

# The First Five Foundations of Morality

Jonathan Haidt’s Moral Foundations Theory is based on his examination of normal social life and the challenges associated with it around the world. He considered how people in different cultures deal with these challenges differently, and what they prioritize as virtues.

In his research, Haidt found five foundations of morality, or “taste receptors.” Just as we all have the same five taste receptors but prefer different foods, we all have these same five moral foundations, but in different proportions. The foundations are:

1. Care/harm
2. Fairness/cheating
3. Loyalty/betrayal
4. Authority/subversion
5. Sanctity/degradation

Each foundation has an adaptive advantage—in some way, each one helped humans succeed. Each also has triggers that existed generations ago and triggers that exist today. Finally, each foundation is associated with certain emotions and virtues. Find the characteristics of each foundation, or “taste receptor,” in the table below.

	<b>Care/Harm</b>	<b>Fairness/Cheating</b>	<b>Loyalty/Betrayal</b>	<b>Authority/Subversion</b>	<b>Sanctity/Degradation</b>
<b>Evolutionary Purpose</b>	To raise children and keep them from harm	To work with others for mutual benefit	To form groups that can stick together	To create and sustain positive hierarchies	To avoid disease or other harm
<b>Universal Triggers</b>	When a child shows signs of pain or distress	A cheater or someone who works well with a group	An external conflict that the group has to deal with together	Someone claiming authority or submitting to another	People or animals carrying disease
<b>Modern-Day Triggers</b>	A cute video, an animal at a rescue shelter	Being faithful to your partner, shoplifting	Any sort of organized team	Respect in the workplace for superiors	Concepts like fascism
<b>Typical Emotions</b>	Empathy	Frustration, thankfulness	Pride, anger at a betrayal	Esteem, terror	Revulsion
<b>Virtues Associated</b>	Generosity, sympathy	Objectivity	Allegiance to a group	Acquiescence	Restraint, faith

Haidt’s Moral Foundations Theory did not include the sixth foundation, Liberty/oppression, until he discovered it later.