



# The 5 Moral Foundations

Social and cultural psychologists have identified these “innate and universally available psychological systems [as] the foundations of ‘intuitive ethics.’” Unique, cultural moralities are built on these foundations.<sup>1</sup>

As artistic activists, these ideas can help us create more sophisticated campaigns by giving us insight into those who don’t share our moral beliefs.

## 1. CARE/HARM

Values of kindness, gentleness, and nurturance. We have an ability to care for and be attached to others. We also have the ability to feel and dislike the pain of others.

## 2. FAIRNESS/CHEATING

When we help or are kind to others, we value those who reciprocate. From this generates ideas of justice, rights, and autonomy. It also touches on proportionality – that people take their “fair share”.

## 3. LOYALTY/BETRAYAL

Humans have an ability to form shifting coalitions and we value those who are loyal to those coalitions. From this comes ideas of patriotism and self-sacrifice for the group.

## 4. AUTHORITY/SUBVERSION

Humans also have an ability to form hierarchical social interactions. This foundation underlies virtues of leadership and followership, including deference to legitimate authority and respect for traditions.

## 5. SANCTITY/DEGRADATION

This foundation was shaped by the psychology of disgust and contamination. It underlies notions of striving to live in an elevated, less carnal, more noble way. It underlies the widespread idea that the body is a temple which can be desecrated by immoral activities and contaminants.

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1: The text has been borrowed heavily from Jonathan Haidt’s [The Righteous Mind](#) and [moralfoundations.org](#)