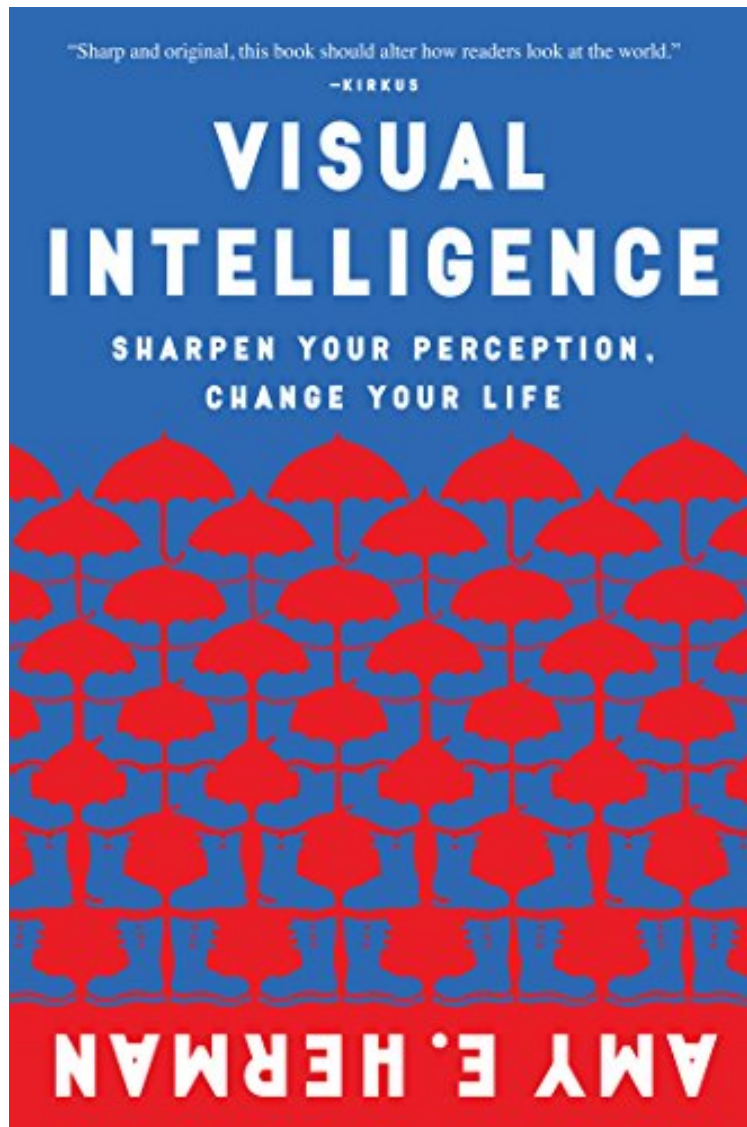


Visual Intelligence: Sharpen Your Perception, Change Your Life

Amy E. Herman

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Amy E. Herman : Visual Intelligence: Sharpen Your Perception, Change Your Life before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Visual Intelligence: Sharpen Your Perception, Change Your Life:

47 of 49 people found the following review helpful. Training Your Observation Through Looking At ArtBy Dr. Cathy GoodwinThe first time I visited the National Gallery in London, I went on a docent tour. The docents weren't volunteers: they were art students and teachers who really knew their stuff, and I believe they were paid. That's where I learned to look at art.The guides didn't try to cover the whole museum. They spent lots of time with a single piece of art. Many of them began with the question, "What do you see?"Since then I've been back many times and each time I

