

# KIRKUS

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# REVIEWS

## TITLE INFORMATION

### **THE BREAKTHROUGH**

Hartman, Fredric C.

iUniverse (221 pp.)

\$28.95 hardcover, \$18.95 paperback

ISBN: 978-0595686971; September 14, 2012

## BOOK REVIEW

A perceptive, persuasive analysis of self-imposed suffering with a practical formula for relief and release.

To psychologist Hartman, “It’s all in your mind” is neither a dismissive statement nor cliché; it’s the truth. Hartman paints the mind—which he distinguishes from the physical organ that is the brain—as a vast repository of memory that controls, and usually sabotages, us. Instead of allowing us to accept each moment as it is, the mind plunges us into a storehouse of negative emotions that perpetuate unhappiness and pain, as well as a yearning for a perfect, unending and unachievable experience. The approach is similar to that of cognitive behavioral therapy. To underscore the universality of the sabotaging mind—and the urgent need to change its negative impact—Hartman addresses his exploration of the mind to all of human consciousness, which plays the nonspeaking role of a patient in a series of theatrical scenes. The set up is entertaining, thanks to whimsical stage directions and the engaging, nonpedantic manner of a caring, passionate therapist. Though the mind is the target, the discussion is neither dry nor cut off from the heart (or practicality). Abstractions give way to specific steps for breaking free of painful emotions, including pausing when the magnetism of memories kicks in. The guide also outlines seven specific attitudinal shifts that stop the cycle of both reliving memories and blaming other events or people for one’s internal state or mood. The payoff is the ability to embrace the simplicity of each moment as it comes and as it ultimately goes.

A rarity among self-help books that imparts pabulum-free concepts and methods with the power to change mindsets and lives.