

# *Pick a number.*

Any number between 1 and 10.

*Do not think about it. Just pick the first one that comes to mind.*

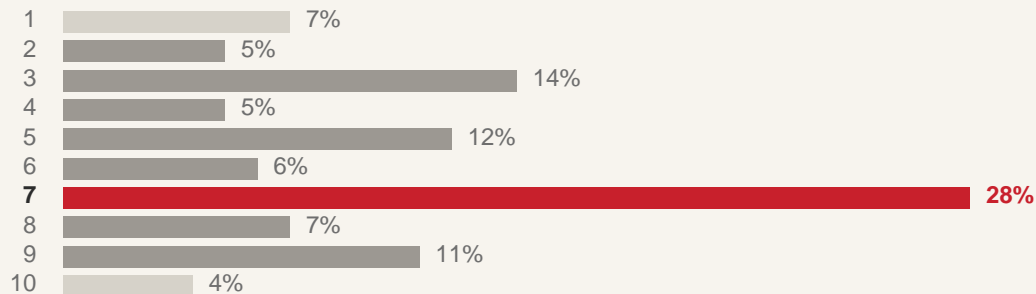
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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Circle one above.

*Now turn the page.*

# Statistically: 7.

Asked to pick a number 1–10, here is what people actually pick.\*



**1 and 10 combined: about 10% of picks. Pure chance would give them 20%.**

*The brain rejects the endpoints. They feel "too obvious" to be random.*

## Why?

### WHY 7 WINS

The brain filters 'random' as odd, asymmetric, mid-range. Seven hits all three. Add cultural priming — lucky 7 in gambling, fairy tales, religion — and the subconscious is on a small menu it does not consciously see.

### EVEN IF YOU DIDN'T PICK 7

Roughly 72% of people pick an odd number.\* After 7, the next most-picked are 3, 5, and 9. Your subconscious chose from a menu of about four numbers out of ten — without telling you the other six were never on the table.

*Documented neuroscience for forty years.\*\* By the time you wrote the number, the decision was already several seconds old.*

*"The magician doesn't do magic. He understands a system that looks like magic to everyone else in the room. So then — is thought random, or can it be engineered?"*

— Russ Cersosimo

*Author of Molecular Influence and Elemental Influence*

**Read the discipline at [cersosimoassociates.com/decision-science](http://cersosimoassociates.com/decision-science)**

### SOURCES

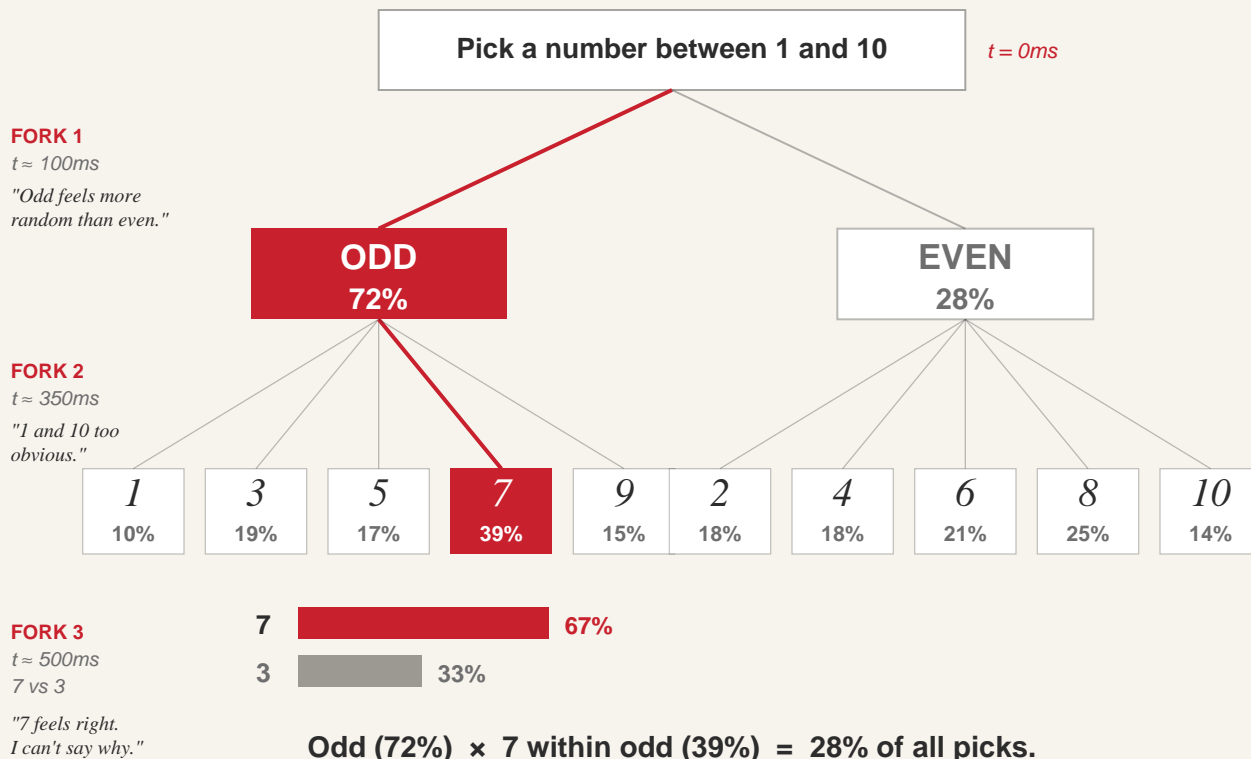
\* Kubovy & Psotka, Journal of Experimental Psychology (1976); subsequent replications confirm 7 dominates random-number selection 1–10. Odd-number bias and the 3/5/9 pattern come from the same family of studies on perceived randomness.

\*\* Libet, Brain (1983) — readiness potential precedes conscious decision by 350–550 ms. Soon, Brass, Heinze & Haynes, Nature Neuroscience (2008) — fMRI predicts simple decisions up to 7 seconds before conscious awareness.

THE FUNNEL

# How the brain got to 7 in half a second.

Three forks. ~500ms.\* Random became 28%.



*Pure chance was 10%. Three predictable forks did the rest — all in roughly half a second.\**

## You did not pick. You narrated.

The forks were already chosen. The inner voice was just the brain catching up to itself.

**Put yourself in the best statistical situation possible.**  
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**SOURCE**

\* Libet, Brain (1983) — readiness potential precedes conscious awareness of a decision by 350–550 ms. Soon, Brass, Heinze & Haynes, Nature Neuroscience (2008) extend the range to up to 7 seconds for binary deliberative choices. The cascade above is illustrative of cumulative pre-conscious processing time.