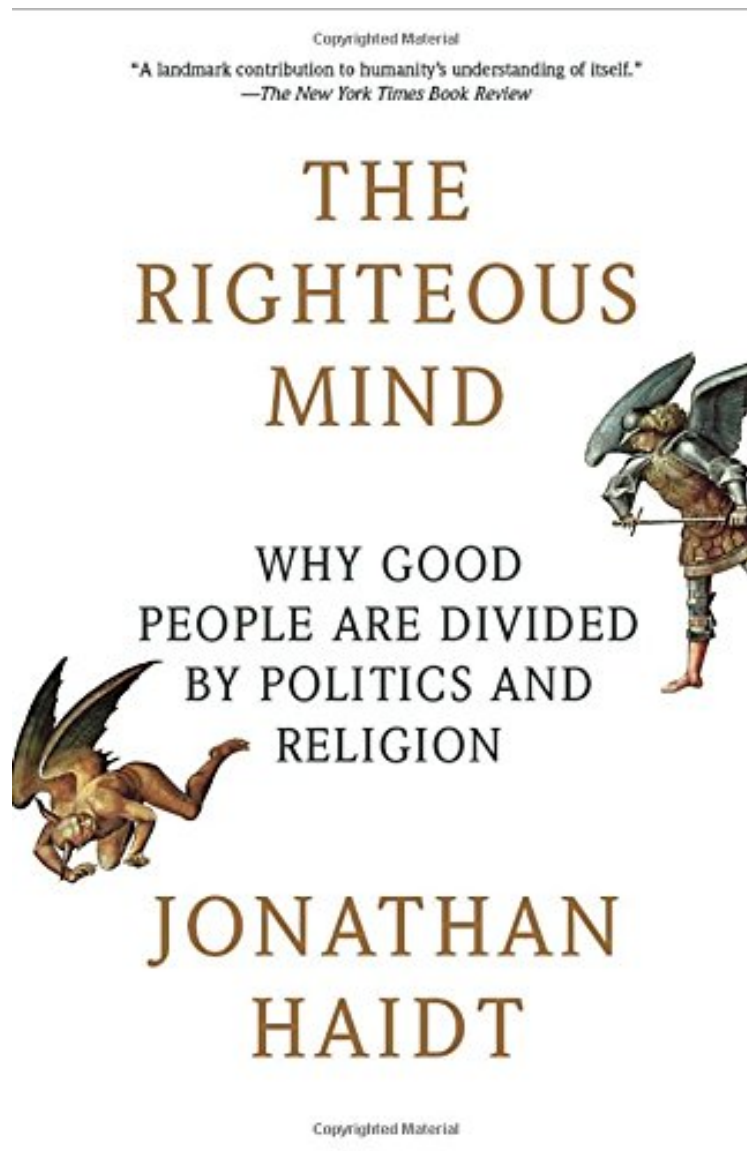


(Free pdf) The Righteous Mind: Why Good People Are Divided by Politics and Religion

The Righteous Mind: Why Good People Are Divided by Politics and Religion

Jonathan Haidt

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#1273 in Books Jonathan Haidt 2013-02-12 2013-02-12 Original language: English PDF # 1 7.96 x 1.12 x 5.18l, 1.07 #File Name: 0307455777528 pages The Righteous Mind Why Good People Are Divided by Politics and Religion | File size: 36.Mb

Jonathan Haidt : The Righteous Mind: Why Good People Are Divided by Politics and Religion before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Righteous Mind: Why Good People Are Divided by Politics and Religion:

