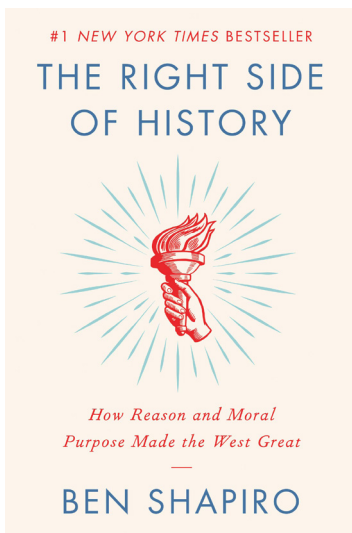


# EXECUTIVE BOOK SUMMARIES

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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# The Right Side of History

## THE NUTSHELL

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### Introduction

The twin notions that God created every human being in His image, and that human beings are capable of investigating and exploring God's world built our civilization, and built us as individuals. In America, we are in the process of abandoning Judeo-Christian values and Greek natural law, favoring moral subjectivism and the rule of passion. It took Western civilization three thousand years to get here—we can lose it all in one generation, unless we begin shoring up our foundations.

### Chapter 1 - The Pursuit of Happiness

Thomas Jefferson didn't write that the government was granted power to grant you happiness: it was there to protect your pursuit of happiness. Instead of looking inward to find ways to better their lives, we've decided that the chief obstacle to our happiness is outside forces, even in the freest, richest country in the history of the world. We've mixed up the means with the ends. And in doing so, we've left our souls in desperate need of sustenance. We must make our way back toward our roots.

### Chapter 2 - From the Mountaintop

The Bible presents a fulsome view of human happiness. The Bible tells us what God expects of us and tells us that we have the duty to fulfill those expectations. But revelation is not enough. The soul with which God endowed man seeks the

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Divine through reason—the uniquely human quality that lifts humans above the animals, and places us at the foot of God’s throne. To seek a higher moral purpose, human beings must cultivate their reason.

## Chapter 3 - From the Dust

The classical roots of Western civilization in Athens still have much to teach us. Athens teaches us what we are capable of doing as human beings. Athens teaches us that we have the ability to use our reason to reach beyond ourselves. Athens teaches us not only how liberty can flourish, but why it *should*. Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoics developed ethical systems that didn’t merely recommend personal cultivation, but also encompassed the creation of new forms of government.

## Chapter 4 - Coming Together

The birth of Christianity represented the first serious attempt to merge Jewish thought with Greek thought. The Christian admixture was far more Jewish than Greek in its vision of God and of man’s quest in the world, but it was also far more Greek than Jewish in its universality. Thomas Aquinas merged Aristotelianism and Christianity—a commitment to reason and logic, as well as to revelation. God orders us to use our reason, and reason impels us to discover the natural law—laws designed by God.

## Chapter 5 - Endowed by Their Creator

By the end of the thirteenth century, two strong new ideas emerged: first, human beings are capable of exploring the world and bettering their material condition in it; second, each human being is free and endowed with natural rights. The philosophy of the founders, made material in the creation of the United States and in the continuing quest to fulfill their ideals, has been the greatest blessing for mankind in human history.

## Chapter 6 - Killing Purpose

Charles Darwin’s *On the Origin of Species* (1859) proposed the notion of a world without God. Man was merely the next step up in a chain of evolution propelled forward by natural selection. Friedrich Nietzsche advocated the destruction of Judeo-Christian values. He properly understood that all other systems of morality are based at root on the moral discoveries of the Judeo-Christian tradition—and he said that man can only be freed by destroying that moral vestigial structure. What was required is a new morality.

## Chapter 7 - The Remaking of the World

The American Revolution, based on the God-given rights of individuals, the value of social virtue, and a state system created to preserve inalienable individual rights, broke sharply with the French Revolution, which was born with a utopian sense of purpose: man would finally be free of old constraints. By the end of WW II the three prominent collectivist world-views—romantic nationalism, communism, and bureaucracy—came into direct conflict. The West was suddenly in crisis.

## Chapter 8 - After the Fire

The world survived World War II. But there remained a hole at the center of Western civilization: a meaning shaped hole. That hole has grown larger and larger in the decades since. We tried to fill it with the will to action; we tried to fill it with science; we tried to fill it with world-changing political activism. None of it provides us the meaning we seek.

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## Chapter 9 - The Return to Paganism

Unfortunately, reason is no longer in vogue. Subjectivity rules the day. Reason suggests that one person can know better than another, that one person's perspective can be more correct than someone else's. Reason is intolerant. Better to destroy reason than to abide by its dictates. But the death of reason could have been predicted once reason alone failed to provide us with meaning. Our only alternative is to return to the Judeo-Christian values and Greek reason that undergirded America's founding.

## Conclusion - How to Build

America is struggling right now for our national soul. We are so *angry* at each other right now. Where did it come from? It came from the destruction of a common vision. We used to believe in the Founding vision, supported by a framework of personal virtue culled from Judeo-Christian morality. Our individual and communal happiness depends on us regaining the values we're losing all too quickly. If we wish our civilization to survive, however, we must be willing to teach our children. The only way to protect *their* children is to make warriors of our own children. We must make our children messengers for the truths that *matter*.