

pure evil, but do it.” No political leader puts forth policies on the grounds that the policies don’t matter. Political prescriptions are assumed to be right. The problem is that different political leaders have different ideas about what is right.

All politics is moral, but not everybody operates from the same view of morality. Moreover, much of moral belief is unconscious. We are often not even aware of our own most deeply held moral views.

As we shall see, the political divide in America is a moral divide. We need to understand that moral divide and understand what the progressive and conservative moral systems are.

Most importantly, a great many people operate on different—and inconsistent—moral systems in different areas of their lives. The technical term is “biconceptualism.”

Here the brain matters even more. Each moral system is, in the brain, a system of neural circuitry. How can inconsistent systems function smoothly in the same brain? The answer is twofold: (1) mutual inhibition (when one system is turned on the other is turned off); and (2) neural binding to different issues (when each system operates on different concerns).

Biconceptualism is central to our politics, and it is vital to understand how it works. We will be discussing it throughout this book.

What Is Rationality?

The brain and cognitive sciences have radically changed our understanding of what reason is and what it means to be rational. Unfortunately, all too many progressives have been taught a false and outdated theory of reason itself, one in which framing, metaphorical thought, and emotion play no role in rationality. This has led many progressives to the view that the facts—alone—will set you free. Progressives are constantly giving lists of facts.

Facts matter enormously, but to be meaningful they must be framed in terms of their moral importance. Remember, you can only understand what the frames in your brain allow you to understand. If the facts don’t fit the frames in your brain, the frames in your brain stay and the facts are ignored