235 of 244 people found the following review helpful. This Book Changed my Life By Brandon I've read a lot of books in my life. Psychology, Poetry, Biology, Business Theory, Self-Help, Nutrition, Economics and so many other subjects are represented in my home library. The Righteous Mind is hands-down the most important book I've ever consumed. Haidt's understanding of human morality and the science of communication and decision making are weaved together into an approachable, beautiful and potentially life changing symphony. Enough has been said about why you should read this book so I want to use the rest of this review to tell you exactly what I experienced after finishing this book and how it became "The most important thing I've ever read". I have struggled for years to communicate with some of my friends and family. So many words were wasted discussing politics, religion and conspiracy theories and all we ever accomplished was self-fulfillment. We never had resolution and we never succeeded in convincing the other side. I'm a person who considers myself well-read and a champion for pragmatism and logic. You can probably imagine how frustrated I felt when I was consistently unable to win arguments about out-there, government's coming for us-so buy some guns, conspiracy discussions. Something had to give, so I went searching and ended up on this book. I read it, digested it and decided to try and apply the principles to my communications. I was determined to "align with their elephant" first so I could then shift their mindset to my point of view. Let's be honest: I was just trying to manipulate other people into seeing things my way. Well, something incredible and completely unintentional happened: I realized I was wrong, a lot. One of the foundational pieces discussed in the book is the fact that we, as humans, make decisions in the parts of our brain that aren't subject to critical thinking. If you want to sway someone's opinion, Haidt suggests, you must first appeal to their elephant (the emotional part of their brain or "why they feel the way they do"). In the effort to start practicing this: I dedicated myself to asking "why do they believe this way?" first and only made suggestions after I felt that I could articulate what the other person was "feeling" about the subject. A crazy thing happened: many times I would find myself changing my mind about a subject mid conversation. As it turns out, other people aren't quite as crazy as I thought, they just have different experiences than I do. After I spent some time training my brain, I started to converse this way without any conscious effort. I actually seem to have re-wired my brain. The implication of this can't be overstated. I now see the world in completely different ways and I feel that I can actually empathize for the first time in my life. I only wish everyone could read this book, understand their natural decision making process and be aware of what's happening to them when they have disagreements or strong opinions on a subject. You need to read this book. Everyone does. To the author: Thank you, Jonathan, for giving your life to understanding us a little better and for taking the time to write it all down and pass these lessons onto the rest of us. 66 of 67 people found the following review helpful. Cognitive Dissonance By Avril James This book was stressful for me to read because I really wanted to keep not liking the people I don't agree with. Challenge you to consider that those who do not agree with are not necessarily the devil. I will continue to refer to this in the future in my work as a therapist and minister. 69 of 73 people found the following review helpful. Made Me Re-think By Tony B. Excellent read. Made me think about a lot of cultural and social factors I would never have considered. I lean toward "liberal" ideologies, but this book made me realize the value of a more diverse perspective for the survival of the human race and how my anti-religious viewpoints had incorporated "sacred" elements of their own. Subsequently, a few of my liberal views which I would not allow to be challenged in my own mind, I am now open to considering broader implications. In summary, this book moved a few of my black and white viewpoints back into the gray and was unexpectedly life changing for me.

This well-researched examination of human moral impulses will appeal to liberals and conservatives alike following the 2016 presidential campaign and election. As America descends deeper into polarization and paralysis, social psychologist Jonathan Haidt has done the seemingly impossible—challenged conventional thinking about morality, politics, and religion in a way that speaks to everyone on the political spectrum. Drawing on his twenty five years of groundbreaking research on moral psychology, he shows how moral judgments arise not from reason but from gut feelings. He shows why liberals, conservatives, and libertarians have such different intuitions about right and wrong, and he shows why each side is actually right about many of its central concerns. In this subtle yet accessible book, Haidt gives you the key to understanding the miracle of human cooperation, as well as the curse of our eternal divisions and conflicts. If you're ready to trade in anger for understanding, read *The Righteous Mind*.

Splendidly written, sophisticated and stimulating. It may well change how you think and talk about politics, religion and human nature. NPR's landmark contribution to humanity's understanding of itself. . . . Haidt is looking for more than victory. He's looking for wisdom. That's what makes *The Righteous Mind* well worth reading. The New York Times Book Review An eye-opening and deceptively ambitious best seller . . . undoubtedly one of the most talked-about books of the year. The Wall Street Journal Ingenious prose. . . . Beautifully written, Haidt's book shines a new and creative light on moral psychology and presents a provocative message. Science A remarkable and original synthesis of social psychology, political analysis, and moral reasoning. Edward O. Wilson, University Research Professor Emeritus, Harvard University Highly readable, highly insightful. . . . The principal posture in which one envisions him is that of a scrappy, voluble, discerning patriot standing between the warring factions in American politics urging each

