



Shankar Vedantam, host of the **Hidden Brain** podcast, uses science and storytelling to reveal the unconscious patterns that drive human behavior and direct the course of our relationships.



Credit: Jamey Stillings

As a speaker at select gatherings, **Shankar Vedantam** offers unique insights into how our unconscious biases — what he calls the "hidden brain" — affect the decisions we make as individuals, groups and organizations. He bases these insights on scientific studies and empirical research, not on lay theories about the subconscious mind. Few speakers are able to do what Vedantam does — connect breakthroughs in social science research with engaging storytelling to address the interests of specific audiences.

Hidden Brain is currently among the top ten podcasts in the United States. It sees nearly ten million downloads every week, and the Hidden Brain radio show is featured on over 400 public radio stations. Some seven million people per week tune into NPR's Morning Edition, where Vedantam's stories are often broadcast.

Vedantam was previously a national correspondent at *The Washington Post*. Between 2007 and 2009, he authored the weekly Department of Human Behavior column. He is the winner of several journalism awards, and a 2009-2010 Nieman Fellow at Harvard University. The podcast and radio show build on ideas that Vedantam first explored in his 2010 book, *The Hidden Brain: How Our Unconscious Minds Elect Presidents, Control Markets, Wage Wars, and Save Our Lives*. Shankar's latest book, *Useful Delusions: The Power and Paradox of the Self-Deceiving Brain* was released in March 2021.

Hidden Brain has won numerous awards, including a Webby and a Kavli Science Journalism Award from the American Association for the Advancement of Science, an Edward R. Murrow Award for Excellence in Social Media, and a Salute to Excellence Award from the National Association of Black Journalists.

The New York Times describes the Hidden Brain podcast:

"Delivered with wit and lightness by Vedantam, 'Hidden Brain' is digestible without ever being dumbed down and embodies an open-mindedness that becomes infectious."

<https://mollieplotkingroup.com/speaker/shankar-vedantam>

TOPICS:

Vedantam tailors each presentation to the needs of his audience and is not limited to the topics listed below. He works with each client to hone the content to fit the needs of the group or event.

Recent keynote topics by Vedantam include:

- **UNCONSCIOUS BIAS:** Highly interactive presentation acclaimed in business, educational and legal settings, filled with new insights and practical, take-home suggestions on how to combat bias in the workplace
- **MAKING CHANGE:** How to use the "hidden brain" to drive innovation and change in organizations, communities and individuals
- **CREATIVITY:** How the brain can help us — or hinder us — in coming up with breakthroughs. How to build a "learning organization"
- **RISK:** Fear influences the behavior of investors, voters and parents. But hidden algorithms in the brain often cause our fears to be out of whack with reality. How to recalibrate your mind to focus on the things that can *really* do you harm
- **COMMUNICATION:** How do you get your ideas to stick?
- **THE GOOD LIFE:** The surprising science of altruism, ethics and philanthropy

Recent *Hidden Brain* Programs

Our Brands, Our Selves — All of us are surrounded by brands. Designer brands. Bargain-shopper brands. Brands for seemingly every demographic slice among us. But have you ever stopped to ask yourself how brands influence you? This week, we bring you our 2019 conversation with Americus Reed, who studies how companies create a worldview around the products they sell, and then get us to make those products a part of who we are.

The Secret Life of Secrets — It's human nature to hide parts of ourselves that produce shame or anxiety. We tend to skip over details that could change how others perceive us. But no matter how big or small our secret, it will often weigh on our minds, and not for the reasons you might expect. This week on Hidden Brain, we talk with psychologist Michael Slepian about the costs of secret keeping.

The Double Standard — It's easy to spot bias in other people, especially those with whom we disagree. But it's not so easy to recognize our own biases. Psychologist Emily Pronin says it's partly because of our brain architecture. This week on Hidden Brain, we explore what Pronin calls the introspection illusion.

A Creature of Habit — At the beginning of the year, many of us make resolutions for the months to come. We resolve to work out more, to procrastinate less, or to save more money. Though some people stick with these aspirations, many of us fall short. This week, psychologist Wendy Wood shares what researchers have found about how to build good habits — and break bad ones.



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