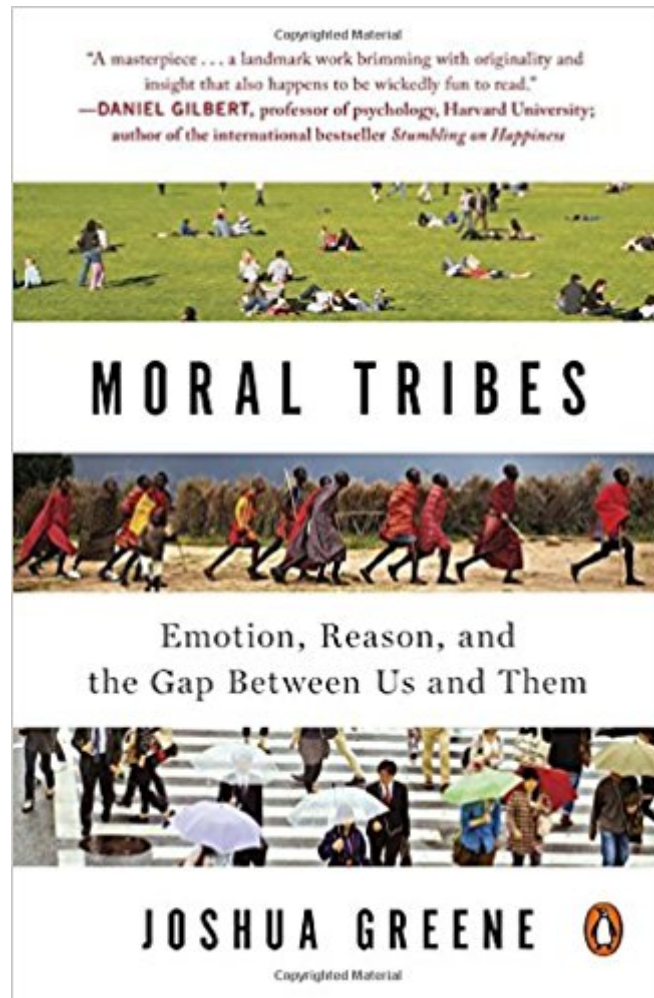The book was found

Moral Tribes: Emotion, Reason, And The Gap Between Us And Them

Synopsis

Ã¢â ¬Å"Surprising and remarkableÃ¢â ¬Â|Toggling between big ideas, technical details, and his personal intellectual journey, Greene writes a thesis suitable to both airplane reading and PhD seminars.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â •The Boston Globe Our brains were designed for tribal life, for getting along with a select group of others (Us) and for fighting off everyone else (Them). But modern times have forced the worldÃ¢â ¬â„¢s tribes into a shared space, resulting in epic clashes of values along with unprecedented opportunities. As the world shrinks, the moral lines that divide us become more salient and more puzzling. We fight over everything from tax codes to gay marriage to global warming, and we wonder where, if at all, we can find our common ground. A grand synthesis of neuroscience, psychology, and philosophy, Moral Tribes reveals the underlying causes of modern conflict and lights the way forward. Greene compares the human brain to a dual-mode camera, with point-and-shoot automatic settings (Ã¢â ¬Å"portrait,Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬Å"landscapeÃ¢â ¬Â•) as well as a manual mode. Our point-and-shoot settings are our emotionsÃ¢â ¬â •efficient, automated programs honed by evolution, culture, and personal experience. The brainÃ¢â ¬â„¢s manual mode is its capacity for deliberate reasoning, which makes our thinking flexible. Point-and-shoot emotions make us social animals, turning Me into Us. But they also make us tribal animals, turning Us against Them. Our tribal emotions make us fightÃ¢â ¬â •sometimes with bombs, sometimes with wordsÃ¢â ¬â •often with life-and-death stakes.Ã Â A major achievement from a rising star in a new scientific field, Moral Tribes will refashion your deepest beliefs about how moral thinking works and how it can work better.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The human brain processes morality automatically, influenced by evolution, culture, and experience but with a capacity for deliberate reasoning that allows for nuance, much needed in our increasingly complex world. Greene, a philosopher and scientist, draws on research in psychology and neuroscience to explore the roots of morality, particularly the tragedy of commonsense morality, when people of different races, religions, ethnic groups, and nationalities share the same sense of morality but apply it from different perspectives in whose differences lie the roots of conflict. Us-versus-them conflicts date back to tribal life. Greene analyzes the structure of modern moral conflicts on a wide spectrum of issues, from global warming to Obamacare to economic policy, and also the structure of our Ã¢â ¬Å"moral brains.Ã¢â ¬Â• Conflicts stem from a lack of moral philosophy, a problem pondered by philosophers since the Enlightenment. Greene ends with a vision of universal moral philosophy, a Ã¢â ¬Å"metamoralityÃ¢â ¬Â• that crosses, racial, religious, ethnic, and national boundaries. GreeneÃ¢â ¬â„¢s strategies for examining moral reasoning are as applicable to day-to-day decisions as they are to public policy. This is a highly accessible look at the complexities of morality. --Vanessa Bush --This text refers to the Audio CD edition.