to see the others viewpoint, to stop demonizing, bashing, clobbering. . . . Haidts real contribution, in my judgment, is inviting us all to sit at the table. Washington TimesExcellent. . . . An impressive book that should be read by anyone who has the slightest interest in how political opinions are reached. The Daily BeastHaidts work feels particularly relevant now. . . . Haidts perspective can help us better understand our own political and religious leanings. San Francisco ChronicleJonathan Haidt is one of smartest and most creative psychologists alive, and his newest book, *The Righteous Mind* is a tour de force a brave, brilliant and eloquent exploration of the most important issues of our time. It will challenge the way you think about liberals and conservatives, atheism and religion, good and evil. This is the book that everyone is going to be talking about. Paul Bloom, Brooks and Suzanne Ragen Professor of Psychology, Yale UniversityHaidts research has revolutionized the field of moral psychology. This elegantly written book has far-reaching implications for anyone interested in anthropology, politics, religion, or the many controversies that divide modern societies. If you want to know why you hold your moral beliefs and why many people disagree with you, read this book.. Simon Baron-Cohen, Cambridge University, Author of *Zero Degrees of Empathy* and *The Science of Evil*A much-needed voice of moral sanity. Booklist[Haidts] framework for the different moral universes of liberals and conservatives struck me as a brilliant breakthrough . . . *The Righteous Mind* provides an invaluable road map. Miller-McCune.comA well-informed tour of contemporary moral psychologyA cogent rendering of a moral universe of fertile complexity and latent flexibility. Kirkus sHaidts a good thing. The AtlanticJonathan Haidts absorbing*The Righteous Mind* should come with a warning label: contents highly addictive. Written in a breezy and accessible style but informed by an impressively wide range of cutting-edge research in the social sciences, evolutionary biology and psychology,*The Righteous Mind* is about as interesting a book as youll pick up this year. The Globe and MailWhat makes [*The Righteous Mind*] so compelling is the fluid combination of erudition and entertainment, and the authors obvious pleasure in challenging conventional wisdom. . . . [Haidts] core point is simple and well-made: our morality, much of it wired into brains from birth, at the same time binds us together and blinds us to different configurations of morality. The Guardian (London)An important and timely book. . . . His ideas are controversial but they make you think. Bill Moyers, Moyers Company*The Righteous Mind* refutes the New Atheists and shows that religion is a central part of our moral heritage. Haidts brilliant synthesis shows that Christians have nothing to fear and much to gain from the evolutionary paradigm. Michael Dowd, author of *Thank God for Evolution**The Righteous Mind* is an intellectual tour de force that brings Darwinian theorizing to the practical realm of everyday politics. The book is beautifully written, and it is truly unusual to encounter a book that makes a major theoretical contribution yet encourages one to turn its pages enthusiastically. Christopher Boehm, Professor of Anthropology, University of Southern California, author of *Moral Origins*As a fellow who listens to heated political debate daily, I was fascinated, enlightened, and even amused by Haidts brilliant insights. This penetrating yet accessible book will help readers understand the righteous minds that inhabit politics. Larry Sabato, University of Virginia, author of *A More Perfect Constitution*A profound discussion of the diverse psychological roots of morality and their role in producing political conflicts. Its not too much to hope that the book will help to reduce those conflicts. Richard E. Nisbett, University of Michigan, Author of *The Geography of Thought*About the AuthorJonathan Haidtis the Thomas Cooley Professor of Ethical Leadership at New York Universitys Stern School of Business. He obtained his Ph.D. in social psychology from the University of Pennsylvania in 1992, and then taught at the University of Virginia for 16 years. He is the author of *The Happiness Hypothesis: Finding Modern Truth in Ancient Wisdom*, and the co-editor of *Flourishing: Positive Psychology and the Life Well-Lived*. He lives in New York City.Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved.Introduction Can we all get along? That appeal was made famous on May 1, 1992, by Rodney King, a black man who had been beaten nearly to death by four Los Angeles police officers a year earlier. The entire nation had seen a videotape of the beating, so when a jury failed to convict the officers, their acquittal triggered widespread outrage and six days of rioting in Los Angeles. Fifty-three people were killed and more than seven thousand buildings were torched. Much of the mayhem was carried live; news cameras tracked the action from helicopters circling overhead. After a particularly horrific act of violence against a white truck driver, King was moved to make his appeal for peace. Kings appeal is now so overused that it has become cultural kitsch, a catchphrase I more often said for laughs than as a serious plea for mutual understanding. I therefore hesitated to use Kings words as the opening line of this book, but I decided to go ahead, for two reasons. The first is because most Americans nowadays are asking Kings question not about race relations but about political relations and the collapse of cooperation across party lines. Many Americans feel as though the nightly news from Washington is being sent to us from helicopters circling over the city, delivering dispatches from the war zone. The second reason I decided to open this book with an overused phrase is because King followed it up with something lovely, something rarely quoted. As he stumbled through his television interview, fighting back tears and often repeating himself, he found these words: Please, we can get along here. We all can get along. I mean, were all stuck here for a while. Lets try to work it out. This book is about why its so hard for us to get along. We are indeed all stuck here for a while, so lets at least do what we can to understand why we are so easily divided into hostile groups, each one certain of its righteousness. ###People who devote their lives to studying something often come to believe that the object of their fascination is the key to understanding everything. Books have been published in recent years on the transformative role in human history played by cooking, mothering, war . . . even

