Morality

- Moral intuition
- Five moral domains and their adaptive foundations (Haidt)
- Moral misconduct, nausea, and cleanliness
- Morality and politics
- Religious belief, theory of mind, and the social brain
Moral Intuitions

Julie is traveling in France on summer vacation from college with her brother Mark. One night they decide that it would be interesting and fun if they tried making love. Julie was already taking birth-control pills, but Mark uses a condom, too, just to be safe. They both enjoy making love but decide not to do it again. They keep the night as a special secret, which makes them feel closer to each other.

What do you think about that? Was it OK for them to make love? (Haidt, 2001)
The runaway trolley: Impersonal scenario
The runaway trolley: Personal scenario
Moral intuition and moral reasoning

**Moral intuitions:** Fast, automatic, affect-laden.

**Moral reasoning:** Slower, conscious, less emotional

Moral reasoning is a post-hoc process. Usually we search for evidence to support our moral intuitions.
How much money would it take you to...

A. Stick a pin into your palm.
B. Stick a pin into the palm of a child you don’t know. (Harm/care)

A. Accept a wide-screen TV from a friend who received it at no charge because of a computer error.
B. Accept a wide-screen TV from a friend who received it from a thief who had stolen it from a wealthy family. (Fairness.)

A. Say something bad about your nation (which you don’t believe) on a talk-radio show in your nation.
B. Say something bad about your nation (which you don’t believe) on a talk-radio show in a foreign nation. (loyalty/Community.)

A. Slap a friend in the face, with his permission, as part of a comedy skit.
B. Slap your father in the face, with his permission, as part of a comedy skit. (Authority/respect.)

A. Attend a performance-art piece in which the actors act like idiots for 30 minutes, including flubbing simple problems and falling down on stage.
B. Attend a performance-art piece in which the actors act like animals for 30 minutes, including crawling around naked and urinating on stage. (Purity/sanctity.)
What are moral intuitions based on?

If moral intuitions are not based on costs and benefits, then what are they based on?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Moral domain</th>
<th>Adaptive benefit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Avoiding harm/caring</td>
<td>Protecting young, kin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairness/Reciprocity</td>
<td>Dyadic non-kin cooperation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ingroup Loyalty</td>
<td>Collective action/group cooperation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authority/Respect</td>
<td>Negotiating hierarchy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purity/Sanctity</td>
<td>Avoiding pathogens</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(from Jonathan Haidt; Liberty/Oppression added later as a 6th moral domain)
Moral misconduct and nausea

Moral misconduct causes physical feelings of disgust

Reading the Julie and Mark incest story caused people to report feelings of nausea, gagging and reduced appetite (compared to a control story where they were not siblings)

from Royzman et al. 2008
Is Cleanliness next to Godliness?

ATTENTION

I. THOSE WHO ARE NOT ALLOWED TO ENTER THE TEMPLE ARE:
1. LADIES WHO ARE PREGNANT
2. LADIES WHOSE CHILDREN HAVE NOT GOT THE FIRST TEETH
3. CHILDREN WHOSE FIRST TEETH NOT FALLEN OUT YET
4. LADIES DURING THEIR PERIOD
5. DEVOTEES GETTING IMPURE DUE TO DEATH
6. MAD LADIES / GENTLEMEN
7. THOSE NOT PROPERLY DRESSED

II. ALL DEVOTEES ENTERING THE TEMPLE SHOULD MAINTAIN CLEANLINESS AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION
Is morality universal?
Morality themes in church sermons

Support of moral concepts in a liberal versus conservative church sermons

- Unitarian (liberal)
- Southern Baptist (conservative)

Avoiding harm, Fairness, Ingroup loyalty, Authority, Purity

(C) Tom Rees - do not distribute without attribution
Is environmentalism a politically liberal issue?

% agree there needs to be stricter laws and regulations to protect the environment

- Republican
- Democrat
- Independent

- 93
- 86
- 94
- 93
- 64
- 47

Liberals see environmentalism as a moral issue

from Feinberg and Willer, “the moral roots of environmental attitudes”
Psychological Science 2012
How to increase conservatives’ pro-environmental attitudes

Most environmental media messaging is about harm/care, not purity.

What happens if you recast the messaging to emphasize purity?

3 groups of participants read editorial about either:

▶ caring for and protecting the environment
▶ cleaning and purifying the environment
▶ history of neckties

Purity condition:

▶ enhanced feelings of disgust, esp. in conservatives
▶ enhanced pro-environmental attitudes among conservatives
How to increase conservatives’ pro-environmental attitudes

Feinberg and Willer 2012
Theory of mind underlies moral reasoning

Two friends take a coffee break at a chemical plant. Mary asks Grace to pass the sugar, and Grace hands her a dispenser clearly labeled 'Sugar.' Unbeknownst to either woman, however, the dispenser contains not sugar, but a poisonous chemical that looks like it. Mary drinks her toxin-sweetened coffee and dies a few hours later.

Is Grace to blame?
When God is Watching People are More Generous

Cash offered in a dictator game after religious or no primes (Shariff and Norenzayan 2007)