Robert Wright, The Atlantic:Ã¢â ¬Å"[GreeneÃ¢â ¬â„¢s] concern is emphatic, his diagnosis precise, and his plan of action very, very ambitious. The salvation of humankind is possible, but itÃ¢â ¬â„¢s going to take concerted effortÃ¢â ¬Â¦ [a] rich, sprawling book."The Boston Globe:"Surprising and remarkableÃ¢â ¬Â¦ Toggling between big ideas, technical details, and his personal intellectual journey, Greene writes a thesis suitable to both airplane reading and PhD seminarsÃ¢â ¬Â¦ Moral Tribes offers a psychology far beyond the realm of self-help, instead probing the intricacy and complexity of morality in an attempt to help, and perhaps unite, entire communities."Robert M. Sapolsky, The Wall Street Journal:Ã¢â ¬Å"Superb."Christian Perring, Metapsychology:Ã¢â ¬Å"More interesting than its defense of Utilitarianism is the fact that Moral Tribes is one of the first attempts to bring experimental philosophy to a wider audience. Making technical philosophy accessible to a wider group is something that academic philosophers have not done enough.Ã Â Greene provides a fascinating glimpse of what it might be to do scientifically informed moral philosophy.Ã¢â ¬Â•Sasha Pfeiffer and Anthony Brooks, WBUR:Ã¢â ¬Å"Joshua Green has a fascinating new book about how we make moral decisions. With a deep knowledge of philosophy and using brain scan science, the Harvard psychologist probes some big questions. Questions like why is it weÃ¢â ¬â„¢re capable of putting the welfare of our communities above our own personal welfare?Ã Â In other words weÃ¢â ¬â„¢re pretty good at making tribal life work, but

then why do groups of people: sports fans, political partisans, religious believers, Americans, have so much trouble getting along with other groups?Ã Â The question is hugely important in this modern world when conflicts among political parties, religious faiths and nations have dramatic consequences. ItÃ¢â¬â„¢s at the core of Joshua GreeneÃ¢â¬â„¢s new book.Ã¢â¬Â•Thomas Nagel, New Republic:Ã¢â¬Å"Joshua Greene, who teaches psychology at Harvard, is a leading contributor to the recently salient field of empirical moral psychology. This very readable book presents his comprehensive view of the subject, and what we should make of it. Greene offers much more experimental detail and some ingenious psychological proposals about why our gut reactions have the particular subtle contours that they do.Ã¢â¬Â•Publishers Weekly:Ã¢â¬Å"With a humorous, relaxed tone, Greene stacks piles of evidence from well-researched studies onto his theory of modern-day morality. Having spent most of his academic career on the study of morality, Greene foresees the questions his readers have and systematically addresses every doubt and concern. As he mixes 20th-century philosophical moral treatises with neuroscience and psychological studiesÃ¢â¬â•many of which were undertaken by his colleagues in the field of moral psychologyÃ¢â¬â•GreeneÃ¢â¬â„¢s role as educator shines through; his writing is clear and his examples simple yet intriguing.Ã¢â¬Â•Vanessa Bush, Booklist:Ã¢â¬Å"GreeneÃ¢â¬â„¢s strategies for examining moral reasoning are as applicable to day-to-day decisions as they are to public policy. This is a highly accessible look at the complexities of morality.Ã¢â¬Â•Kirkus Reviews:"A provocative, if Utopian, call for a new 'common currency of observable evidenceÃ¢â¬Â¦not to gain advantage over others, but simply because itÃ¢â¬â„¢s good.'Ã¢â¬Â•Daniel Gilbert, professor of psychology, Harvard University; author of the international bestseller Stumbling on Happiness:Ã¢â¬Å"Joshua Greene is the rarest of birdsÃ¢â¬â•a brilliant scientist and equally brilliant philosopher who simultaneously takes on the deepest problems of both disciplines. More than a decade in the making, Moral Tribes is a masterpieceÃ¢â¬â•a landmark work brimming with originality and insight that also happens to be wickedly fun to read. The only disappointing thing about this book is that it ends.Ã¢â¬Â•Robert Sapolsky, John A. and Cynthia Fry Gunn Professor of Biological Sciences, Stanford University:Ã¢â¬Å"A decade ago, the wunderkind Joshua Greene helped start the field of moral neuroscience, producing dazzling research findings. In this equally dazzling book, Greene shows that he is also one of the fieldÃ¢â¬â„¢s premier synthesists. Considerable progress has been made in solving the classic problem of how to get individuals within a group to start cooperating. Greene takes on an even bigger problemÃ¢â¬â•how to foster cooperation between groups, groups with deeply felt morals and values, but with different morals and values. There are few more

