

When writing his novella *The Gambler* in 1866, Fyodor Dostoevsky remained true to the old adage write what you know. Critically acclaimed for its insight into the mind of a gambling addict, the book offers a fascinating glimpse into Dostoevsky's personal struggle with gambling. The manuscript, in fact, was written to pay off a debt he owed to his publisher. A decade of Dostoevsky's adult life was consumed by gambling, yet the reason behind his startling dependency has remained largely unknown. In comparing Dostoevsky's life with the experience of modern-day gamblers, documented through in-depth interviews and written biographical accounts, a team of leading sociologists have uncovered the Dostoevsky Effect. This model proposes that social factors-especially childhood trauma and a poor ability to deal with adult stress-are often the cause of gambling addiction rather than, as some have argued, an inherited predisposition to wager. The Dostoevsky Effect offers new insight into Dostoevsky's life and work, and using contemporary field research draws surprising connections to today's gamblers, blurring the often elusive line between fact and fiction.

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