appreciated what the guides were doing. And when I go to a museum myself, I don't dash through in a frenzy. I've spent lots of time - not hours, but close - with objects that particularly engaged or puzzled me. And I do the same with historical and archeological museums. So I had some idea where Amy Herman was coming from. She takes it to another level and she asks different questions. An art guide will ask about the artist's intention. Why did the artist choose these colors? Where does our eye go? Why is this object in the center of the painting - does the artist believe it's important? Amy encourages us to look at details, to notice the traces of wine in a glass and remember how many objects were on a table. She encourages the reader to look - really look - at a work of art to increase your powers of observation. The idea is that after studying works of art, you'll take those powers of observation to real life. She cites dozens of examples of groups of people who increased their skills after taking her courses. As a reviewer with an advance reading copy, I had trouble going through the exercises. The art works will be in 4-color reproductive form in the final published work; reviewers get grainy black and white. So to test the exercises, I took out my trusty iPad and looked up the works online. Of course this action conflicted with Amy's directive to ignore the artist and title: I had to use those signifiers to locate the works online! Still, I found the exercises enjoyable. And I realized my observation skills could be sharpened with practice. What's not clear is how these exercises will translate into real life based on a book rather than a class. I've always liked the fact that art can be studied because it doesn't move or change; if you're analyzing music, you have to be able to catch what's playing in real time. In life, the things you observe tend to move and morph while you're watching. And it's difficult to look closely at a work in a book, as compared to a museum when you've got the original on the wall. It's also frustrating to be working through these exercises alone, as compared to a group. Often when I've looked at a painting (and I tend to spend more time with painting than sculpture) I come away with an awareness - a story line that makes sense. But I also feel like a mystery reader who's left with loose ends, because there's no way to verify my own observations. With the Internet, you can often find detailed commentaries on well-known artworks, but even then your questions don't always get answered. The author's writing style is engaging. I enjoyed reading the book and plan to dip into the exercises periodically. And, of course, I'm planning more museum visits to hone my skills even more.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Art History has to be boring and has nothing to do with anything in the real world - Right? --- WRONG! This is actually useful! By Glen Mills I saw Amy Herman speak at a law enforcement training conference and I have to admit that I may have rolled my eyes a bit when I first read the brief class description. I then recalled reading about this training program in New York City and how detectives had used it to sharpen their observation skills so I went in with an open mind hoping to learn something. This turned out to be a great presentation! I wished the program was longer at the time and that there was more material to reinforce the lessons learned. I thought, "Wouldn't it be great if there was a book?" ... well now there is! People expect police officers to have super-human powers of observation. They expect them to see cues and clues that others don't. Guess what? This is generally something that is only taught briefly at police academies and is usually a skill developed over time by being on the streets. In today's world we have also lost some people skills and behavioral observation skills because of technology. Some new officers don't need to figure out through observation that someone is potentially dangerous because they can run them instantly on a computer and get their entire criminal history. The problem with how officers typically learn observation skills is that it is just undirected learning that happens on its own and at its own pace. Often, the best lessons are learned by making mistakes. When the mistakes are minor and nobody gets hurt this is not a big deal. When mistakes result in a close call or a "near miss" nobody is hurt and lessons stick quite a bit more but occasionally the failure to notice a detail or pick up on a cue can have serious and deadly consequences. Besides going out on patrol and spending years with a veteran officer or detective how can we improve visual intelligence and sharpen perception? By coming up with some directed learning techniques that anyone can practice any time. A great way to start building skills is with works of art. Amy makes the point that artists put things into their work deliberately and by analyzing and deciphering these works of art we can safely build upon our powers of observation in a very controlled and deliberate manner. I would recommend this book and this training for anyone but especially for anyone who needs to excel in the area of perception and understanding what they are looking at. This is one of many books that would be useful to police officers, security guards, soldiers and investigators. If I were to create a reading list for new and experienced officers who want to sharpen their observation, perception and interpretation skills my list would include Visual Intelligence, Blink, The Gift of Fear and Left of Bang. Visual Intelligence is a deeper dive into analyzing and interpreting visual data than the other books I mentioned and the exercises are great for anyone looking to practice the concepts that they have learned. I also think that it is useful to learn these techniques for the purposes of police report writing. Many a great street cop has been frustrated in court because they weren't able to articulate the things they saw and what those things mean. There are techniques here that can help translate street experience into something that can be understood by a lay person or judge. One complaint I saw in other reviews was that the pictures are too small. I didn't have this issue but one can either magnify the images with a magnifying glass or their cell phone camera to zoom in on details or, like in the real world, accept that you may be further away than you like and work with what you can and can't see. Either way, it makes for good exercise. It is not enough to notice details, the real skill comes in how those fine details are interpreted and in the conclusions that can be drawn. Visual Intelligence is a great place to start building or enhancing these skills and a great way to

deliberately and systematically improve upon years of knowledge and experience gained on the streets.³⁹ of 41 people found the following review helpful. A great book for learning to observe your world more closely By Jeff Wignall This is a fascinating book and, being a photographer, a writer and a student of police procedures (for writing purposes), I found a lot of the information familiar, but still helpful. It was nice to see the whole idea of visual observation woven into a very coherent and fairly comprehensive narrative. The author has built a career on teaching a lot of the principles she outlines here at various seminars and, after many years teaching the topic of visual observation, gathered them into a book--a good idea. A lot of the information here applies very well to photography and photographers and, in fact, I think photographers would get a lot from reading this book. The concept of looking at familiar subjects to see things that are out-of-place, for example, is something that photographers rely on a lot to make interesting photographs from ordinary subjects. I once found a silk butterfly stapled to a telephone pole and photographed it and someone on Facebook told me that it had come off of some kind of wedding decoration and so I gather someone held their reception near where I found the butterfly. Looking at scenes to see what is missing or out of place is another example: police and detectives will all tell you that the shoes a person is wearing will tell you more about a person and if he belongs somewhere than anything he says. In the movie the Shawshank Redemption Tim Robbins character walks through a prison wearing a pair of brand new wingtip shoes and no one notices--because most people pay no attention to someone feet. A pickpocket is far more likely to smile and hold a door for you than an ordinary stranger. She also tells an interesting story about an African gentleman that starts a major international charity based on one simple observation: all American hotels toss out their soaps every day (millions and millions of them) even though the same guest will be coming back to the same room that night. He put that fact together with the fact that a lack of soap and sanitation was causing the spread of disease in Africa--a story in the book worth reading. (And it's that kind of observation that lets people create great business ideas that gets them on Shark Tank.) The author also brings up the topic of having priorities, which I think is a hugely important topic (for everyone). There is a great story that I won't spoil about how a charity and librarians badly prioritized funds and it cost them dearly. Getting back to photographers, she also talks extensively about looking at subjects from many different angles (visually and otherwise) and that's a huge part of creative photography. Rarely do photographers create great photos by looking at a subject just from the front of it. Photographers inherently roam around subjects from every possible angle: below, above, behind, on top of it. The only negative thing I have to say about the book is that it kind of left me wanting more information about how to overcome some of our visual blind spots. In particular I would have loved to have read more about how the police, the FBI and anti-terrorism agencies train to see beyond the obvious. I wanted to read more about specific training methods. This book provides a great overview of what we often miss, or what we should be looking for and that's good as far as it goes, but I wanted more in the way of solutions, of training exercises and a few more anecdotes about how this information is used to stop or solve crimes. Perhaps that would make a good follow-up book. And it's not really a criticism of this book, because this is a book aimed at a more general-audience and publishers sort of rein you in when you start to exceed your original idea. I got a pre-publication galley that had poor-quality black-and-white illustrations and that was another frustration--but the version being sold will be in full color. The illustrations *do* need to be larger though. I'd love to see the finished book so that I can see the photo examples in color. (Publishers are odd in that they often set the number of pages in a book before it's even written--and then they make you write to that length which often results in photos that are way too small.) Finally, I found a few things that are out of date and an editor should have caught. Wayne Dyer is talked about in the present tense and he's been dead now for almost eight months. The author did choose a good quote from him though. I know this book is aimed at adults primarily, but if I had teenagers I'd beg them to read this. I see so many naive kids walking around (buried in a cell phone screen) that see nothing of the world around them. For their own safety they should read this book and become more aware of their world. Overall, a great book, well worth a read (I'm going to read it a second time). The more you see when you look at the world around you the more you'll enjoy things, the more you'll be connected and the safer you'll be.

