

RECOMMENDED READING



BUSTAMANTE
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Think Like a Freak

A Useful Perspective for Legal Practice

by **Stephen J. Dubner** and **Steven Levitt**



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In the practice of law, we constantly face complex problems that require not only legal knowledge, but also creativity and strategic thinking. From negotiating a contract to resolving a dispute, our work consists of finding effective solutions where the answer is not always evident.

In this context, a book that I have found particularly useful is “Think Like a Freak” by Steven D. Levitt and Stephen J. Dubner, authors of *Freakonomics*. This book invites readers to think differently—to question assumptions, set aside biases, and learn to ask the right questions before rushing to find answers. Far from being an economics manual, it is a collection of practical lessons on how to approach difficult problems from unconventional angles.

Some of the most relevant lessons for our professional practice include:

1. **Learning to say “I don’t know.”** In law, we often feel the pressure to always have an answer, but admitting uncertainty can open space for rigorous research, creativity, and stronger solutions. In negotiation, acknowledging what we don’t yet know can even build trust and credibility.
2. **Redefining the problem before solving it.** Many times, the way we frame a question determines the possible solutions. As shown in the book’s examples—where changing the way a problem was posed led to more efficient strategies—in our legal practice this approach



To “think like a freak” means daring to step outside orthodoxy to find more creative and effective solutions for our clients.

can make the difference between deadlocked negotiation and an innovative resolution.

3. **Analyzing real incentives.** One of the book’s core ideas is that incentives drive human behavior. As lawyers, understanding what truly motivates the other side—beyond what is stated at the negotiation table—can be decisive for designing successful strategies.
4. **Valuing simplicity over unnecessary complexity.** In a legal environment where we often deal with complex structures, the authors’ invitation to “think like a child,” unafraid of simple questions, is a valuable reminder: what seems obvious is sometimes the most effective.

These lessons, applied to our profession, remind us that law is not limited to the application of rules; it demands critical thinking, flexibility, and the ability to rethink our approaches.

In an increasingly competitive and demanding legal world, adopting these ways of thinking can become a differentiating advantage—enhancing our advisory work, strengthening negotiations, and shaping more innovative legal strategies.

“Think Like a Freak” encourages us to reflect on how this change in mindset can enrich our lives and, indeed, our professional practice. Ultimately, thinking differently is not just a desirable skill—it is a necessity for those seeking to find different solutions.

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