

## Better Angels Book & Video Discussion Guide

*Being Wrong: Adventures in the Margin of Error*, by Kathryn Schulz

TED talk by Kathryn Schulz: <https://youtu.be/QleRgTBMX88>

### Optional resources for pre-discussion reading and reflection

Blog post by Schulz on wrongness and our nation's founding (and why it's a good thing!) :

<https://freakonomics.com//2010/07/28/the-united-mistakes-of-america/>

Transcript of Schulz's TED talk:

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1wvB7YSeDyWILMV8K0ucg5x8Q5zFCJeRY\\_yk5HL7cmEg/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1wvB7YSeDyWILMV8K0ucg5x8Q5zFCJeRY_yk5HL7cmEg/edit?usp=sharing)

### Discussion questions

1. Schulz writes that "A whole lot of us go through life assuming that we are basically right, basically all the time, about basically everything: about our political and intellectual convictions, our religious and moral beliefs, our assessment of other people, our memories, our grasp of facts. As absurd as it sounds when we stop to think about it, our steady state seems to be one of unconsciously assuming that we are very close to omniscient." How does this resonate with you personally? Does this sound like an accurate description of your own life experiences?
2. In the final chapter of her book, and in her closing comments of her TED talk, Schulz talks about the pleasure of experiencing our own wrongness. Comedy, suspense, innovation, imagination, the unpredictability of life that takes us to places we'd never dreamed...they all hinge on things turning out differently than we once thought. She asserts our ability to be wrong is a kind of superpower, unique to humans. What do you think of this idea? If being wrong is so great, why is it so difficult to embrace?
3. Schulz writes that "our beliefs are inextricable from our identities. That's one reason why being wrong can so easily wound our sense of self." If this is true, what does it say about our ability to connect with people "on the other side"?

### The Better Angels Pledge

- As individuals, we try to understand the other side's point of view, even if we don't agree with it.
- In our communities, we engage those we disagree with, looking for common ground and ways to work together.
- In politics, we support principles that bring us together rather than divide us.