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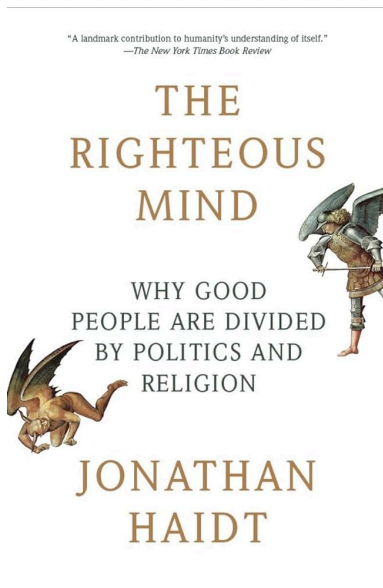
JONATHAN HAIDT

THE RIGHTEOUS MIND

Disagree Better Book Club
Discussion Guide

About This Selection

Jonathan Haidt's *The Righteous Mind: Why Good People Are Divided by Politics and Religion* was the Disagree Better Book Club selection for March 2024. Haidt, a social psychologist, is a world-renown specialist of moral psychology and moral emotions.



Discussion Questions

- In *The Righteous Mind*, Jonathan Haidt introduces the metaphor of the elephant and the rider to explain human moral reasoning. Do you find this metaphor helpful in understanding how humans make moral decisions? Why or why not?
- Haidt discusses the importance of intuition in moral judgment, suggesting that reason often serves to justify preexisting intuitions rather than guiding them. How does this perspective challenge traditional views of moral reasoning? Does Haidt make his point convincingly?
- Haidt identifies six moral foundations: 1) care/harm, 2) fairness/cheating, 3) loyalty/betrayal, 4) authority/subversion, 5) sanctity/degradation, and 6) liberty/oppression. Do you agree with these foundational principles, or do you believe there are others that should be included?

Discussion Questions Continued

- Haidt argues that liberals and conservatives prioritize these moral foundations differently, leading to different political and moral beliefs. How might understanding these differences help bridge ideological divides?
- Haidt suggests that our moral instincts evolved to bind individuals into cohesive groups. How do these instincts influence modern-day politics and social dynamics?
- Haidt explores the concept of moral dumbfounding, where individuals maintain moral judgments despite being unable to articulate reasons for them. Have you ever experienced moral dumbfounding? How might it affect interpersonal relationships and political discourse?
- Haidt discusses the role of disgust in moral judgments, particularly in relation to the sanctity/degradation foundation. How might disgust shape our moral beliefs and behaviors, and how can we navigate its influence in a diverse society?
- Haidt argues that moral diversity is essential for societal well-being, comparing moral communities to ecosystems. How can we foster a greater appreciation for moral diversity while maintaining societal cohesion?
- Haidt discusses the concept of "groupishness," where individuals are motivated to cooperate with their in-group and compete with out-groups. How does groupishness influence intergroup relations, and how can we mitigate its negative effects?
- Haidt explores the psychological underpinnings of political polarization, suggesting that it is driven by moral foundations and group identity. How might we overcome polarization by appealing to shared moral values?
- Haidt discusses the concept of moral capital, which refers to the trust and goodwill that develop within communities with high levels of moral behavior. How can individuals and societies cultivate moral capital, and what are the benefits of doing so?
- Haidt argues that religion plays a crucial role in binding communities together through shared moral practices and rituals. How might secular societies replicate the social functions of religion to foster moral community and cohesion?
- Haidt discusses the concept of moral elevation, where witnessing acts of moral goodness inspires positive emotions and motivates prosocial behavior. How can we cultivate moral elevation in ourselves and others to promote a more compassionate society?
- Haidt suggests that moral reasoning is often motivated by social considerations rather than rational analysis. How might this perspective challenge traditional views of morality and ethics?
- Haidt argues that moral diversity is essential for societal resilience and adaptability, comparing it to biodiversity in ecosystems. How might we foster greater acceptance of moral diversity while maintaining social cohesion and stability?