

# Reclaiming Virtue: How We Can Develop the Moral Intelligence to Do the Right Thing at the Right Time for the Right Reason

John Bradshaw



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In his groundbreaking *New York Times* bestselling books and compelling PBS specials, John Bradshaw transformed our understanding of the family and became a dominant figure in the field of addiction and recovery. Now he brings together a lifetime of experience and teaching to redefine virtue—how we learn it and live it—for our troubled times.

John Bradshaw has written this book for the millions of decent, caring people who are struggling every day with painful choices, who are appalled—as he is—by the greed and shamelessness that plague our society, and who long for guidance for themselves and their children in an increasingly complex world.

Is the only solution a return to an oppressive, rules-based morality or an idealized past? Bradshaw says no. Instead he shows that each of us has what he calls an inborn *moral intelligence*, an inner guidance system that can lead us—if we know how to cultivate it in ourselves and others.

His fascinating discussion ranges from the ancient Greek philosophers to modern explorations of emotional development, from provocative historical insights to the recent discoveries of neuroscience. Why do so many attempts at moral education fail? What is willpower, and how can we develop it? How can we navigate the inevitable problems of love and work and aging? How can we begin again after addiction or failure? How can we lead and discipline our children?

What emerges is a clear vision of a morality grounded in childhood, educated by the practice of both traditional and modern virtues, and culminating in the moment-to-moment ability to "do the right thing at the right time for the right reason." **Reclaiming Virtue** is both an inspiring appeal to what Abraham Lincoln called "the better angels of our nature" and a wise guide to building a life of unshakable integrity and well-being.



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