



Summary of Content Covered

Step 1: Why talk to people you disagree with?

Key concepts covered:

- Assimilation and accommodation
- Groupthink
- Engaging with diverse perspectives:
 - Helps you uncover things you can't see by yourself
 - Enables you to make wiser decisions and new discoveries
 - Is the cornerstone of a functioning democracy

Summary:

- In today's hyper-polarized climate, it often seems easier to avoid "the other side" entirely. We're going to explore three reasons why engaging with diverse perspectives can be beneficial, even if it doesn't always seem pleasant at first.
- The first benefit of speaking to people you disagree with is that it helps you uncover things you can't see by yourself. We all have limitations to what we can see from our particular perspectives.
- The second benefit is that it helps you make wiser decisions and new discoveries. The Bay of Pigs fiasco highlights why simply adding more people to a group doesn't necessarily lead to good decision-making. Groups run the risk of falling prey to *groupthink*. You need a diversity of perspectives among the members of the group, as well as the right conditions to lead to wise decision-making.
- The third benefit is that engaging with diverse perspectives is the cornerstone of a democracy. Democracy relies upon us not only living together peacefully, but also engaging with one another.
- Despite these benefits, at times engaging with diverse perspectives and having your views challenged can be frustrating and uncomfortable. The science of learning helps us understand why this is the case.
- There are two types of learning that complement one another: *assimilation* is when we encounter new information that we are able to fit it into our pre-existing mental structures, and *accommodation* is when we encounter new information that doesn't fit. It takes extra effort (and sometimes discomfort) to accommodate new information

by changing our existing mental structures. This process is an essential part of growth and learning.

Step 2: Cultivate intellectual humility

Key concepts covered:

- Intellectual humility and the value of acknowledging and learning from our mistakes
- The theory of growth versus fixed mindset
- How to cultivate a growth mindset

Summary:

- In order to prevent our certainty from blinding us to other ideas, we must develop *intellectual humility*. This helps us become wiser by allowing us to recognize the limits of our knowledge.
- Those with a *fixed mindset* believe that intelligence is set in stone, which makes it harder for them to learn and grow because they prioritize looking smart over learning. Those with a *growth mindset* believe that intelligence can develop, which makes it easier for them to learn and grow because they relish accepting new challenges.
- There are three methods of injecting more growth into your mindset:
 - Acknowledge that your abilities are fluid
 - View each mistake as a learning opportunity
 - Challenge yourself to do things you haven't already mastered

Step 3: Explore the irrational mind

Key concepts covered:

- Dual process theory
- Metaphor of the rider (slow, conscious reasoning) and the elephant (automatic, intuitive thinking)
- Visual and cognitive illusions
- Post hoc reasoning
- Confirmation bias
- Motivated reasoning

Summary:

- Even after cultivating intellectual humility and a growth mindset, two well-intentioned and well-informed people often still end up with very

different beliefs. The particular way in which our minds work can help us understand why this happens so often.

- Our minds are divided into two parts that sometimes conflict, like a small human rider sitting on top of an elephant. The *rider* represents our slow, conscious reasoning. The *elephant* represents all of the automatic, intuitive processes that occur rapidly and often outside of our conscious awareness.
- While we think that our rider (conscious reasoning) is in control, it's often actually our elephant that holds the power.
- This division often causes us to fall prey to *post hoc reasoning*, the process in which our elephant makes a snap judgment, and our rider works to justify it.
- A common form of post hoc reasoning is when we seek or interpret information in a way that confirms our preexisting beliefs, which is called *confirmation bias*.
- Our reasoning becomes even less reliable when we are motivated to reach a particular conclusion, especially when a moral issue is at stake. This can lead to *motivated reasoning*.
- As a result, it can be difficult to convince other people to change their minds, especially on moral issues—because their brains, just like ours, are wired in these ways.

Step 4: Break free from your moral matrix

Key concepts covered:

- The moral matrix
- The six taste receptors of morality
- Moral foundations theory
- Moral roots of political differences
- Breaking free from our moral matrices

Summary:

- We all live within a *moral matrix*: a consensual hallucination that we believe represents objective reality. Many different moral communities exist, each with its own set of shared values, and each convinced that its group alone sees truth as it really is.
- The moral mind is like a tongue with six different taste receptors. We all share these same foundations, but we build upon them in different

ways to create our own moral matrices. The six *moral foundations* are: Care, Fairness, Loyalty, Authority, Sanctity, and Liberty.

- Many disagreements can be attributed to the application of different moral foundations. There are also cases when different people apply the same moral foundation in different ways.
- We can break free of our moral matrices by learning to identify the moral foundations that we and others use to reach our conclusions.

