

Prisoners of Hate: The Cognitive Basis of Anger, Hostility, and Violence

By Aaron T., M.D. Beck



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World-renowned psychiatrist Dr.Aaron T. Beck, widely hailed as the father of cognitive therapy, presents a revolutionary and eye-opening look at destructive behavoir in *Prisoners of Hate*. He applied his established principles on the relationships bewteen thinking processes and the emotional and behavoiral expressions to the dark side of humanity. In fascinating detail, he demonstrates that basic components of destructive behavoir-domestic abuse, bigotry, genocide, and war-share common patterns with everyday frustrations in our lives. A book that will radically alter our thinking on violence in all its forms, *Prisoners of Hate*, provides a solid framework for remedying these crucial problems.



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Editorial Review

From Library Journal

Noted as the founder of cognitive psychotherapy, Beck (emeritus, Pennsylvania State Univ.) here applies his work to greater social problems, from domestic violence to bigotry, crime, and war. Focusing on involuntary and usually unnoticed thought patterns, Beck's therapy emphasizes relearning. He wants patientsAand, now, everyone from gang members to world leadersAto examine their cognitions rationally with a view to decreasing hostility. Beck's approach is so sweeping that economic, geographic, and racial issues all can be subsumed under it, and he makes a strong case. However, he oversimplifies when he argues that anger, hate, and hostility are the same whether the conflict is between spouses or nations. Unfortunately, he gives short shrift to the constructive aspects of anger and chooses to ignore the psychology of nonviolence, though his approach is consistent with Gandhi's and King's. Still, Beck's broad scope; valuable summaries on prejudice, altruism, and political psychology; and optimistic, humane, and rational treatment of a vital subject recommend this for lay and professional readers.AE. James Lieberman, George Washington Univ. Sch. of Medicine, Washington, D.C.

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From Kirkus Reviews

A reflective consideration of the dysfunctional thinking that results in acts ranging from verbal abuse on the personal level to mass murder on the societal level, as well as suggestions for remedying these problems. Known as the father of cognitive therapy, Beck, professor emeritus of psychology at the Univ. of Penn. School of Medicine, finds parallels between violent reactions of troubled individuals to presumed wrongs, bombings by extremist militant groups, and acts of genocide perpetrated by states. In his psychotherapeutic work with patients, he observed a pattern of thinking that he describes as `hostile framing," that is, perceiving the person one is in conflict with as dangerous and evil and the self as right and good. Such thinking locks the mind in a "prison of hate" in which a false image is mistaken for the real person. Beck calls such cognitive distortion "primal thinking" because it occurs in the earliest stage of information processing and also in the early developmental stage of children. When primal thinking pigeonholes adversaries as evil, even subhuman, creatures who deserve to be punished, the moral code against killing is weakened. Beck demonstrates how such cognitive errors have led to wife-beating, group rape, the Salem witch trials, the Oklahoma City bombing, the Holocaust, and genocide in Cambodia, Turkey, and the Soviet Union. The cognitive distortions that led to WWI get special attention. There is hope, however, says Beck, who argues that war is not inevitable and asserts that humans have an innate capacity for altruistic behavior to override hostile tendencies and for rational thinking to correct cognitive distortions. He argues that an understanding of individual psychology can provide the tools for developing corrective political and social programs, and he describes how these might operate in preventing child and spousal abuse, juvenile delinquency, and ethnopolitical violence. A provocative and most timely report in this era of ethnic cleansing abroad and high school shootings at home. -- Copyright ©1999, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.

Review

"In this important book, one of America's most distinguished psychiatrists draws on his vast clinical experience, personal wisdom, and scholarly knowledge to offer a fascinating account of the dark side of the human psyche."--Roy F. Baumeister, author of "Evil: Inside Human Violence and Cruelty"The leading authority on depression here turns his clinical radar on the cognitive sources of anger and hostility. As Dr. Beck demonstrates, hate and violence bring pain not only to the victims but also to the perpetrators. Hostility and rage can become habitual and, like other bad habits, these can be broken. This fine book can help."--

David T. Lykken, Ph.D., professor emeritus of psychology, University of Minnesota"This magnificent synthesis crowns a lifetime of achievement in cognitive behavior therapy. The same formulations that account for violence in the individual are found to apply also to collective violence. During the Cold War the West had a convenient distant enemy; now that NATO dominates the world, close neighbors are turning on one another. This is a timely book, closely argued and vividly illustrated with telling examples."--Sir David Goldberg, professor, Institute of Psychiatry (London)" Aaron Beck draws on a lifetime of scientific research and therapeutic experience. . . . He has devoted his career to showing how the rational side of human nature can be trained to overcome the merciless legacy of irrelevant evolutionary imperatives and the tragic result of individual traumas. By reducing conflict arising, not from clashes of interest, but mistaken judgments and unprocessed impulses, this book will help both laymen and professionals put human rationality to its most importantuse."--Ian S. Lustick, department chair and professor of political science, University of Pennsylvania "A brilliant book, deeply needed in today's world. Dr. Beck brings to bear both immense knowledge and creative intelligence to synthesize this amazingly practical, yet never too simple book of advice and insight."--Edward M. Hallowell, M.D., author of "Worry and "Connect"This valuable book shows that even the most extreme forms of hate and violence arise from diminishing and dehumanizing other people, from seeing them as enemies--even if they are our wives and husbands. Very importantly, it also offers remedies--ways to alter our thinking so that we can live more loving lives."--Ervin Staub, Ph.D., author of "The Roots of Evil"Prisoners of Hate offers a profound analysis of a most pressing human challenge: the causes--and prevention--of hatred. Of the many important books Aaron Beck has written, this may be his greatest gift to humanity."--Daniel Goleman, author of "Emotional Intelligence" A provocative and most timely report."--"Kirkus Reviews" A breathtaking experience. Beck's explanations are so clear, obvious and practical that you feel a surge of hope. "Prisoners of Hate is a clear review of the world's most important psychological theory, and is virtually a workbook on how to prevent violence. . . . A book that does so many important things so well can only be called a masterpiece.""Philadelphia Inquirer

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Frances Hairston:

Book is to be different for every single grade. Book for children till adult are different content. As you may know that book is very important usually. The book Prisoners of Hate: The Cognitive Basis of Anger, Hostility, and Violence seemed to be making you to know about other know-how and of course you can take more information. It is quite advantages for you. The reserve Prisoners of Hate: The Cognitive Basis of Anger, Hostility, and Violence is not only giving you far more new information but also to become your friend when you experience bored. You can spend your current spend time to read your reserve. Try to make relationship with all the book Prisoners of Hate: The Cognitive Basis of Anger, Hostility, and Violence. You never sense lose out for everything should you read some books.

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