



# The Good Life: Wellbeing and the new science of altruism, selfishness and immorality

*Graham Music*

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**Are we born selfish or primed to help others?**

**Does stress make people more antisocial?**

**Can we ever be genuinely altruistic?**

This book explores some of the dilemmas at the heart of being human. Integrating cutting edge studies with in-depth clinical experience, Graham Music synthesizes a wealth of fascinating research into an explanation of altruism, cooperation and generosity and shows how we are primed to turn off the 'better angels of our nature' in the face of stress, anxiety and fear.

Using fascinating psychological research but rooted in a clinician's understanding of the impact of stress on our moral and pro-social capacities, *The Good Life* covers topics as diverse as:

- The role of parenting and family life in shaping how antisocial or pro-social we become
- How stress, abuse and insecure attachment profoundly undermine empathic and altruistic capacities
- The relative influence of our genes or environments on becoming big-hearted or coldly psychopathic
- How our immediate contexts and recent social changes might tilt us towards either selfish or cooperative behaviour

This book makes a unique contribution to a subject that is increasingly on people's minds. It does not shirk complexity, nor suggest easy explanations, but offers a hard look at the evidence in the hope that we can gain some understanding of how a 'Good Life' might develop. Often personally challenging, intellectually exhilarating and written with an easily accessible style, *The Good Life* makes sense of how our moral selves take shape, and shines a light on the roots of goodness and nastiness.

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