salt. This is one of those books. I study moral psychology, and I'm going to make the case that morality is the extraordinary human capacity that made civilization possible. I don't mean to imply that cooking, mothering, war, and salt were not also necessary, but in this book I'm going to take you on a tour of human nature and history from the perspective of moral psychology. By the end of the tour, I hope to have given you a new way to think about two of the most important, vexing, and divisive topics in human life: politics and religion. Etiquette books tell us not to discuss these topics in polite company, but I say go ahead. Politics and religion are both expressions of our underlying moral psychology, and an understanding of that psychology can help to bring people together. My goal in this book is to drain some of the heat, anger, and divisiveness out of these topics and replace them with awe, wonder, and curiosity. We are downright lucky that we evolved this complex moral psychology that allowed our species to burst out of the forests and savannas and into the delights, comforts, and extraordinary peacefulness of modern societies in just a few thousand years. My hope is that this book will make conversations about morality, politics, and religion more common, more civil, and more fun, even in mixed company. My hope is that it will help us to get along.

BORN TO BE RIGHTEOUS could have titled this book *The Moral Mind* to convey the sense that the human mind is designed to do morality, just as it's designed to do language, sexuality, music, and many other things described in popular books reporting the latest scientific findings. But I chose the title *The Righteous Mind* to convey the sense that human nature is not just intrinsically moral, it's also intrinsically moralistic, critical, and judgmental. The word righteous comes from the old Norse word *rettviss* and the old English word *rihtwis*, both of which mean just, upright, virtuous. This meaning has been carried into the modern English words *righteous* and *righteousness*, although nowadays those words have strong religious connotations because they are usually used to translate the Hebrew word *tzedek*. *Tzedek* is a common word in the Hebrew Bible, often used to describe people who act in accordance with God's wishes, but it is also an attribute of God and of God's judgment of people (which is often harsh but always thought to be just). The linkage of righteousness and judgmentalism is captured in some modern definitions of *righteous*, such as arising from an outraged sense of justice, morality, or fair play. The link also appears in the term *self-righteous*, which means convinced of one's own righteousness, especially in contrast with the actions and beliefs of others; narrowly moralistic and intolerant. I want to show you that an obsession with righteousness (leading inevitably to *self-righteousness*) is the normal human condition. It is a feature of our evolutionary design, not a bug or error that crept into minds that would otherwise be objective and rational. Our righteous minds made it possible for human beings but no other animals to produce large cooperative groups, tribes, and nations without the glue of kinship. But at the same time, our righteous minds guarantee that our cooperative groups will always be cursed by moralistic strife. Some degree of conflict among groups may even be necessary for the health and development of any society. When I was a teenager I wished for world peace, but now I yearn for a world in which competing ideologies are kept in balance, systems of accountability keep us all from getting away with too much, and fewer people believe that righteous ends justify violent means. Not a very romantic wish, but one that we might actually achieve.

