

Chapter 1: **Discovering How to Be More Free**

Imagine a shopping mall in 1972, San Francisco, where a young woman named Jessica has just finished buying a gift. It is years before anyone could buy a cell phone, so Jessica lines up at a public payphone to call for a ride. Her wait isn't long – the man in front of her gets no answer, and hangs up. As she enters the phone booth, Jessica notices that he left his dime in the return slot. She turns to give it to him, but he is gone. *I guess this is my lucky day*, she muses to herself as she uses it to pay for her own call.

Later, on the way to the parking lot, an older woman in front of Jessica trips, dropping a manila folder. Papers spill all over the floor. *Clearly not her lucky day*, Jessica thinks as she bends down to help the poor stranger retrieve her papers.

If you were Jessica, would you have stopped to help the stranger? Why or why not?

Jessica was the thirty-ninth subject in a psychology experiment conducted in 1972 by American psychologists Alice Isen and Paula Levin. The man who left the dime and the woman who dropped the papers were both actors. Leaving the dime and dropping the papers were scripted actions (although the man didn't always leave a dime, and whether he did or not was kept secret from the older woman, so she couldn't bias the results). The goal of their experiment was to determine whether people are more likely to help strangers after finding a dime – in other words, whether our behavior depends upon our mood.

If you answered that you would have done what Jessica did in her situation, that you would have helped pick-up the papers, your response to the second question, "Why?" probably was not "Because of the dime." Your answer probably referred to your character, or your

principles, or the consequences for yourself or your world. Questions about what you would do in such situations reveal your morals; and there are good reasons to believe that your morals are consistent. The suggestion that they can be bought with a ten-cent bribe is preposterous.

However, conducting their experiment in shopping malls in both San Francisco and Philadelphia, Isen and Levin found that fourteen of the sixteen people who were given a dime stopped to help the stranger, while only one of the twenty-five people who weren't given a dime did the same. To put this another way, only 4% of the people who had to pay for a phone-call helped, compared to 88% of the people who didn't have to pay – the dime made people *twenty times* as likely to help! If you are humble enough to doubt that you are among the 4%, and you think of the dime as bribery, then these results are so shocking that you might find yourself in denial. First you might deny that you help strangers only if bribed, and second you might deny that a mere ten cents could transform you from an apathetic passerby to a good Samaritan.

As it turns out, you'd be right on both accounts.

Forty years later, we have another explanation for the data Isen and Levin collected. According to this alternate explanation, the dime functions more as a trigger than as a bribe. If the dime were a bribe, then it wouldn't matter that Jessica happened to receive it in a phone booth when she needed to make a phone call. Unlike a bribe, however, a trigger needs a deeper, often hidden, story. In addition to a trigger, for example, a bomb needs an explosive element with the potential to release tremendous energy, and a restraining element which prevents the explosive element from fulfilling its potential until triggered. If the trigger is

disconnected, if it does not interrupt the restraint, or if there is no explosive element, then the bomb won't function.

In Jessica's case, the analog to the explosive element was her generosity. Being generous is very different from releasing destructive energy, but generosity, like explosive substances, can be restrained and held dormant. The restraining element is what we might call "stress." We are not fully aware of all stresses we experience. As an incomplete solution to some of them, the payphone was part of a stress-ridden ritual which was interrupted by the strategically placed dime, much as other triggers interrupt the restraining elements in bombs. Stress blocks our ability to process certain nutrients, so interrupting the rituals of stress can be like a "breath of fresh air," unleashing our potential. On this explanation, rather than bribe Jessica, the dime simply allowed her true nature to shine through.

This alternative perspective is reinforced by a wealth of new experiments. Paul Zak, Director of the Center for Neuroeconomics Studies at Claremont Graduate University, has recently confirmed that, just as human muscles require a molecule called "oxygen" to function, the brain processes involved in human empathy require a molecule called "oxytocin." This molecule is found naturally in most human brains, but stressful situations can inhibit its action and thus shut-down empathy the way depriving us of oxygen can shut down our muscles. To prove this, Zak developed an oxytocin-rich nasal spray which can restore suppressed empathy much as an oxygen tank can let people function underwater.

Zak's nasal spray is only for experiments – it doesn't have enough shelf-life for over-the-counter distribution, and Zak is more inclined to promote natural ways of raising oxytocin levels anyway, such as a hug or a kind word. Even if the name "oxytocin" or its function in the

brain is new to you, you probably already know what it feels like. Zak loves to tell the story of the wedding party who allowed him to measure oxytocin levels immediately before and after the ceremony. As expected, the bride's rise in oxytocin level was the highest, followed by others' in proportion to their emotional investment in the wedding couple.

