

Short Answer #1

In Chapter 3 of his book, *The Righteous Mind*, Haidt asserts, “intuitions come first, reasoning second,” disproving past philosophers such as Aristotle who believed reasoning to be supreme. To demonstrate his theory, Haidt uses psychological research. The research that Haidt describes proves that reason is not the dominant factor in human decision-making. Within his chapter, Haidt explains in detail six major research findings that support the theory that intuitions come before reasoning.

The first finding is that the human brain evaluates instantly and constantly. Social psychologist, Robert Zajonc conducted a “priming” study that demonstrated that the human brain thinks independently of feeling. Zajonc’s research was considered to be a landmark because it proved that “feeling” is the first process. In a different study, Haidt found that our bodily states have the power to influence our moral judgments. In exposing people to bad smells and tastes, it was proven that people become more judgmental about certain things. Another imperative finding that Haidt mentions is the claim that social and political judgments are considered to be particularly intuitive. Through the work and research of Alex Tordov, it is established that human minds are constantly reacting intuitively to everything they perceive, and basing their responses to those reactions. Our social judgments are heavily relied on quick intuitive feelings.

Haidt’s claim that “intuitions come first, reasoning second” is considered to be radical because philosophers previously established reasoning as the primary element in human decision-making. Through his research and studies, Haidt has effectively demonstrated that intuitions are extremely significant in the thinking process and that they in fact triumph over reasoning. Although he believes that intuitions come first, Haidt still stresses that reasoning

matters, particularly between people. Reasoning shapes many of our intuitions. Haidt concludes that the elephant (automatic processes) is the dominant action in moral psychology.