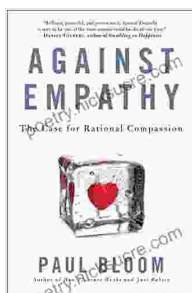


Against Empathy: The Case for Rational Compassion

Empathy is often seen as a virtue, but in his book *Against Empathy*, Paul Bloom argues that it is actually harmful. Bloom claims that empathy leads to bias, prejudice, and even violence. He proposes instead a more rational approach to compassion, one that is based on reason and evidence.



Against Empathy: The Case for Rational Compassion

by Paul Bloom

★★★★☆ 4.4 out of 5

- Language : English
- File size : 1688 KB
- Text-to-Speech : Enabled
- Screen Reader : Supported
- Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
- X-Ray : Enabled
- Word Wise : Enabled
- Print length : 266 pages



The Problem with Empathy

Bloom argues that empathy is a flawed emotion that can lead us to make bad decisions. When we empathize with someone, we feel their pain as if it were our own. This can lead us to be biased in favor of those who are similar to us and to ignore the needs of those who are different.

For example, a study by the University of California, Berkeley found that people were more likely to donate money to a charity that helped people

who were similar to them, such as those who shared their race or ethnicity. This is because empathy leads us to identify with those who are like us and to ignore the needs of those who are different.

Empathy can also lead to prejudice and discrimination. When we empathize with members of our own group, we are more likely to see them as victims and to blame outsiders for their problems. This can lead to conflict and violence.

For example, the Rwandan genocide was fueled by empathy. The Hutu majority empathized with their fellow Hutus who had been killed by the Tutsi minority. This led them to see the Tutsis as a threat and to justify the genocide.

A More Rational Approach to Compassion

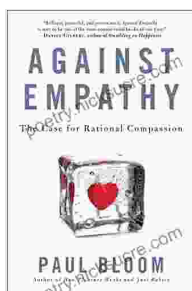
Bloom argues that we need to move beyond empathy and adopt a more rational approach to compassion. He proposes a compassion that is based on reason and evidence, rather than on emotion.

This kind of compassion would take into account the needs of all people, regardless of their race, ethnicity, religion, or any other group affiliation. It would also be based on a realistic understanding of the world, rather than on wishful thinking.

For example, instead of donating money to a charity that helps people who are similar to us, we could donate money to a charity that helps people who are most in need, regardless of their group affiliation.

Bloom acknowledges that rational compassion is not always easy. It can be difficult to put aside our emotions and to make decisions based on reason. However, he argues that it is the only way to create a more just and compassionate world.

Empathy is a powerful emotion, but it can also be a dangerous one. If we want to create a more just and compassionate world, we need to move beyond empathy and adopt a more rational approach to compassion.



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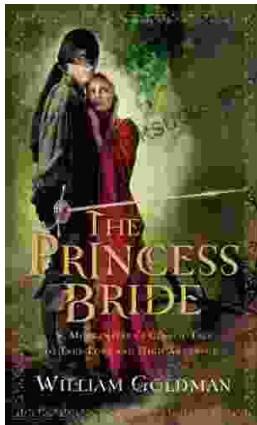
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