WHAT LIES AHEAD This book has three parts, which you can think of as three separate books except that each one depends on the one before it. Each part presents one major principle of moral psychology. Part I is about the first principle: Intuitions come first, strategic reasoning second. Moral intuitions arise automatically and almost instantaneously, long before moral reasoning has a chance to get started, and those first intuitions tend to drive our later reasoning. If you think that moral reasoning is something we do to figure out the truth, you'll be constantly frustrated by how foolish, biased, and illogical people become when they disagree with you. But if you think about moral reasoning as a skill we humans evolved to further our social agenda to justify our own actions and to defend the teams we belong to then things will make a lot more sense. Keep your eye on the intuitions, and don't take people's moral arguments at face value. They're mostly post hoc constructions made up on the fly, crafted to advance one or more strategic objectives. The central metaphor of these four chapters is that the mind is divided, like a rider on an elephant, and the rider's job is to serve the elephant. The rider is our conscious reasoning—the stream of words and images of which we are fully aware. The elephant is the other 99 percent of mental processes—the ones that occur outside of awareness but that actually govern most of our behavior. I developed this metaphor in my last book, *The Happiness Hypothesis*, where I described how the rider and elephant work together, sometimes poorly, as we stumble through life in search of meaning and connection. In this book I'll use the metaphor to solve puzzles such as why it seems like everyone (else) is a hypocrite and why political partisans are so willing to believe outrageous lies and conspiracy theories. I'll also use the metaphor to show you how you can better persuade people who seem unresponsive to reason. Part II is about the second principle of moral psychology, which is that there's more to morality than harm and fairness. The central metaphor of these four chapters is that the righteous mind is like a tongue with six taste receptors. Secular Western moralities are like cuisines that try to activate just one or two of these receptors—either concerns about harm and suffering, or concerns about fairness and injustice. But people have so many other powerful moral intuitions, such as those related to liberty, loyalty, authority, and sanctity. I'll explain where these six taste receptors come from, how they form the basis of the world's many moral cuisines, and why politicians on the right have a built-in advantage when it comes to cooking meals that voters like. Part III is about the third principle: Morality binds and blinds. The central metaphor of these four chapters is that human beings are 90 percent chimp and 10 percent bee. Human nature was produced by natural selection working at two levels

simultaneously. Individuals compete with individuals within every group, and we are the descendants of primates who excelled at that competition. This gives us the ugly side of our nature, the one that is usually featured in books about our evolutionary origins. We are indeed selfish hypocrites so skilled at putting on a show of virtue that we fool even ourselves. But human nature was also shaped as groups competed with other groups. As Darwin said long ago, the most cohesive and cooperative groups generally beat the groups of selfish individualists. Darwin's ideas about group selection fell out of favor in the 1960s, but recent discoveries are putting his ideas back into play, and the implications are profound. We are not always selfish hypocrites. We also have the ability, under special circumstances, to shut down our petty selves and become like cells in a larger body, or like bees in a hive, working for the good of the group. These experiences are often among the most cherished of our lives, although our hiveishness can blind us to other moral concerns. Our bee-like nature facilitates altruism, heroism, war, and genocide. Once you see our righteous minds as primate minds with a hiveish overlay, you get a whole new perspective on morality, politics, and religion. I'll show that our higher nature allows us to be profoundly altruistic, but that altruism is mostly aimed at members of our own groups. I'll show that religion is (probably) an evolutionary adaptation for binding groups together and helping them to create communities with a shared morality. It is not a virus or a parasite, as some scientists (the New Atheists) have argued in recent years. And I'll use this perspective to explain why some people are conservative, others are liberal (or progressive), and still others become libertarians. People bind themselves into political teams that share moral narratives. Once they accept a particular narrative, they become blind to alternative moral worlds. (A note on terminology: In the United States, the word liberal refers to progressive or left-wing politics, and I will use the word in this sense. But in Europe and elsewhere, the word liberal is truer to its original meaning valuing liberty above all else, including in economic activities. When Europeans use the word liberal, they often mean something more like the American term libertarian, which cannot be placed easily on the left-right spectrum. Readers from outside the United States may want to swap in the words progressive or left-wing whenever I say liberal.) In the coming chapters I'll draw on the latest research in neuroscience, genetics, social psychology, and evolutionary modeling, but the take-home message of the book is ancient. It is the realization that we are all self-righteous hypocrites: Why do you see the speck in your neighbor's eye, but do not notice the log in your own eye? . . . You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your neighbor's eye. (Matthew 7:35) Enlightenment (or wisdom, if you prefer) requires us all to take the logs out of our own eyes and then escape from our ceaseless, petty, and divisive moralism. As the eighth-century Chinese Zen master Sen-tsan wrote: The Perfect Way is only difficult for those who pick and choose; Do not like, do not dislike; all will then be clear. Make a hairbreadth difference, and Heaven and Earth are set apart; If you want the truth to stand clear before you, never be for or against. The struggle between for and against is the mind's worst disease. I'm not saying we should live our lives like Sen-tsan. In fact, I believe that a world without moralism, gossip, and judgment would quickly decay into chaos. But if we want to understand ourselves, our divisions, our limits, and our potentials, we need to step back, drop the moralism, apply some moral psychology, and analyze the game we're all playing. Let us now examine the psychology of this struggle between for and against. It is a struggle that plays out in each of our righteous minds, and among all of our righteous groups.