those who would mislead us try to convince us of the correctness of their bad decisions; and *Remedies*, in which the author prescribes some of the ways in which we can reduce our own tendencies to premature factulation. The book benefits from frequent use of quotations from Montaigne, Bertrand Russell, Miguel de Unamuno, Eric Hoffer, and other writers. The style is light for a philosophy book, even "frolicksome" to use one of Montaigne's descriptions. It is, in fact, the antithesis of the pontifical tomes that I have thought of as typical philosophy texts, and succeeds in being both serious and amusing.

I highly recommend *Premature Factulation* for anyone interested in the ways in which humans make decisions, and especially for those interested in why political leaders so often make very bad decisions.

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