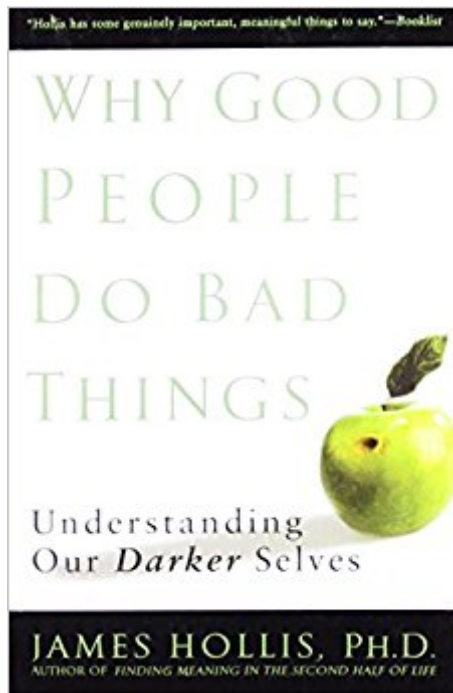




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Why Good People Do Bad Things: Understanding Our Darker Selves



Synopsis

Working with the Shadow is not working with evil, per se. It is working toward the possibility of greater wholeness. We will never experience healing until we can come to love our unlovable places, for they, too, ask love of us. How is it that good people do bad things? Why is our personal story and our societal history so bloody, so repetitive, so injurious to self and others? How do we make sense of the discrepancies between who we think we are or who we show to the outside world versus our everyday behaviors? Why are otherwise ordinary people driven to addictions and compulsions, whether alcohol, drugs, food, shopping, infidelity, or the Internet? Why are interpersonal relationships so often filled with strife? Exploring Jung's concept of the Shadow—the unconscious parts of our self that contradict the image of the self we hope to project—Why Good People Do Bad Things guides you through all the ways in which many of our seemingly unexplainable behaviors are manifestations of the Shadow. In addition to its presence in our personal lives, Hollis looks at the larger picture of the Shadow at work in our culture—from organized religion to the suffering and injustice that abounds in our modern world. Accepting and examining the Shadow as part of one's self, Hollis suggests, is the first step toward wholeness. Revealing a new way of understanding our darker selves, Hollis offers wisdom to help you to acquire a more conscious conduct of your life and bring a new level of awareness to your daily actions and choices.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Jungian psychologist Hollis turns the whole why-bad-things-happen-to-good-people question

around and asks, instead, why good people often do such horrible things. Exploring the notion of the Shadow, Jung's term to describe the hidden aspects of ourselves--the parts that contradict the self we show the rest of the world, the dark side of our personality--Hollis suggests that we can only become whole (and good) by acknowledging our Shadow and accepting that it's OK to have a dark side, as long as we never let it take control of who we are. The prose is a little stodgy, and some readers might find the book feels a little too similar to others in the psychological self-help genre, but finally the similarities are only superficial. The difference between this book and most of the slick self-helpers is that Hollis has some genuinely important, meaningful things to say. A thoughtful book, well worth the concentration involved in reading it. David Pitt

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James Hollis is one of our great teachers and healers. (Stephen Dunn, Pulitzer Prize Winning Poet)

Nourishing. . . . Like a master chef, James Hollis knows that good food for the soul cannot be ordered to go. ("The Plain Dealer," Cleveland)

Hollis speaks to and teaches from the heart. A combination of genuine vision and genuine humanity is a rare and valuable gift... (Clarissa Pinkola Estés, author of "Women Who Run with the Wolves")

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[Hollis] speaks to and teaches from the heart. A combination of genuine vision and genuine humanity is a rare and valuable gift... (Clarissa Pinkola Estés, author of "Women Who Run with the Wolves")

Everyone seems to be obsessing about the monetary cost of the graying of the American population, but there's very little talk of the soul. James Hollis...has plenty to say about the soul erudite and cultured but also accessible. ("The Portland Tribune")

Praise for "Why Good People Do Bad Things" and for James Hollis

Hollis suggests that we can only become whole (and good) by acknowledging our Shadow and accepting that it's OK to have a dark side, as long as we never let it take control of who we are. . . . The difference between this book and most of the slick self-helpers is that Hollis has genuinely important, meaningful things to say.

"Booklist"

Nourishing. . . . Like a master chef, James Hollis knows that good food for the soul cannot be ordered to go.

