

# Moral Choices VIII

**Making the choice, at the wye in the road, for our responses.**

**[Reflections based on J Haidt The Righteous Mind]**

When trying to convince another of your point of view Dale Carnegie said “if there is one secret of success it lies in the ability to get the other person’s point of view and see things from their angle as well as your own.” This is obvious in light of Jesus’ command to remove the plank from your own eye to see the splinter in your friend’s eye, but few seem to apply it in moral and political arguments because we so easily shift into combat mode when we are challenged. We may argue well, but it will not convince our opponent, because logic will not speak to the decision making core of our minds which is the elephant, the emotions. When we open ourselves to see things from another’s perspective, we might even find that our own mind opens in response. Empathy is the antidote to self-righteousness. These insights are also corroborated by scientific research on how we think. Scientists discovered with MRI’s and other technical tools that the brain fires in the area of “affect” [emotions or feelings] immediately upon being confronted with a choice. The second wave comes from the area of complex thinking. In other words the elephant is first to respond and the rider [the intellect] follows. If the rider, the intellect is an attentive servant, trying to anticipate the elephant’s next move, if the elephant leans slightly to the right, as though preparing to take a step, the rider will look to the right and start preparing to assist on the journey to the right. At the same time the rider loses interest in everything off to the left.

**IHM Pray for us.**

*Fr. Jerry*