

# The Value Of Nothing

Raj Patel



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#### The Value Of Nothing Raj Patel

As retirement funds shrink, savings disappear and houses are foreclosed on, now is a good time to ask a question for which every human civilization has had an answer: why do things cost what they do? *The Value of Nothing* tracks down the reasons through history, philosophy, neuroscience and sociology, showing why prices are always at odds with the true value of the things that matter most to us.

Damien Hirst's diamond-encrusted skull sold for a record \$100 million at auction. But if we account for the possibility that blood diamonds were used (as many suspect), the human cost is even greater. A Big Mac might seem like the best deal in these economic times, but after analyzing the energy to produce each burger, from field to Happy Meal, Patel argues the real price tag is a whopping \$200. But it is easiest to see the gap between price and value by looking at things that are so-called free. Examining everything from Google to TV, from love to thoughts, *The Value of Nothing* reveals the hidden social consequences of our global culture of "freedom."



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