



## The Hidden Half: The Unseen Forces That Influence Everything

**Michael Blastland**

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While it is politically inconvenient at times, science is certainly real and deserving of respect. Not to say that science doesn't deserve scrutiny. Like experts in other fields, scientists too often lack the humility to acknowledge the shortcomings and potential weaknesses of their findings, reasoning that to show uncertainty might lead to a loss of authority. No, sir: mistakes and half truths, not honesty, lead to loss of authority.

In *The Hidden Half: The Unseen Forces That Influence Everything*, Michael Blastland points to another factor that limits our ability to navigate an increasingly complicated world: our unwillingness to “face up more readily to the many mysteries and surprises that humble human understanding.” The problem, Blastland notes, is most acute when we seek to use the knowledge that we've attained in other places, expecting it to apply again, when it doesn't. Suddenly, we're forced to “concede that we didn't really know what was going on quite so well as we thought we did.” He continues, “there is, all too often, a hidden half of understanding that we are bound to miss and don't even like to acknowledge.” This unexplained or enigmatic variation can be looked at as a strong force of disorder, but it is usually dismissed as “noise” or “chance.” Blastland would like us to embrace “how ingeniously the world creates difference,” and to treat such abstractions as a potentially positive force in our understanding of science, economics, policymaking, and business. We'd be wise to listen.

MATT SUTHERLAND (September / October 2020)

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