



# Passions Within Reason: The Strategic Role of the Emotions

*By Robert H. Frank*



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**In this book, I make use of an idea from economics to suggest how noble human tendencies might not only have survived the ruthless pressures of the material world, but actually have been nurtured by them.**

The idea rests on a simple paradox, namely, that in many situations the conscious pursuit of self-interest is incompatible with its attainment. We are all comfortable with the notion that someone who strives to be spontaneous can never succeed. So too, on brief reflection, will it become apparent that someone who always pursues self-interest is doomed to fail.



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### **Editorial Review**

From Library Journal

To be moral is to be a chump. Or is it? Frank (economics, Cornell) believes in the efficacy of the selfless act and provides a new interpretation of the empirical research on common behavioral signals implying commitment to social values. He thus offers a much-needed refinement of the influential Rational Expectations Hypothesis, a decision theory used chiefly by economists whereby materialist motives of self-interest are ascribed to the average person weighing costs and benefits for every action. After a wide-ranging and thorough discussion of the implications of collaborative and unopportunistic behavior, Frank presents his own "commitment model" for prudential cooperation, which emphasizes the strategic and clarifying role of the emotions in facilitating socially efficient interactions. William Abrams, Portland State Univ. Lib., Ore. Copyright 1988 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Review

... offers a much-needed refinement of the influential Rational Expectations Hypothesis. -- *William Abrams, Library Journal*

Frank wants us to be more altruistic but he also is intent on convincing his fellow social scientists that embellishing self-interest theory with systematic consideration of the role of the emotions will permit explanation and prediction of more of human behavior . . . . One can find fault with this book: Frank demonstrates the importance of 'emotions' but never either defines them or even presents us with a complete list. Nor do we know whether he believes we choose or are pawns of our sentiments. Still, this is an important work. Frank's intellectually fruitful and socially hopeful central argument prevails. -- *John Brandl, Commonweal*

Through myriad hypothetical examples, factual accounts and case studies, and theoretical models, Frank explores the seams between the behavioral sciences and strikes at their central assumptions and methodologies . . . . Annotated coverage of leading research and researchers coupled with ample notes and references, offer solid bibliographical aids. -- *A.R. Sanderson, Choice*

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