Another reason why Zak will not make the oxytocin nasal spray available over-the-counter is its potential to be abused. Much as the drug sodium pentothal has been shown to make people more willing to relinquish secrets, Zak's nasal spray has been shown to make people more trusting and generous in financial negotiations. He believes that there are some strangers whom we ought not be inclined to trust, that our body's natural tendency to reduce or inhibit oxytocin in stressful situations may be a valuable defense mechanism, and therefore we shouldn't make a habit of manipulating it artificially. For example, con-artists might like to spray oxytocin in your face or substitute it for your regular nasal spray like a "love potion" to make you more susceptible to their scams.

Even if FDA regulations prevent criminals from using oxytocin to control their victims, a pessimist might nonetheless find the science horrifying. No matter how you spin it, it shows that we can be manipulated. What freedom do we have when our very morals, our willingness to help strangers in distress, depends upon some potentially hidden world of stressors?

That is like being horrified by the discovery of allergies. Yes, science reveals our weaknesses. It reveals that some of us could be oppressed though exposure to peanuts, for example. But the science of allergies can also free us to reach new levels of health by teaching us to avoid things we did not previously realize oppress us. Being able to monitor ways in which your freewill is constrained, ways in which your sense of right and wrong is

manipulated, can similarly free you to reach new levels of morality. Like your health, your freedom improves or degrades in every moment of your life. It comes in degrees, and the endless quest for freedom ultimately depends upon how well you understand it.

That is what this book will give you: a piece of the truth that will set you free.

GRIN Freedom

The science of empathy is only a quarter of the story, because it turns out that not everyone prefers to let empathy guide their behavior. Instead of empathizing, for example, some of us prefer to help a stranger out of principle. Rather than retrieve papers, some prefer to be helpful in other ways. Zak admits that some people are unaffected by oxytocin. Maybe they lack some other necessary component of empathy, or maybe they simply prefer to be moral in a different way. There are at least four different ways of conducting the evaluative aspect of decision-making: Gadfly, Relational, Institutional, and Negotiator (GRIN). The first step in freeing yourself is to identify your own GRIN orientation.

At Princeton's department of psychology, experimental subjects are loaded into Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) machines to scan their brains while they solve different moral dilemmas. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that they *pretend* to solve moral dilemmas, since the ways we claim we *would* act in a given situation can be quite different from the ways we actually act in practice. But thought experiments may reveal more about us than actual practice does, since they allow us to avoid the clouding influence of practical factors like the dime.

Here is an example of a balanced dilemma used at Princeton:

The Crying Baby dilemma: Enemy soldiers have taken over your village. They have orders to kill all remaining civilians. You and some of your townspeople have sought refuge in the cellar of a large house. Outside, you hear the voices of soldiers who have come to search the house for valuables. Your baby begins to cry loudly. You cover his mouth to block the sound. If you remove your hand from his mouth, his crying will summon the attention of the soldiers who will kill you, your child, and the others hiding out in the cellar. To save yourself and the others, you must smother your child to death. Is it appropriate for you to smother your child in order to save yourself and the other townspeople?¹

Responses to this question are divided, revealing that people come in at least two different varieties. Researchers find that subjects who answer, "Yes," use "cognitive" parts of their brain to reach their answer (i.e. the right dorsolateral prefrontal cortex and bilateral inferior parietal lobe), while those who answer, "No," use "emotional" parts (i.e. the medial prefrontal cortex, posterior cingulate, precuneus, and bilateral superior temporal sulcus). Of course, the relative size and strength of these different brain structures is different in different brains. The part of your brain that *you* would use to answer the dilemma depends upon the unique shape of your own brain. Do you have a more "emotional" brain, or a more "cognitive" brain? Your answers to questions like the Crying Baby dilemma can allow you to discover which kind of brain you have without physically dissecting or scanning it.

On the other hand, not every dilemma is balanced. Consider the "Trolley" and "Footbridge" dilemmas:

The Trolley Dilemma: A runaway trolley is headed for five people who will be killed if it proceeds on its present course. The only way to save them is to hit a switch that will turn the trolley onto an alternate set of tracks where it will kill one person instead of five. Should you turn the trolley in order to save five people at the expense of one?

