Motivated Reasoning -- The Greatest Hits


- A user-friendly introduction to motivated reasoning, the backfire effect, and their implications for deliberative democracy.


- A broad review of research in motivated processing of information – sets the stage nicely for more focused studies on motivated reasoning in political contexts.


- Clearly states the principal hypotheses for motivated reasoning in political contexts and provides empirical evidence for each.


- Establishes the existence of an “affective tipping point,” a threshold that motivated reasoners reach after encountering a significant amount of challenging evidence, at which point they stop engaging in defensive processing and update their old beliefs in light of new evidence.


- Suggests that affirming the subject’s sense of self-worth can mitigate motivated reasoning, as can presenting challenging information in a graphical format (rather than just text).

Happy reading!

Mark Lenker
Greenwood Library, Longwood University
lenkermn@longwood.edu