Step 5: Tools for productive dialogue

Key concepts covered:

- Cognitive reappraisal primer
 - Identifying automatic thoughts
 - Dispelling cognitive distortions
- Skills for constructive disagreement
 - Active listening
 - Acknowledgement
 - Moral reframing

Summary:

- We can engage in *constructive disagreement* by seeking to learn, rather than to be right. The key to constructive disagreements is mastering the language of the elephant (automatic, intuitive thinking).
- Sometimes, our automatic thoughts (generated by our elephants) aren't accurate, and these cognitive distortions can cause negative feelings. Our riders can rein in our elephants by examining our initial thoughts, and—over time—training them to be more accurate.
- We can also hone our ability to communicate effectively with other people by focusing on their elephants. We can: respect their elephants (don't criticize people or make them feel stupid); understand their elephants (learn about what other people care about and why); and appeal to their elephants (convey your thoughts in a language that will resonate with them).

Sources Cited:

Step 1: See what you'll gain from viewpoint diversity

Dallek, R. (2011, August 14). Bay of Pigs: Newly Revealed CIA Documents

- Expose Blunders. *Newsweek*. Retrieved from <https://www.newsweek.com/bay-pigs-newly-revealed-cia-documents-expose-blunders-67275>.
- Goodwin, D. K. (2005). *Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Grant, A. (2016). *The Originals: How Non-Conformists Move the World*. New York: Penguin Books, 185.
- Greene, G. (1999). *The Woman Who Knew Too Much: Alice Stewart and the secrets of radiation*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 244.
- Hannam, J. (2011). *The Genesis of Science: How the Christian Middle Ages Launched the Scientific Revolution*. Washington, D.C.: Regnery Publishing, Inc., 329-344.
- Hansen, M. (2009). *Collaboration: How Leaders Avoid the Traps, Build Common Ground, and Reap Big Results*. Cambridge: Harvard Business Review Press.
- Herrmann, E., Call, J., Hernandez-Lloreda, M. V., Hare, B., & Tomasello, M. (2007). Humans have evolved specialized skills of social cognition: The cultural intelligence hypothesis. *Science*, 317(5843), 1360-1366.
- Janis, I. (1972). *Victims of Groupthink: A psychological study of foreign-policy decisions and fiascoes*. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin.
- John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum. Cuban Missile Crisis. Retrieved from <https://www.jfklibrary.org/JFK/JFK-in-History/Cuban-Missile-Crisis.aspx>.
- Jones, H. (2010). *The Bay of Pigs*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kahneman, D. (2011). *Thinking, fast and slow*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 87.
- Mill, J. S. (1859/2011). *On liberty*. London and Felling-on-Tyne: The Walter Scott Publishing Co., Ltd.
- Nemeth, C. (2018). *In Defense of Troublemakers: The Power of Dissent in Life and Business*. New York: Basic Books, 139.
- Piaget, J., & Cook, M. T. (1952). *The origins of intelligence in children*. New York, NY: International University Press.
- Rawls, J. (1971). *A Theory of Justice*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 358.
- Schlesinger, Jr., A. M. (1965). *A Thousand Days: John F. Kennedy in the White House*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 250-259.
- Salovey, P. (2017, 26 November). Free Speech, Personified. *The New York Times*. Retrieved here <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/26/opinion/free-speech-yale-civil-rights.html>.
- Society for Public Health. (2017). Status Of Mind: Social media and young people's mental health and wellbeing. Retrieved here <https://www.rsph.org.uk/our-work/campaigns/status-of-mind.html>.

Step 2: Cultivate intellectual humility

Beyerstein, B. L. (1999). Whence cometh the myth that we only use ten

- percent of our brains? In S. Della Sala (Ed.), *Mind myths: Exploring popular assumptions about mind and brain* (3-24). New York: Wiley.
- Blackwell, L. S., Trzesniewski, K. H., & C. S. Dweck. (2007). Theories of intelligence predict achievement across an adolescence transition: A longitudinal study and an intervention. *Child Development*, 28(1), 246-263.
- Buddha. (2001). *The Dhammapada: The sayings of the Buddha*. (T. Byrom, Trans.). New York: Vintage Books. (Original work published c. 300 BC).
- Cerretani, J. (2010). Extra sensory perceptions. *Harvard Medicine*.
- Dweck, C. S. (1998). The development of early self-conceptions: Their relevance for motivational processes. In J. Heckhausen & C. S. Dweck (Eds.), *Motivation and self-regulation across the life span* (pp. 257-280). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Dweck, C. S. (2006) *Mindset: The new psychology of success*. New York: Random House.
- Maguire, E. A., Woollett, K., and Spiers, H. J. (2006). London taxi drivers and bus drivers: a structural MRI and neuropsychological analysis. *Hippocampus*, 16(12), 1091-101.
- O'Connor, A. (2005, June 28). The claim: never swim after eating. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/06/28/health/the-claim-never-swim-after-eating.html>.
- Pascual-Leone A., Amedi A., Fregni F., & Merabet L. B. (2005). The plastic human brain cortex. *Annual Review of Neuroscience*, 28, 377-401.
- Pope, A. (1727). Thoughts on various subjects. In J. Swift (Ed.), *Miscellanies in prose and verse. The second volume*. London: Printed for Benjamin Motte at the Middle Temple-Gate in Fleet-Street.
- Smiley, P., & Dweck, C. S. (1994). Individual differences in achievement goals among young children. *Child Development*, 65(6), 1723-1743.
- Stoseel, J., & Binkley, G. (2007, May 3). Can a penny dropped from a building kill a pedestrian below? *ABC News*. Retrieved from <http://abcnews.go.com/2020/story?id=3131332&page=1>.
- Voltaire. (1919). *Voltaire in his letters: Being a selection from his correspondence*. (S. G. Tallentyre, Trans.). New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. (Original work published 1770).

