



Good Natured

By Frans B. M. DE WAAL, F. B. M. de Waal

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To observe a dog's guilty look.

to witness a gorilla's self-sacrifice for a wounded mate, to watch an elephant herd's communal effort on behalf of a stranded calf--to catch animals in certain acts is to wonder what moves them. Might there be a code of ethics in the animal kingdom? Must an animal be human to be humane? In this provocative book, a renowned scientist takes on those who have declared ethics uniquely human. Making a compelling case for a morality grounded in biology, he shows how ethical behavior is as much a matter of evolution as any other trait, in humans and animals alike.

World famous for his brilliant descriptions of Machiavellian power plays among chimpanzees--the nastier side of animal life--Frans de Waal here contends that animals have a nice side as well. Making his case through vivid anecdotes drawn from his work with apes and monkeys and bolstered by the intriguing, voluminous data from his and others' ongoing research, de Waal shows us that many of the building blocks of morality are natural: they can be observed in other animals. Through his eyes, we see how not just primates but all kinds of animals, from marine mammals to dogs, respond to social rules, help each other, share food, resolve conflict to mutual satisfaction, even develop a crude sense of justice and fairness.

Natural selection may be harsh, but it has produced highly successful species that survive through cooperation and mutual assistance. De Waal identifies this paradox as the key to an evolutionary account of morality, and demonstrates that human morality could never have developed without the foundation of fellow feeling our species shares with other animals. As his work makes clear, a morality grounded in biology leads to an entirely different conception of what it means to be human--and humane.

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Good Natured By Frans B. M. DE WAAL, F. B. M. de Waal Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

In *Good Natured* Frans de Waal, ethologist and primatologist, asks us to reconsider human morality in light of moral aspects that can be identified in animals. Within the complex negotiations of human society, a moral action may involve thoughts and feelings of guilt, reciprocity, obligation, expectations, rules, or community concern. De Waal finds these aspects of morality prevalent in other animal societies, mostly primate, and suggests that the two philosophical camps supporting nature and nurture may have to be disbanded in order to adequately understand human morality. A theoretician, de Waal is meticulous in his research, cautious not to extrapolate too much from his findings, and logically sound in his arguments. He also writes with precision and a flair for the dramatic, carrying readers along with graceful ease and vivid examples.

From Publishers Weekly

Is morality a biological or cultural phenomenon? Can nonhuman animals be humane? Primatologist de Waal (*Chimpanzee Politics*) explores these questions in a provocative book and makes a strong case for biology. He is convinced that social tendencies come into existence via a genetic calculus rather than rational choice. He defends anthropomorphism, noting that it serves the same exploratory function as intuition in the sciences. He discusses aggression and altruism and offers abundant anecdotal evidence of moral behavior among primates and other animals?food sharing, protection, sympathy, guilt. De Waal argues that the remarkable trainability among certain species, e.g., sheepdogs and elephants, hints at a rule-based order among them. He takes issue with the animal rights movement; rights, he says, are normally accompanied by responsibilities, which cannot possibly apply to apes and other animals. Readers who enjoyed *Why Elephants Weep* (Jeffrey Masson and Susan McCarthy) will welcome this volume. Illustrations. Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc.

From [Booklist](#)

Ethologist de Waal is engaged in research that hits humans where they live. Observing monkeys and apes, he seeks to find and explain behaviors among them that bespeak qualities often thought to be exclusively human and artificial. In his new book, morality is the object of inquiry, and in incident-packed chapters on sympathy, hierarchy, exchange, and social accommodation among animals (besides his primate studies, he cites other researchers' work on nonprimates), he demonstrates how animals manifest morality and presents reasons for regarding moral behavior as natural. Not surprisingly, those reasons are social, beginning with the demands of familial loyalty and extending to the requirements of living with others of their species and even to getting along with friends of other species, such as zookeepers and researchers. Of course, in addition to enthralling readers with superbly written reportage of his work, de Waal wants them to consider what his research analogically suggests about human behavior and how to help our societies be happier. Like his marvelous *Peacemaking among Primates* (1989), this is prime science reading. *Ray Olson*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Jimmy Torres:

The book *Good Natured* will bring you to the new experience of reading a new book. The author style to clarify the idea is very unique. When you try to find new book to learn, this book very suited to you. The

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Emanuel Douglas:

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