important issues to solve in our increasingly pluralistic world, and this beautifully written book is a step in that direction.Ã¢â ¬Å•Peter Singer, professor of bioethics, Princeton University:Ã¢â ¬Å"Over the past decade, GreeneÃ¢â ¬â„¢s groundbreaking research has helped us understand how people judge right and wrong. Now, in this brilliant and enlightening book, he draws on his own research and that of many others to give a more complete picture of our differences over moral issues. But the significance of this book goes far beyond that. Greene suggests a common moral currency that can serve as a basis for cooperation between people who are otherwise deeply divided on matters of morality. If our planet is to have a peaceful and prosperous future such a common moral currency is urgently needed. This book should be widely read and discussed.Ã¢â ¬Å•Steven Pinker, Harvard College Professor of Psychology, Harvard University; author of How the Mind Works and The Better Angels of Our Nature:Ã¢â ¬Å"After two and a half millennia, itÃ¢â ¬â„¢s rare to come across a genuinely new idea on the nature of morality, but in this book Joshua Greene advances not one but several. Greene combines neuroscience with philosophy not as a dilettante but as an expert in both fields, and his synthesis is interdisciplinary in the best sense of using all available conceptual tools to understand a deep phenomenon. Moral Tribes is a landmark in our understanding of morality and the moral sense.Ã¢â ¬Å•

Neuroscieintist/philosopher Joshua Greene has a big thesis in this book that requires some quite involved steps. His concern is to argue for a "metamorality" of the kind that should help groups with differing moralities resolve differences. Greene starts out envisioning two prototypical "tribes. One has a morality of self-reliance and "just desserts," where people are responsible for their lot in life and get rewarded in proportion to their efforts. The other has a more altruistic view of the world, where things are shared and shared alike, and everyone feels responsibility for everyone. The question: how do we decide which of these groups - or more likely, which elements of each group's worldview - should win the day in cases of moral conflict? (More specifically: when we face moral dilemmas where we could respond via self-interest and "just desserts" or with altruism and egalitarian "desserts", how should we determine which to go with?)Greene's answer is basically a form of utilitarianism that he calls "deep pragmatism." And to see why requires some explanation, which could be really dull but isn't, owing to Greene's gifts as a good and clear writer. He argues that humans have what is called a "dual process morality" that is divided between intuitive gut instincts (dominated by the ventromedial prefrontal cortex) and a more calculating thought process (owing more to the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex). When it comes to questions of "me versus us,"

the intuition side of things is pretty reliable, making us feel guilty for taking more than "our fair share," breaking rules that we expect everyone else to follow, etc. Understandable, because our intuitions of empathy and the like almost certainly evolved to stimulate cooperation within groups among otherwise selfish individuals (which confers an overall survival advantage).But our instincts also don't do very well with "we versus them" problems, because the same mechanisms that evolved to stimulate cooperation evolved to do so only WITHIN GROUPS (not between them). So, instincts often make us feel guilty at not helping others who are close to us, but the guilt lessens the farther removed the others-in-need are from us. Here, though, the thinking part of our brains can step in, and the thinking part of our brains (Greene's and others' research suggests) tend to be "utilitarian" - preferring whatever option leads to the greatest overall happiness less discriminately.The most interesting (and original) parts of this book are those where Greene reviews his own and others' research on "the trolley problem" - a problem philosophers have concocted to illustrate the dilemma between the sanctity of individual rights and the imperative of maximizing overall happiness. The trolley problem - and there are many variations of it - is of a train going down a track where five people are trapped. One can avert the trolley from killing the five only if one pushes a particular person onto the track (fortunately, you are standing at an area of the track where any obstruction to the trolley will avert it to a side-track, and pushing the man in front of the track will create such an obstruction.)Yes, it is highly contrived, but philosophers have argued for many years over the 'correct' answer to the problem: is it better to maximize happiness by saving five even if it means you have to intentionally sacrifice one, or is it better to let the five die if it means not intentionally killing one innocent person? Greene's study has led him to see the "dual process theory" of morality at work here. Those who have damage to the "instinctual" part of the brain unhesitatingly kill the one to save the five, and those with damage to the "calculating" part of the brain do the opposite. The rest of us struggle because the two parts of our brain are telling us different things.But, far from saying that there is no good answer, Greene suggests that in the trolley case, the best answer is the utilitarian one, because he suspects that our compunctions about intentionally killing to save five lives is a relic of the intuitional module of our brain (as evidenced partly by the fact that those who choose to let the five die can''t generally give any good explanation for why, save that it feels wrong). And Greene also suggests that while intuitional thinking doe serve us well at times - in "me versus us" questions - it is often ill-equipped to deal with "us versus them" problems (problems the world is facing more and more of).This is where I start to find Greene unconvincing. Without getting into too much detail, Greene strikes me as a utilitarian only to the degree that it gets him to the answers he wants to get... and there is a lot of inconsistent reasoning

