face during the standing ovation that followed the announcement that the LHC had found his eponymous boson.

Perhaps the book's strongest facet is its triumphant championing of basic scientific research. Carroll's aim is broad and sweeping: to establish the central importance of science in humanity's wrestle with the question of existence. He terms the finding of the Higgs boson a "success for the human race" in answering our "restless desire to understand our world." The Particle at the End of the Universe illustrates that finding it "is its own reward," emphasizes the "universality of the scientific impulse," and waxes poetic in juxtaposing art and science. The vast behemoth of modern physics, the LHC, and the scintillating discovery of the Higgs boson are not only important because they illumine the "secrets of the Universe"—the entire effort tells us something profound about ourselves.

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NEUROSCIENCE

Where I end, where you begin

By Séamus A. Power

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icolas Epley begins Mindwise outside a courthouse in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Epley (a social psychologist at the University of Chicago) and his wife have just legally adopted two Ethiopian children. Epley is both perplexed and anxious before first meeting their biological father, who has agreed to have them adopted. What did this man think, believe, feel, and want for his children? This opening vignette is the first of many examples taken from the author's personal life, news headlines, and empirical science that drive this fast-moving and highly readable book. Epley's central concern is articulating the ways in which we both understand and, very often, misunderstand other people, even those close to us.

Epley delivers the good news that we all have a sixth sense, an ability to read minds. The bad news is that we are not very good at it. However, there is hope. In the book, Epley reveals how we fail to attribute minds to other people, such as the homeless or terrorists, when it is advantageous or even necessary to do so. Conversely, humans also anthropomorphize; we attribute minds to nonhumans such as gods, family pets, and technological objects like robots and even alarm clocks that force us out of bed in the morning. According to the author, these evolutionarily ingrained intuitions are only half of the reason why people converse with gods in the sky while ignoring homeless people who ask for spare change.

The book covers a variety of ways by which we try to read others' minds: We often project our own thoughts, wants, feelings, or beliefs onto the minds of others—assuming that they think what we think. We stereotype groups and consequently fail to see how individuals might be like us. We often incorrectly make inferences about others' mindsets based on our observations of their behaviors. (Most people who stayed in New Orleans despite the warnings about Hurricane Katrina were not irresponsible or stupid. They simply had no means to leave or nowhere else to go.)

These mind-reading tools allow us to make sense of complex social interactions to a degree better than chance. However, their faults indicate they could be improved, and Epley ends Mindwise by suggesting ways to do so. The secret lies in perspective getting rather than perspective taking. According to Epley, the latter, egocentric strategy at best reinforces—and at worst amplifies—stereotypical and incomplete understandings of others. He espouses the more direct strategy of opening the lines of communication and getting someone else's perspective as a potential solution to understanding the mind of the other. It worked for Kennedy and Khrushchev in resolving the Cuban Missile Crisis. It can also work for us in our relationships with colleagues, friends, family, and significant others.

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HISTORY OF CHEMISTRY

Elemental discoveries

By James McDonagh

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he periodic table has become a symbol of scientific understanding and the power of the scientific method. It is used by the popular media to signify scientific excellence, a logical progression to better understanding of the natural world. But how many people really appreciate the subtle complexities, trials, and tribulations that underlie this edi-