The Footbridge Dilemma: As before, a trolley threatens to kill five people. You are standing on a footbridge spanning the tracks, in between the oncoming trolley and the hapless five. This time, the only way to save them is to push this stranger off the bridge and onto the tracks below. He will die if you do this, but his body will stop the trolley from reaching the others. Should you save the five others by pushing this stranger to his death?¹

The Trolley and Footbridge Dilemmas are two versions of the same decision, carefully rephrased to evoke opposite responses. Researchers find that almost everyone who is given the Trolley dilemma claims that they would hit the switch, but almost everyone who is given the Footbridge dilemma claims that they would not push the stranger off the bridge. Furthermore, they find that almost everyone uses the "cognitive" parts of their brain on the Trolley dilemma, but the "emotional" parts on the Footbridge dilemma. Thus, the way the dilemma is phrased manipulates not only our response, but also the brain parts we use to generate that response. To put this another way, although you may have a preference for emotional over cognitive thinking, or vice-versa, you are likely capable of thinking in either way, and scientists can manipulate which way you do.

If you are emotional, you may complain that the phrasing of the Trolley Dilemma forces you to think logically because manning the switch implies a position of responsibility in which one is expected to suppress emotion. If you are cognitive, you may complain that the Footbridge phrasing forces you to use your empathy to assess the likelihood that the stranger on the bridge (or his survivors) will retaliate. Fears about resistance or about failure to meet expectations are surely irrelevant to whatever the morally correct action happens to be, yet we do answer the two phrasings differently, so such distractions clearly do manipulate our responses. In the spirit of the term "orientation," I will call such manipulation "closeting." When something like fear causes you to act and think as though you had a GRIN orientation other than your preferred orientation, I will say that you have been "closeted." Once you know you are closeted, staying in the closet is your choice. If you have never encountered balanced questions like the Crying Baby dilemma, however, then you might not know which kind of brain you have, and thus never know which of the two phrasings closets you.

You cannot detect manipulation, much less protect your freedom, without access to balanced questions like the ones featured in this book. Since everyone gives the same answers to unbalanced questions like the Trolley and Footbridge dilemmas, only balanced questions reveal preference. For example, my choice to wear my favorite color is determined by who I am, so I am not closeted when I make it. However, if someone were to manipulate me into acting as though I prefer a different color, or as though I have no color preference, then they would be violating my freedom. Furthermore, if I never had a balanced opportunity to discover my color preference, then I wouldn't be able to detect this violation. I might even get defensive if anyone called me a "victim." If I never encountered balanced questions which reveal that my

own preferences differ from those of other people, then I couldn't know when I was closeted, so I couldn't protect my freedom.

The idea that one might not know one's own identity may sound silly until you consider debates over sexual identity. There was a time when it was much more common to believe that all human beings prefer to be heterosexual, that anyone claiming to prefer homosexuality, bisexuality, or asexuality was either sick or confused. Until 1973, for example, the American Psychiatric Association officially considered homosexuality a mental disorder. Questions to measure sexual preference were not balanced: Would you prefer to live a normal life, or the life of an outcast? Many people did not realize that they were in the closet. In a similar way, when an actress spills a manila folder full of papers in front of us, and tries to convince us to empathize with her, we might not realize that she is manipulating us with an unbalanced choice. Even *she* may fail to recognize that she is oppressing us. If she likes to empathize, she may find it hard to imagine anyone not sharing that preference. She may think that anyone who complains about her apparent neediness is sick or confused or immoral.

Of the subjects who helped the actress in the Isen and Levin experiment, those who preferred to empathize probably enjoyed the experience—like emotional people solving the Footbridge dilemma, they were in their element—but others may have felt dragged-in, maybe even guilty about helping. Although it is good for society to include good-Samaritans who respond with empathy to the victims of muggings and folder disasters, for example, it is also good to include people who prevent muggings and folder disasters in the first place. Such people, police officers, judges, custodians, inventors of better folders, and manufacturers of better folders, can be moral even if not ruled by empathy. In their processes, empathy might even be a handicap, a distraction from objectivity, critical thinking, and efficiency.

Furthermore, if society contained too many empathizers, more people would be tempted to manufacture distress. Children would be spoiled. Had Isen and Levin considered these arguments, they might not have conducted their experiment, but GRIN diversity training was not available in 1972 and is unavailable at the writing of this book.

According to management guru Mitch Kapor, in fact, modern institutions systemically manipulate employees to eliminate GRIN diversity: "Every new employee who is hired has to be integrated into the organization. There are certain values, styles of behavior, and practices which are characteristic of the entity. Until a new employee learns to operate within those norms, he or she is like a foreign body introduced into an organism. The body system recognizes an alien invader and mobilizes its immune system to neutralize it. Newcomers are rendered impotent and, worse, start counterproductive efforts (infections) which have to be extinguished."² For example, if a woman who prefers to empathize became CEO of a publically-traded company, she might have to work in the closet, using objective calculations instead of empathy to make decisions about layoffs. Likewise, if she became a soldier, she might have to follow orders instead of following her feelings. If she exhibited her preferred GRIN orientation publicly, revealing her true self, she might be punished.

