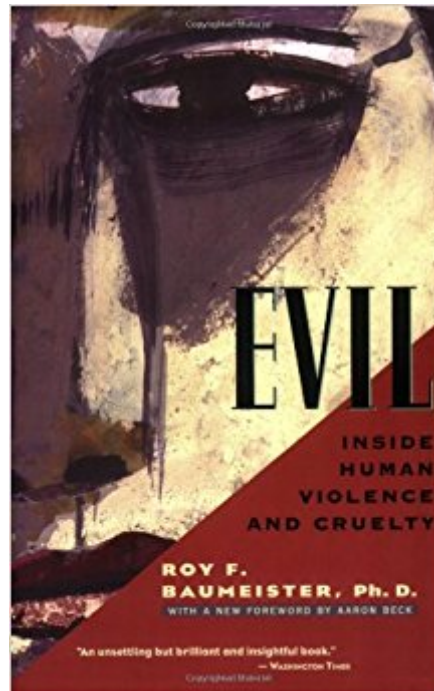




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Evil: Inside Human Violence And Cruelty



Synopsis

Why is there evil, and what can scientific research tell us about the origins and persistence of evil behavior? Considering evil from the unusual perspective of the perpetrator, Baumeister asks, How do ordinary people find themselves beating their wives? Murdering rival gang members? Torturing political prisoners? Betraying their colleagues to the secret police? Why do cycles of revenge so often escalate? Baumeister casts new light on these issues as he examines the gap between the victim's viewpoint and that of the perpetrator, and also the roots of evil behavior, from egotism and revenge to idealism and sadism. A fascinating study of one of humankind's oldest problems, *Evil* has profound implications for the way we conduct our lives and govern our society.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The question of why people hurt others is perhaps humanity's oldest and most urgent, long the subject of literature and religion. Can social science provide any answers? Social psychologist Baumeister assembles the available research, such as experiments on how people justify small transgressions and react to hypothetical situations, as well as close readings of accounts by murderers, rapists and torturers. He concludes that "pure evil"--brutality inflicted on innocent victims for sadistic pleasure--is largely a myth. Most violence springs from the same sources as other human behavior: ambition, lust, fear, pride, idealism. It breaks out when self-control breaks down, often because of group pressures or a slow escalation from seemingly innocuous decisions. Most perpetrators do not enjoy their acts, at least at first, but feel they must be done. "To understand

evil,"Baumeister writes, "we must set aside the comfortable belief that we would never do anything wrong. Instead, we must begin to ask ourselves, what would it take for me to do such things?" Although few of these ideas are original to Baumeister, and the book is sometimes pedantic, it is a worthy synthesis both for victims who want to know why and for policymakers who need to know what to do. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

"A revealing and unflinching look at a subject usually ignored." -- Booklist
"An impressive book." -- New Scientist
"Blending material from history, literature, philosophy, and anthropology, Baumeister has skillfully presented a picture of the nature of the evil that people do, a picture often at odds with popular and mythological ones." -- Russell G. Geen, Curators Professor of Psychology University of Missouri
"I once met a man who commanded a squad that executed some 10,000 men, women, and children with axes and hoes. Today that man is a humble farmer. I have often wondered what he dreams. Baumeister helps us to see into the dreams of such perpetrators and, indeed, into our own darkest dreams." -- Craig Etcheson, Ph.D. Manager, Cambodian Genocide Program, Yale University
"This is the most important work I have read on the nature of evil." -- Brad J. Bushman, Iowa State University --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This is a great book. It draws you in and offers some interesting ideas and insights. I think it applies to all of us, which makes it even more interesting. The amount of time that my mind wandered off while reading this book was minimal, it really captures your attention. It is dark disturbing in parts but I believe it reveals a lot about human nature.

This book has helped me expand my understanding of how people commit and rationalize violent / harmful acts. The darker part is turning it in on my own misdeeds in life and figuring what my thought processes were at the time.

I liked the book so much I bought it again when someone borrowed it and didn't return. I first read the book several years ago, but is timely reading now.

To understand evil, really understand it, read Baumeister's book on the subject, which allows the reader to take a look inside the mind of human evil.

Very powerful insight into behavior. Better than just rules and preaching.

I picked up this book thinking it would be a study of serial killers or something. I was happily surprised to find a well written book about the myth of evil. Baumeister does a good job of introducing difficult concepts that challenge our belief systems. One particularly interesting facet of his theory is the "perception gap" between the victims of evil and the perpetrators of evil. Baumeister uses both scientific research and real-life examples (O.J., Sadaam Hussien, Bosnia) to illustrate his points, making the information very accessible. As a writer, I found the information on what causes people to commit evil actions fascinating and helpful in creating fictional characters with dimension. As a someone who works in the prevention field, I applied his theory about egotism and violence to school bullies. This book is a must read for writers, teachers, law enforcement, prevention specialist, counselors and so forth. This book will definately make you think.

Excellent book on evil. Very insightful.

interesting material, I would recommend this book to everyone. however It is a little violent and I would keep it out of the hands of sensitive audiences.

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