Step 3: Explore the irrational mind

- Ditto, P. H., Pizarro, D. A., & Tannenbaum, D. (2009). Motivated Moral Reasoning. *Psychology of Learning and Motivation*, 50, 307-338.
- Greene, J. (2013). *Moral tribes: Emotion, reason, and the gap between us and them*. New York: The Penguin Press.
- Haidt, J. (2012). *The righteous mind: Why good people are divided by politics and religion*. New York: Pantheon.
- Kahneman, D. (2011). *Thinking, fast and slow*. New York: Farrar, Straus and

Giroux.

Knobe, J. (2003). Intentional Action and Side Effects in Ordinary Language. *Analysis*, 63, 190-193.

Shaw, V. F. (1996). The cognitive processes in informal reasoning. *Thinking and Reasoning*, 2, 51-80.

Step 4: Break free from your moral matrix

Buddha. (1973). *The Dhammapada*. (J. Mascaro, Trans.). London: Penguin Classics. (Original work published c. 300 BC.).

Frimer, J. A., Tell, C. E. & Haidt, J. (2015). Liberals condemn sacrilege too: The harmless desecration of Cerro Torre. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 6(8), 878-886.

Gibson, W. (1984). *Neuromancer*. New York: Ace Books.

Graham, J., Haidt, J., & Nosek, B.A. (2009). Liberals and Conservatives Rely on Different Sets of Moral Foundations. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 96(5), 1029-1046.

Graham, J., Haidt, J., Koleva, S., Motyl, M., Iyer, R., Wojcik, S., & Ditto, P. H. (2012). Moral Foundations Theory: The Pragmatic Validity of Moral Pluralism. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, 47, 55-130.

Grassley, C. (2013). *Statement of Senator Chuck Grassley of Iowa*. Hearing on the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act.

Haidt, J. (2012). *The righteous mind: Why good people are divided by politics and religion*. New York: Pantheon.

Hill, W.E. (1915). My Wife and My Mother-In-Law (illus.). *Puck*, 78(2018), 11.

Leahy, P. (2013). *Border security, economic opportunity, and immigration modernization act*, S. 744. United States Senate, Committee on the Judiciary. One hundred thirteenth congress, first session.

Ross, L., & Ward, A. (1996). Naive realism in everyday life: Implications for social conflict and misunderstanding. *A. Lawrence Erlbaum Assoc. Publ.*, 103-135.

Step 5: Tools for productive dialogue

Buddha. (1973). *The Dhammapada*. (J. Mascaro, Trans.). London: Penguin Classics. (Original work published c. 300 BC.).

Burns, D. M. (1980). *Feeling good: The new mood therapy*. New York: Harper Collins.

Carnegie, D. (1936/2009). *How to Win Friends & Influence People*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Epictetus. (1995) *The art of living: The classical manual on virtue, happiness, and effectiveness*. (S. Lebell, Trans.). New York: HarperCollins. (Original work published c. 125 AD.).

- Feinberg, M., & Willer, R. (2015). From gulf to bridge: When do moral arguments facilitate political influence? *Personality and Social Psychology*, 41(12), 1665-1681.
- Frankl, V. E. (1959/2006). *Man's search for meaning*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Greenberger, D., & Padesky, C. A. (2016). *Mind over mood: Change how you feel by changing the way you think*. New York: The Guilford Press.
- Haidt, J. (2006). *The happiness hypothesis: Finding modern truth in ancient wisdom*. New York: Basic Books.
- Hansen, T. L. (2015). *The 70-30 rule of communication*. Hansen Group Company. Retrieved from <http://hansengroupcompany.com/the-7030-rule-of-communication>.
- Piaget, J., & Cook, M. T. (1952). *The origins of intelligence in children*. New York, NY: International University Press.
- Lamolinara, G., Cannady, S., & Urschel, D. (2012, June 21). 'Books That Shaped America' Exhibition to Open June 25. *Library of Congress*. Retrieved from <https://www.loc.gov/item/prn-12-123/>.
- Mill, J. S. (1859/2011). *On Liberty*. London and Felling-on-Tyne: The Walter Scott Publishing Co., Ltd.
- Ray, R.D., Ochsner, K.N., Cooper, J.C., Robertson, E.R., Gabrieli, J.D.E. & Gross, J.J. (2005). *Individual differences in trait rumination and the neural systems supporting cognitive reappraisal*. *Cognitive, Affective & Behavioral Neuroscience*, 5, 156-168.

If you have any questions or if you would like to learn more about using OpenMind in your institution, classroom, company, or organization, please contact info@openmindplatform.org.