Before condemning such discipline, we need to consider that some people *prefer* to obey norms. The practices Kapor described would not closet such people at all – to the contrary, eliminating discipline from all organizations might violate the freedom of another kind of people. Nonetheless, if you look out the window of an airplane, you can witness the way engineering makes our world more uniform, full of parallel lines. Systematic engineering cannot create diversity – if it does not protect diversity, it can only reduce it – and behavior tends to be even more engineered than landscapes. Most jobs are standardized, involving

standard ways of handling issues, and those standards have evolved, like the Trolley and Footbridge dilemmas, to produce consistent results, causing everyone to exhibit the same GRIN orientation for a given situation.

Balanced questions like the Crying Baby dilemma provide evidence that, underneath all the engineering, people remain GRIN diverse. Protecting everyone's freedom requires a less systematic approach, one which provides different protections for different kinds of people. That's why Franklin Delano Roosevelt's famous 1941 State of the Union address named four *different* fundamental freedoms: Freedom of Speech, Freedom of Worship, Freedom from Want, and Freedom from Fear. No matter who you are, it is very likely that at least one of these freedoms is much less important to you personally, yet considered essential by someone else.

Much as the Crying Baby dilemma implies two distinct evaluative orientations (i.e. "cognitive" vs. "emotional"), FDR's four freedoms model implies four orientations one might call "speech-centered," "worship-centered," "want-centered," and "fear-centered." How many orientations are there really? Lawrence Kohlberg, Lawrence Walker, and Roger Steare each developed and calibrated measures to prove that there are at least three. Because their models overlap, the GRIN instrument is able to integrate them into a single system distinguishing four. It is possible, of course, that more than four distinct evaluative orientations exist – there may be more to discover – but we will start with GRIN because it is the best tool available right now. The first part of this book will guide you through the GRIN self-quiz to help you identify your personal GRIN orientation. It will then provide evidence that people with your orientation are valuable, and explain how such people typically get closeted.

GRIN Together

Part Two of this book addresses the special challenges GRIN diversity raises for leaders. How can we work together when we evaluate so differently? Consider a group of people who evaluate differently from you; maybe they're religious fundamentalists, or cutthroat stock-traders, or hippies. Imagine how difficult it would be to convince yourself to truly value their perspective, to want them in your family. Now imagine how difficult it would be to convince all three of these kinds of people to value each other in the same way. Do you see why good leaders deserve so much respect?

Movements against sexism and racism starting in the 18th century faced similar challenge. At that time, sex and race were used to tell who is in charge. Men ruled households, and whites ruled communities. To propose equality seemed to threaten anarchy. The first measure of evaluative orientation, developed by Lawrence Kohlberg in the late 1950s, was likewise intended to establish leaders. Kohlberg referred to evaluative orientations as "stages of moral development" culminating with the orientation most preferred by privileged academics. By labeling all other orientations "immature," Kohlberg set up one group of people to rule the others. This is the way GRIN discrimination typically manifests; the privileged people justify their privilege by claiming that their GRIN orientation gives them higher competence.

If you are leader, then you are responsible for group decisions. If your team is diverse, then those decisions will inevitably reflect the evaluative preferences of some members more than others. Without claiming special competence, how can you convince your team to tolerate such inequity? How can you convince them not to migrate into homogeneous cliques?

Too often, scholarship only aggravates this quandary. Consider, for example, the challenges political leaders face from the new sciences of neuropolitics and genopolitics. Jonathan Haidt, a leading psychologist of morality, has pointed-out that the conflict between liberals and conservatives is a conflict between orientations. Jon's research has shown that liberals and conservatives have different evaluative sensibilities, especially regarding authority and purity, and that this pattern spans most, if not all, cultures. Meanwhile other scientists have gathered strong evidence that these differences in perspective stem from differences in brain structure. As of 2011, a machine interpreting brain scans could predict 71.6% of the time whether the scanned person will claim to be liberal or conservative. In 2005, Alford, Funk and Hibbing published research on identical and fraternal twins raised together and apart, showing that genes explain 43% of observed variance in agreement with conservative attitudes, while parenting explains an additional 22%. All of this new science has been establishing that liberal/conservative inclination is just like race and gender, a biological trait which is typically inherited.

