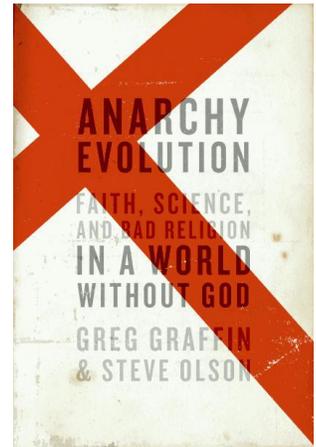


Talking Points for
Anarchy Evolution
Faith, Science, and Bad Religion in a World Without God
Greg Graffin and Steve Olson
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- You do not need to believe in God to have meaning and purpose in your life.
- Human meaning comes from other people, not from belief in a supernatural deity.
- Evolutionary biology and punk rock – the two fields where I’ve spent most of my life – may not seem to have much in common. But both are based on questioning authority, relying on reason, and celebrating creativity. As I write in the book, “If Charles Darwin were alive today, I think he would find something very attractive about punk rock.”
- The message at the heart of punk rock – and science – is that people need to think for themselves.
- You are not condemned to think or believe whatever you were taught as a child. Many people arrive at quite different beliefs as an adult – and they usually begin this process of rediscovery by questioning conventional wisdom.
- Unwarranted authority needs to be resisted, whether religious, political, or cultural.
- The philosophical position known as naturalism – which holds that the entire universe consists only of matter, energy, space, and time – provides a framework that people can use to find meaning in life.
- The naturalist worldview teaches us to respect evidence, trust our senses, arrive at consensus through dialogue and reason, and promote this worldview to others.
- A recognition that tragedy is inevitable is part of the naturalist worldview. This recognition cannot ease the pain of tragedy. But tragedy need not cause despair.
- Creativity is the counterbalance to tragedy. All of life can be seen as a natural outpouring of new organic forms, new evolutionary lineages, and new ideas.
- Many evolutionary biologists place great emphasis on natural selection as a source of biological traits, including our own traits. But much of what we see in the biological world has nothing to do with natural selection. It reflects instead the natural anarchic exuberance of life.
- Many years of studying biology have convinced me that evolution is essentially anarchic. It has no direction or purpose. Yet out of this anarchy has emerged creatures of great sophistication and beauty.

- An understanding of evolution can help us think clearly about our own lives. We can base our actions on evidence and reason, not on blind allegiance to archaic edicts.
- The proper response to a world without God is to embrace life. Each of us has a responsibility to construct meaning from the love of family and friends, from study and enjoyment of the natural world, and from our membership in a worldwide community of like-minded individuals.

Greg Graffin, born in Racine, Wisconsin, is most recognized as the lead vocalist and songwriter of the noted Los Angeles band Bad Religion, which he co-founded in 1980 and has been its only constant member. Graffin is also a professor of life sciences and obtained his Ph.D. at Cornell University. He has lectured courses in life sciences and paleontology at the University of California, Los Angeles.

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