



# Survival Guide for Outsiders: How to Protect Yourself from Politicians, Experts, and Other Insiders

*Sherman K Stein*

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## Survival Guide for Outsiders: How to Protect Yourself from Politicians, Experts, and Other Insiders

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Politicians, business leaders, and so-called experts and pundits are *Insiders* with stakes in public decisions. They use tricks to rig things in their favor. *Outsiders* have a stake in the action and a role to play but how can they cut through the flimflam to see what should be done? Sherman Stein's *Survival Guide for Outsiders* has the answer. Stein begins with *The Model*: how we interpret what is out there. He shows how *Insiders* shape our opinions by omission and misrepresentation. An argument that smells fishy is probably the *Dead Fish* you thought it was. Often forming *No Opinion* is the best course. Stein shows that in many situations there is no "best policy," but rather we have a choice between *Incomparables*. He shows how *Hidden Choices* often guide us. He shows the uses and misuses of *Number* to guide policy, with special attention to probabilities and the *GRIMP* (Gigantic Risk with Incredibly Minute Probability). All policy is influenced by experts, some of whom act as shamans, providing vision and assurance that things will work as planned, while others serve as pros – such as the engineers or doctors on whom we count for their knowledge and skills. Sherman Stein looks at the record of expert judgment and finds it often wrong. His case studies reinforce Philip Tetlock's *Expert Political Judgment: How Good Is It?* Summing up, Stein shows how *The Action Principle* drives us to do something when we would be better off not acting. He outlines our Limits, concluding on a note of *Good Cheer*.

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