What does that scholarship do for you, if you lead a conservative or liberal group? It undermines your ability to explain disagreements with political opponents as purely a matter of education. It suggests that your group can achieve its goals only through discrimination – through destroying (or closeting) opponents' GRIN identities – and thus puts your group in the same category as eighteenth-century sexist and racist bigots. Can you respond by simply telling your followers to change? Of course not! Leaders cannot treat their followers as opponents! There is a sense in which any scholarship yields truth, but no sense in which this scholarship provides solutions, no sense in which it allows itself to become normal belief. Showing that

privilege is not *deserved* did not end racism nor sexism – it merely hinted at a potential for social reform – and we cannot expect it to end GRIN discrimination either.

Evidence that protecting our freedom requires protecting GRIN diversity arises in an age when our religious, philosophical and political theories all treat us as being of a single type: the type with freewill. According to all of these theories, humans are subject to different moral rules than machines, apes, ants and viruses, yet different types of humans are not subject to different rules from each other. In retrospect, this double-standard, allowing for differences between humans and non-humans, yet not *among* humans, seems suspicious...maybe even arrogant. Evidence that freewill is something humans often lack drives a wedge into that double-standard, a wedge that will inevitably topple modern society. If you are a leader of a nation, a business, a team, or even just a family, then it will be your job to pick up the pieces, and the second half of this book is written out of respect for that duty. No book can replace leadership, but it can at least give you tools.

Fortunately, the same traditions which gave us our double-standard also gave us a time-tested solution to the diversity problem. The rich cultures which have empowered us to survive this long include well-honed lists of teachings to balance GRIN orientations. While each culture expresses it with its own flair, we encounter the same list in Judaism, Confucianism, Taoism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, and science. These eight moral authorities do not agree on much else, so their agreement on these teachings is strong evidence that the teachings have value. Each teaching balances one or more GRIN orientations – together they keep the entire set of orientations in check. The teachings humble us. They convince us on our own terms that we need each other. When a moral ecosystem is losing balance, the teachings are the tools leaders can use to heal it.

This way of convincing people to value GRIN diversity is well documented in exactly the places you would expect to find moral truth: the Tanakh, the Bhagavad Gita, the Tao te Ching, the Dhammapada of Buddha, the Analects of Confucius, the Bible, the Qu'ran, and peer-reviewed scientific journals. Furthermore, because such diverse authorities agree on these teachings, we can promote them without fear of discriminating against any particular religion (or non-religion). None of these authorities present the entire list in the organized way this book does, but each endorses the entire list, and that makes leadership possible.

In addition to presenting the entire list of teachings and their citations in all eight authorities, Part Two of this book includes the Evaluative Diversity Monitoring Tool for Organizations (EDMTO), a tool you can use to monitor diversity in your organization. Using the EDMTO is like monitoring pH levels in a lake; it detects shifts in effective diversity, so it responds to closeting as well as to changes in team composition, and it can detect shifts in unknown orientations, as well as those already in the GRIN model. It is designed to roll into organizations' regular accounting practices, and to alert leaders of pending trouble even before financial measures do (i.e. before it is too late). Not only does the EDMTO permit more responsive leadership, but it allows leaders to measure the impact of their diversity management efforts.

This book is designed to be read as a reference. Continue with Chapter Two, which will guide you to use the GRIN self-quiz to identify your own orientation. Depending upon your results, Chapter Two will direct you to Chapter Three, Four, Five, Six, or Seven for information about the value of your approach. Each of these chapters will end by referring you to the

chapters in Part Two which describe the teachings related to your orientation. Reading this book in that order will give you greater appreciation for both your value and your limits. Our survival will ultimately require that each of us tolerate decisions we cannot justify from within the GRIN orientations we prefer. Our problem is not that goodness is fictional, nor that we are inadequate to attain it; our problem is merely that we are inadequate to attain it without diversity.

Society needs diversity. It needs each of us to be our unique selves. If you want the kind of peace that comes from eliminating all opposition, you'll want to ignore the second part of this book, or at least the teachings which reveal your personal inadequacy. I understand the temptation. However, this book is designed to give you a different kind of peace, the kind that comes from more complete self-knowledge:

- How you are different (i.e. using the GRIN self-quiz to find yourself)
- Why your difference is good (i.e. explaining your value to society)
- Why you should appreciate others (i.e. valuing GRIN diversity)

¹Greene, Joshua D. 2009. The cognitive neuroscience of moral judgment. In *The Cognitive Neurosciences IV*, ed. Gazzaniga, M.S. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

²Elkington, John; Hartigan, Pamela (2008). *The Power of Unreasonable People: How Social Entrepreneurs Create Markets That Change the World*. Boston: Harvard Business Press. p. 183.