

How does the mind work?

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“How does our mind work?” I explain how in a new chapter in Edition 2 of my book *Why Human Life Makes Sense*.

In this chapter I clarify the complementary roles of volitional, conscious mental activity and automatic, unconscious mental activity, and I show how decision-making works.

This model of the mind makes it possible to understand myriad characteristics of our mind, informing us what’s happening and why.

In particular, the model makes it possible to understand the complementary roles of intentional reasoning and automatic intuition. This distinction is a prominent theme in the work of Daniel Kahneman and Jonathan Haidt.

The role of intuition in moral judgments is the focus of Jonathan Haidt’s cognitive model in *The Righteous Mind: Why good people are divided by politics and religion* (2012). In light of the model that I present in my book, we can understand the idea of intuition and how it relates to intentional reasoning. This enables us to resolve challenges that claim that Haidt seems to disparage the role of intentional reasoning.

In the meeting on 10-27, we’ll begin by getting a good feel for how our mind works, clarifying numerous characteristics of mental activity, such as the following:

- ◆ Skill
- ◆ Habits
- ◆ Prejudices
- ◆ Phobias
- ◆ Impulsiveness
- ◆ Distractions
- ◆ Temperament
- ◆ Intuition
- ◆ Conscience
- ◆ Temptation
- ◆ First impressions
- ◆ Catching our stride
- ◆ Role of familiarity
- ◆ Blindsight
- ◆ Visual illusions
- ◆ Pattern recognition
- ◆ Proofreading errors
- ◆ Speech errors
- ◆ Automatic story creation
- ◆ Spiritual experiences
- ◆ Decision-making

This introduction to the mind will make the everyday characteristics of the mind seem sensible and natural.

This, in turn, will set the stage for understanding the role of intuition in moral judgments, which is the focus of Haidt’s theory.

My book will be available at the meeting for \$15 for anyone who may wish to take a copy home. You can see the chapter summaries on my website.