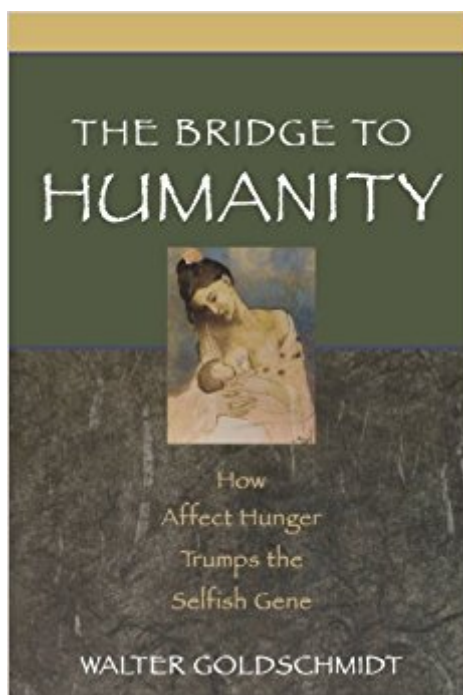


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The Bridge To Humanity: How Affect Hunger Trumps The Selfish Gene



Synopsis

The Bridge to Humanity: How Affect Hunger Trumps the Selfish Gene explores the relationship of biology and culture in the evolution of human behavior. Building upon several of the theoretical issues he first addressed in *Man's Way*, renowned anthropologist Walter Goldschmidt presents a unique look at how human culture functions through biological mechanisms that have evolved from our distant past. "Affect hunger"--the need for affective expressions from others--underlies nurturance and mutuality. Goldschmidt contends that affect hunger--in combination with other factors unique to the human species--in effect "trumps" the selfish gene and is therefore the essential missing key to understanding human behavior. Employing discussions of primate behavior, ethnographies, cognitive studies, psychological research, and hormonal and neurological studies, he demonstrates how affect hunger not only provides a reward system for learning language and other cultural information, but also remains a motive for social behavior throughout life. Transforming the debate on nature versus culture to one on nature and culture, *The Bridge to Humanity* provides a fresh perspective on the ways that biology and culture fit together. Indeed, in this book Goldschmidt reinterprets anthropological knowledge, profoundly affecting all students concerned with human behavior and reaching far beyond the discipline's borders.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Finally, a cultural anthropologist who understands biology! Graced with the gifts of clarity and brevity, Goldschmidt has contributed the best short book on human nature and culture that has

appeared in many years."--Melvin Konner, M.D., Ph.D., author of *The Tangled Wing: Biological Constraints on the Human Spirit* and Samuel C. Dobbs Professor of Anthropology, Emory University "An exceptional book. To my mind, it should be required reading for all anthropology majors and incoming anthropology graduate students. Goldschmidt provides a sophisticated appraisal of the biological and cultural components that underlie human evolution and behavior."--Robert Sussman, Washington University "Dr. Goldschmidt is both an extremely sharp and original thinker and a very, very respected 'elder' in our tribe. He knows the field as do few, if any, others. . . . An amazingly original and insightful book."--Eugene Anderson, University of California, Riverside "My students and I enjoyed the book immensely. Goldschmidt offers a truly insightful synthesis of the influence of genes and environment on behavior. He demonstrates a keen awareness of and appreciation for our genetic predispositions for and constraints on learning. His insight into the need for what he terms "affect hunger", and the early influence by caretakers on molding personality and culture-specific behaviors is enlightening, even after years of learning and thinking about the enculturation process." - Barbara J. Welker, SUNY Geneseo

Walter Goldschmidt is at U.C.L.A. (Emeritus).

In this book, Goldschmidt, an emeritus anthropologist, pulls together several strands of scientific work on genetics and cognition into a view of human evolution that provides some deep insights into what makes us human. One of the primary insights that he builds on is the recent discovery of mirror neurons, which allow us to learn through observation. Goldschmidt's idea that the evolution of language and tool making are related is also a valuable one. But most important is his overarching idea that affect hunger is the source of culture; that it is a biological need, yet one that connects us with others, and therefore encourages the cooperation and empathy that makes culture and civilization possible.

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