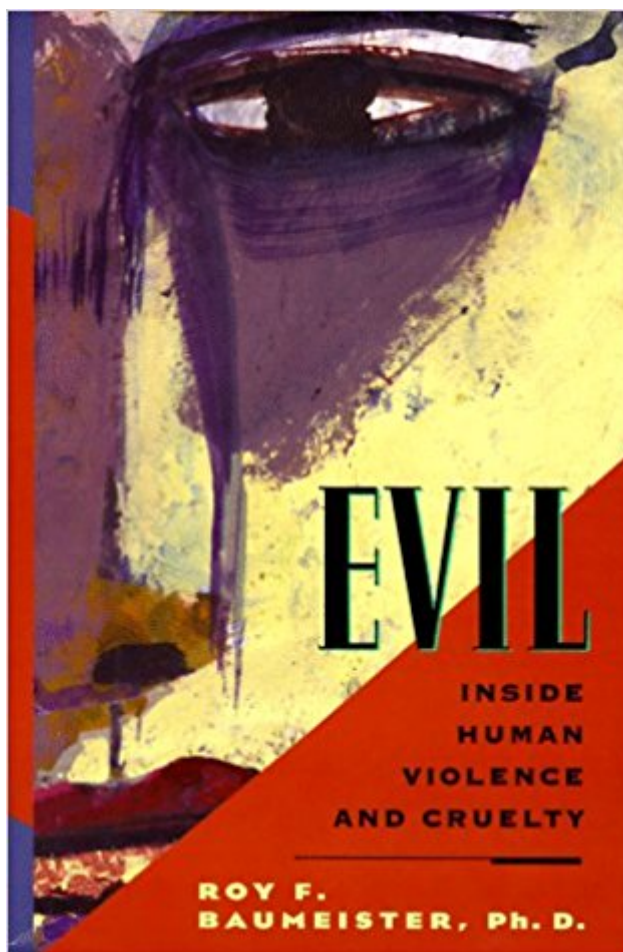


The book was found

Evil: Inside Human Cruelty And Violence



Synopsis

This study of human violence begins by describing the "magnitude gap" between the victim's viewpoint and that of the perpetrator. It then goes on to explore the basic roots of evil, evil as a means to an end, revenge and egotism, and sadism. The final section looks at how people step over the line between acceptable and evil acts, then how evil can grow and spread. There is also a discussion of the human mechanism for suppressing evil - guilt - as well as our natural inclination towards ambivalence, which allows evil to flourish.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Roy examines the mechanisms in the human psyche that make evil attractive while preventing self-knowledge and recognition that what one is doing is in fact evil. It is refreshing to read that there is a time and place for guilt - according to Baumeister guilt serves as the only effective restraint on evil behavior. According to the author, evil is caused by four basic factors; desire for money or power, threatened personal egotism, idealism, and/or the pursuit of sadistic pleasure. Although people tend to assume that most evil is due to the latter cause, in reality it is rare. In most cases people avoid perceiving their activities as evil by concentrating on the methodology of their activities, avoiding empathizing with the victim, and/or believing that the end justifies the means. Thus in order to effectively combat evil, one must expose it publicly and strip away the illusions of the perpetrators. The historical arguments for this which the author provides are compelling. I would recommend this book as good therapy for anyone who has been the victim of evil. It is also very

useful as a tool to clarify choices for anyone caught up in a moral dilemma. Particularly helpful should be Roy's discussion that resulting human suffering, not personal or idealistic motivation, is the better tool for judging whether a particular planned action might be evil.

"Evil", in the strict sense of the word, might best have been left out of the title of this book.

Baumeister does an excellent job of explaining the inner workings of the human psyche as it pertains to cruelty and violence. These actions are deeply or thinly veiled in all humans and held in check by the strength of one's self control and/or morality. A small step at a time could lead any human to acts of cruelty or violence, scarcely noticing the descending path one has taken. I wouldn't say that this book is light reading and it is sometimes disturbing, but it is well worth the effort for anyone who seeks insight into the darker sides of humanity. Beware, you might recognise some small part of yourself within these pages. I am a subscriber of Scientific American and was referred to this book by their recommendation.

This book can be really helpful for abuse victims. I was one myself & never could understand how people could harm others or witness it & do nothing about it. This book helped me understand that

No wonder Steve Pinker recommends this. No one has gotten closer to the nature of the beast. Warning. It's not what you think. Yes, you would have delivered a lethal Milgram shock.

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