

Faith & Reason Group Discussion Questions - November 17, 2023

Discussion prompt #1

Keller laments America has never had a pluralistic society. Haidt laments the **centripetal** forces that once pulled us [as Americans] together are far weaker, leaving us more vulnerable to the **centrifugal** forces pulling us apart. Keller advises people bring their full selves to civics, engage others within their moral frameworks, defer to the majority while respecting minorities. Haidt implores this generation to reinvest in America's civic religion, even a form of assimilation, while rejecting tribal instincts where not moral or useful.

Which points did you relate to most? Which do you struggle with the most?

Discussion prompt #2

Haidt opens with how all groups form around what he calls **sacred values** – de facto boundary lines which are inherently exclusive and [he would add] increasingly illiberal. Keller cautions about how variable, exclusive, and unprovable a concept like **justice** can be, and how pluralism comes not from such views themselves, yet by one's attitude – tolerance, humility, patience. Haidt notes how some **moral foundations** like compassion and fairness are hyper-expressed in the West, whereas others – loyalty, authority, sanctity – while prevalent elsewhere, are out of style in the West, or even resisted as immoral. He, like Keller earlier, encourages us to engage others within *their* moral framework.

Can you think of a time when you successfully engaged someone else within their moral framework (i.e., one you did not share)? Or a time someone did this with you?

Discussion prompt #3

Keller and Haidt in their own ways repudiate a type of identity politics where overfixation on or outrage at identity outweighs arguments. Haidt implores the **charity**, which – even as an atheist – he places within traditional religious wisdom. Keller advises engaging people with different moral frameworks **locally, socially, personally** (so Faith and Reason, not Facebook :)

Share a time when a conversation about a controversial issue amongst friends, colleagues, or family did not go well. What could you have done differently given Keller and Haidt's advice?