

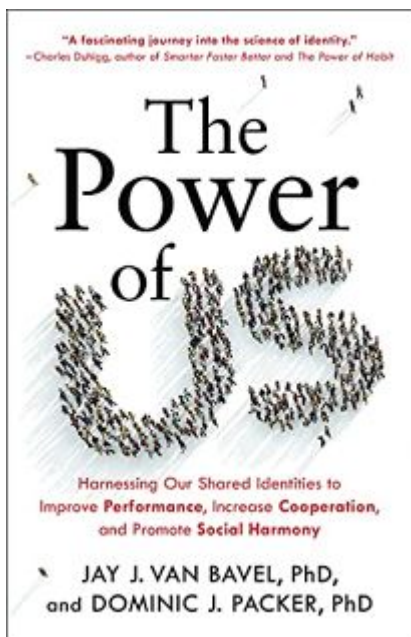
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★ The Power of Us: Harnessing Our Shared Identities to Improve Performance, Increase Cooperation, and Promote Social Harmony

Dominic J. Packer and Jay J. Van Bavel. Little, Brown Spark, \$28 (320p) ISBN 978-0-316-53841-1

Psychologists Packer and Van Bavel explore “how the groups that people belong to become part of their sense of self” in this thought-provoking debut. Identities that come from groups—such as college alma maters and political parties—can influence how one makes sense of the world, the authors write: the way one sees, smells, tastes, and even does math is affected by the “identity colored glasses” one wears. Packer and Van Bavel use a variety of quirky examples and historical vignettes to make their point: in Herzogenaurach, a southern German town, citizens have defined themselves by the shoes they wear, and John F. Kennedy’s decision-making process to move forward with the Bay of Pigs Invasion was a result of groupthink. Giving equal time to the detriments of identifying strongly with a group (such as political polarization and blind loyalty), as well as the benefits (solidarity and a shared sense of purpose), Packer and Van Bavel deliver a balanced assessment of the potential impacts identities play in even the most mundane activities. Providing a wealth of insight in a page-turning package, this timely survey hits the mark. *Agent: Jim Levine, Levine Greenberg Rostan. (Sept.)*

DETAILS