



Evolution for Everyone: How Darwin's Theory Can Change the Way We Think About Our Lives

By David Sloan Wilson

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What is the biological reason for gossip?

For laughter? For the creation of art?

Why do dogs have curly tails?

What can microbes tell us about morality?

These and many other questions are tackled by renowned evolutionist David Sloan Wilson in this witty and groundbreaking new book. With stories that entertain as much as they inform, Wilson outlines the basic principles of evolution and shows how, properly understood, they can illuminate the length and breadth of creation, from the origin of life to the nature of religion. Now everyone can move beyond the sterile debates about creationism and intelligent design to share Darwin's panoramic view of animal and human life, seamlessly connected to each other.

Evolution, as Wilson explains, is not just about dinosaurs and human origins, but about why all species behave as they do—from beetles that devour their own young, to bees that function as a collective brain, to dogs that are smarter in some respects than our closest ape relatives. And basic evolutionary principles are also the foundation for humanity's capacity for symbolic thought, culture, and morality.

In example after example, Wilson sheds new light on Darwin's grand theory and how it can be applied to daily life. By turns thoughtful, provocative, and daringly funny, **Evolution for Everyone** addresses some of the deepest philosophical and social issues of this or any age. In helping us come to a deeper understanding of human beings and our place in the world, it might also help us to improve that world.

From the Hardcover edition.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Starred Review. Evolution is far more than just dinosaurs and fossils, Wilson says, and he enthusiastically explains, with a clear and pleasing style, how it affects our everyday lives. This is Wilson's fourth book on evolution (*Darwin's Cathedral*, etc.) and is by far the most accessible account of evolution for a general audience, as well as the farthest ranging. Building on diverse examples, Wilson demonstrates that evolution is completely relevant to modern human affairs, including how we use language, create culture and define morality. The discussion is as entertaining as it is easy to follow, covering topics as seemingly unrelated as why the burying beetle commits infanticide and why so many domestic animals have floppy ears. For readers seeking a more technical presentation, Wilson offers both a complete bibliography and list of Web sites for reference. Readers who've grown weary of the usual treatment of evolution as a deadly foe to religion will find Wilson's book a cheerful antidote, breaking new ground in its sweeping breadth and offering much to think about. (Apr. 3)

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From [Bookmarks Magazine](#)

Evolution for Everyone is David Sloan Wilson's fifth book on the subject (including *Darwin's Cathedral* and *The Literary Animal*) and the most reader-friendly. Critics favorably compare the effort to Steven J. Levitt's and Stephen J. Dubner's runaway best seller *Freakonomics*. They claim that Wilson, professor of biology and anthropology at Britain's Binghamton University, does for evolution what those two authors did for economics—that is, draw interesting and unexpected connections between musty theory and its practical applications in our everyday lives. Although most of his observations are right on the mark, Wilson's desire to connect evolution and religion may strike some as overreaching or preachy.

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From [Booklist](#)

Wilson, the author of *Darwin's Cathedral* (2002), tends to approach evolution from slightly offbeat angles. Describing himself as simply an evolutionist (rather than an evolutionary biologist, or some other qualifier), he uses the principles of evolution to understand "all things human." Can evolutionary theory explain the horizontal-vertical dimensions in religion ("out there" versus "up there")? Is there a genetic basis for the human desire to dance? Is there an evolutionary explanation for the simplest human traits, such as laughter? The author describes his book as a "journey from the origin of life to human morality and religion," and that sums it up pretty nicely. Sure to be derided or condemned by some evolutionary specialists--especially those who live in the Ivory Archipelago, Wilson's "home" for scientists who microscopically examine Darwin's theory while ignoring its larger, real-world implications--the book is nevertheless ambitious, thoughtful, and intellectually stimulating. Readers will agree or disagree with Wilson to varying degrees, but they will all agree on one thing: he makes you think hard about how we got the way we are. *David Pitt*

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Users Review

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Kirsten Muncy:

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