"The Plain Dealer"

The title might lead a casual reader to dismiss this as just one more lightweight self-help book -- but that's not the case, not in the least! As with Hollis' earlier books, it's a psychologically & philosophically rich examination of the human soul, offering no easy answers, no magic solutions, no simplistic aphorisms in place of real insight. If you truly want to understand your life & its choices, then you have to be willing to do some difficult & often painful emotional work. And that's something

few of us are eager to do. Which leads us to the question: do you want to grow, to become more fully conscious, to strive towards wholeness? If so, you'll have to discard protective illusions, stop expecting someone else to solve everything for you, and apply an almost ruthless honesty to yourself. You won't like a lot of what you see in that dark mirror, and you'll try to fend it off, explain it away ... but that's our mistake. If we can acknowledge the part we unconsciously play in our own suffering, we may well learn how to alleviate some of it & live with what remains. Mind you, Hollis never promises an end to suffering, a wondrous makeover that does away with every ugly scar & thought! He has too much respect for the tragic view of human life to hold up an illusion of perfect happiness, no matter how golden & comforting. He's very clear on this: what we need isn't happiness, but meaning. And to find it, we have to be willing to grapple with the Shadow, all that we fear & despise about ourselves, all that we reject & often project onto others. I feel that this is one of Hollis' finest books, in that it possesses an extra depth & richness of insight. It made me look at my own life more deeply than I have in the past, and encouraged me to confront many of its uncomfortable & frightening aspects. At the very least, it will make you think long & hard about yourself. At the most, it may set you forth upon a fascinating & revealing journey. Most highly recommended!

This book is not for everyone. Expect to be disturbed and upset, and constantly uncomfortable. This book took me months to read, not because of the author's impressive vocabulary (keep a dictionary handy) but because I had to put it down, sometimes for weeks. This is not an easy trip, and if you pick this up you should do so knowing that there's no attempt in these pages to tell you that everything is going to be ok. This is hard work and nothing can change that. But it is valuable, rewarding work.

James Hollis approach of our dark side is indeed enlightening. The understanding that only throughout integrating our dualities and ambiguities can we truly mature and evolve as human beings is crucial to fully live the life that is willing to be manifested throughout our Selves. The age of demonizing and vilifying what we cannot completely understand needs to be left behind, for a larger life and way of being is awaiting for us already.

You need to read the book to understand the points the author is making. I read it and can see how some things relate to my personal life but that is from my perception. I can not comment or predict that this book will create the same understanding it others. That being said, I did enjoy the book,

found it interesting, informative, well researched and well written.

I love the way this man writes. I can tell by the depth of what he teaches that he has a very rich background and excellent training. He takes some very profound ideas and explains them so that they are easy to understand by people (like me) who do not have the advanced degrees that he has achieved. The Jungian system of depth analysis is a complex and elaborate system of teaching the workings of the psyche. Dr Hollis does a superb job of explaining these complex ideas. I highly recommend this book or any of Dr Hollis' books to anyone who wants to increase their understanding of the human psyche.

I love this book and its author. I read the whole thing back to back a couple of years ago. I passed on the book to a friend. Now another friend is ready to look at the reasons of why we have a dark side as people, as countries, and as a planet. This author is a Jungian psychologist and quite astute in his views and elucidations. My friend started reading the book and is appreciating it. Unfortunately he is a busy guy and would probably be able to read as he travels on planes. I couldn't stop when I started this book. It was a reading that I looked forward to. By reading this book, you will understand why we have bloodshed, wars and weird people and also why we may have unexplained, possibly strange and unintegrated parts of ourselves. I recommend it highly to anyone who does inner work.

James Hollis, the Swiss Trained Jungian Psychologist is clearly one of the profound Jungian thinkers and writers of our time. His works provide great overview, clear insight and complex understanding of human nature. This book, although slapped in the face by the lack of judgement of a publisher who wanted a catchy title, provides the same level of insight that many of his other works do on various facets of human development. His master work on relationships *The Eden Project* and his Audio CD set *Through A Dark Wood* provide illuminated and transformative levels of information on human psychological and interpersonal development. This book even goes on to describe shadow energies at the institutional level. Hollis makes a superb case in his book through examples and overall structure that we can have no better relationship with others than we have with ourselves. He then goes on to offer tools and skills that can help a person to do the depth work to make such progress. It is truly a shame that the book was titled to attract such a superficial audience. A title designed to attract those interested in depth understanding of the human psyche would have resulted in a substantially different set of reviews.

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