Greene gives about why utilitarianism is the best actual theory, rather than the one that gets him the answers he likes best. Mostly, this comes from a mixture of explaining both how utilitarianism doesn't conflict with some of our most deeply held intuitions (disrespect for individual rights when they conflict with the greatest good, etc), AND explaining that when it does, it is because in those cases, our intuitions are wrong. In other words, when utilitarianism validates our intuitions, that shows how good utilitarianism is, but when it conflicts with our intuitions, that shows that our intuitions - not utilitarianism - is flawed. Something seems very post hoc and inconsistent about this.To be sure, I don't have a much better answer. I think that, in the end, Greene's work actually REDUCES our confidence that there are best and worst answers to moral questions, but that is because unlike Greene, I see no reason to think we can resolve the "dual process" competing answers by somehow stepping above our human moral thinking and saying that there is an objective criteria that can determine which "process" is the right one and which, the wrong one. Might it just be that our impulses toward intuition and calculation conflict and that is that? Yes, Greene (and many of us) do think that it is quite important to produce the greatest happiness for the greatest number, but if our instincts about what is morally right can be flawed in some cases, why can't our feeling that the greatest good is important be flawed too (and even though we reason to it, the value we put on the greatest good is still an instinct)? Not that Greene is wrong to put value on it, but I came away thinking that he wanted it both ways: intuitions can be trusted when they validate our calculations, but they're probably wrong when they don't.Anyway, aside from my general misgivings about Greene's conclusion (or at least his defense of it), I thoroughly enjoyed this book. Greene's research on the neural basis of moral thinking is intriguing, original, and does a service to moral philosophy. And here, he writes a clear and well-written explanation of those and a larger moral case he draws from it. Those who are interested in this book should also readÃ Â Braintrust: What Neuroscience Tells Us about Morality, andÃ Â The Righteous Mind: Why Good People Are Divided by Politics and Religion (Vintage).The Moral Landscape: How Science Can Determine Human Values

So profound, it took weeks to read. Every few pages he offers up a life changing insight which knocks you right on your behind. Regularly, I had to just put down the darn book and follow the iterative implications from th beginning of life all the way out to the farthest reaches of existence. I know this book changed me. For the better I think. I am forever grateful this book came my way. Like an Alaskan wilderness, tough sledding, great beauty,, and the truth await.

The most profound work in recent times on human behavior -- why "we" behave in socially destructive and constructive ways. The Middle East and it's terrorist tentacles are a manifestation of innate neural structures that Greene "sees" through the tools of neuroscience. His idealist philosophy of utilitarianism may be a dream but at least the book describes the problem, a first step toward saving civilization. My experience as a social scientist doesn't support his idealism, but it does corroborate his underlying research.

Well this was not what I expected. It is more of a prolonged argument for a utilitarian society. Although I find many of the author's points to be interesting, I also find his idea of how to unite the world under one common currency and a particular way of thinking to be highly unrealistic. The book has it's moments and was compelling enough for me to read the entire thing. So I gave it four stars. I would definitely recommend this if someone is a true utilitarian or pragmatist. I just don't believe that this type of society is feasible due to human nature and our recorded history.

Wow, this book is really making me think. I LOVE it when a book does that, and quite frankly, it's rare that it happens anymore, without my intentionally seeking out like quantum physics or something.In the current political climate in America, EVERYONE should read this. They would instantly gain so much awareness and understanding about those who hold different beliefs.

A little more philosophy than I care to mix with psychology. But the author did start his career as a philosophy guru. Good points but extremely drawn out... would have been and even better book if he just condensed it to half the amount of pages.

Yes and no. I always have to struggle to get through philosophy. Soooo many words. Having just read Haidt, I find Green to be the perfect sequel. The first and last two chapters summarize--all in between is the somewhat laborious proof. That said, Green's style is engaging--I've wrestled with things just as he has: picking up trash, how much to give, what is the global good, comparing tribal values, and more. The I/Us and We/They dilemmas. His meta-morality = total deep happiness. I'm enriched having read his book -- referred to me by an ethics colleague. The Moral Animal, The Righteous Mind, The Moral Tribe. A lovely, if challenging, trilogy. What would Wright, Haidt n Green do with Aleppo or Crimea?

The Audible book is a good 'listen.' I listened on a long road trip and hated for it to end. Maybe not a

lot of truly new ground in there, but it ties together some long-known 'morality' and economics concepts. There are a handful of overly-liberal tirades, but they can be mostly ignored.

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