An engrossing guide to seeing and communicating more clearly from the groundbreaking course that helps FBI agents, cops, CEOs, ER docs, and others save money, reputations, and lives. How could looking at Monet's water lily paintings help save your company millions? How can checking out people's footwear foil a terrorist attack? How can your choice of adjective win an argument, calm your kid, or catch a thief? In her celebrated seminar, the Art of Perception, art historian Amy Herman has trained experts from many fields how to perceive and communicate better. By showing people how to look closely at images, she helps them hone their "visual intelligence"; a set of skills we all possess but few of us know how to use properly. She has spent more than a decade teaching doctors to observe patients instead of their charts, helping police officers separate facts from opinions when investigating a crime, and training professionals from the FBI, the State Department, Fortune 500 companies, and the military to recognize the most pertinent and useful information. Her lessons highlight far more than the physical objects you may be missing; they teach you how to recognize the talents, opportunities, and dangers that surround you every day. Whether you want to be more effective on the job, more empathetic toward your loved ones, or more alert to the trove of possibilities and threats all around us, this book will show you how to see

what matters most to you more clearly than ever before. Please note: this ebook contains full-color art reproductions and photographs, and color is at times essential to the observation and analysis skills discussed in the text. For the best reading experience, this ebook should be viewed on a color device.

In converting her lectures to this fascinating book, Hermann convincingly argues that closely analyzing works of art is an empowering exercise that translates to seeing the 'hidden' clues in many real-life scenarios. Perhaps most compelling are the author's descriptions of actual crime scenes that were only solved because someone noticed the right detail—a pair of inside-out pants, a whirling ceiling fan—when most people missed it. Yet despite her expert clientele, Hermann amply demonstrates that tapping into an inner Sherlock Holmes isn't only a skill for investigators and that heightened observation is critical to communicating effectively, empathizing with others, and making informed decisions. With practice, she argues, everyone has an innate "visual intelligence" waiting to be refined. Sharp and original, this book should alter how readers look at the world." —Kirkus
This fascinating and beautifully illustrated book will make you see the world more clearly than you ever have before. And that clarity will transform how you deal with the challenges and opportunities you face every day.
—Leonard Mlodinow, author of *Subliminal* and *The Drunkard's Walk*
Amy Herman has transformed the way I look at art -- and at the world. She shows us when to trust our instincts as observers and when to recognize that our instincts have gone astray. So much wisdom flows from those lessons, which are set forth clearly and convincingly in this book.
—Professor Ari L. Goldman, Columbia University, author of *The Search for God at Harvard* and *The Late Starters Orchestra*.
In her masterful new book, Amy Herman offers a compelling case for the life enhancing value—and central importance—of careful observation. Within these pages Herman teaches us how to be active and attentive observers, both within the confines of an art museum and well beyond. *Visual Intelligence* is a fascinating book, and an important one—and it is a great read.
—Daniel Weiss, President, The Metropolitan Museum of Art
Whether you are a seasoned criminal investigator or a medical professional, Amy Herman's *Visual Intelligence* is a must read. She engages us all to see more objectively, analyze intelligently and to articulate in greater detail. It will guide you to be a more critical observer of what is before you without making those inadvertent assumptions that may sabotage your work.
—John J Sprague, Inspector, Commanding Officer, Force Investigation Division, NYPD