



Falling for Science: Objects in Mind

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edited and with an introduction by Sherry Turkle [as per Sherry]"This is a book about science, technology, and love," writes Sherry Turkle. In it, we learn how a love for science can start with a love for an object--a microscope, a modem, a mud pie, a pair of dice, a fishing rod. Objects fire imagination and set young people on a path to a career in science. In this collection, distinguished scientists, engineers, and designers as well as twenty-five years of MIT students describe how objects encountered in childhood became part of the fabric of their scientific selves. In two major essays that frame the collection, Turkle tells a story of inspiration and connection through objects that is often neglected in standard science education and in our preoccupation with the virtual. The senior scientists' essays trace the arc of a life: the gears of a toy car introduce the chain of cause and effect to artificial intelligence pioneer Seymour Papert; microscopes disclose the mystery of how things work to MIT President and neuroanatomist Susan Hockfield; architect Moshe Safdie describes how his boyhood fascination with steps, terraces, and the wax hexagons of beehives lead him to a life immersed in the complexities of design. The student essays tell stories that echo these narratives: plastic eggs in an Easter basket reveal the power of centripetal force; experiments with baking illuminate the geology of planets; LEGO bricks model worlds, carefully engineered and colonized. All of these voices--students and mentors--testify to the power of objects to awaken and inform young scientific minds. This is a truth that is simple, intuitive, and easily overlooked. Sherry Turkle is Abby Rockefeller Mauzé Professor of the Social Studies of Science and Technology at MIT and Director of the MIT Initiative on Technology and Self. She is the author of *The Second Self: Computers and the Human Spirit* (Twentieth Anniversary Edition, MIT Press, 2005) and *Life on the Screen: Identity in the Age of the Internet* and the editor of *Evocative Objects: Things We Think With* (MIT Press, 2007).

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Anna Raynor:

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