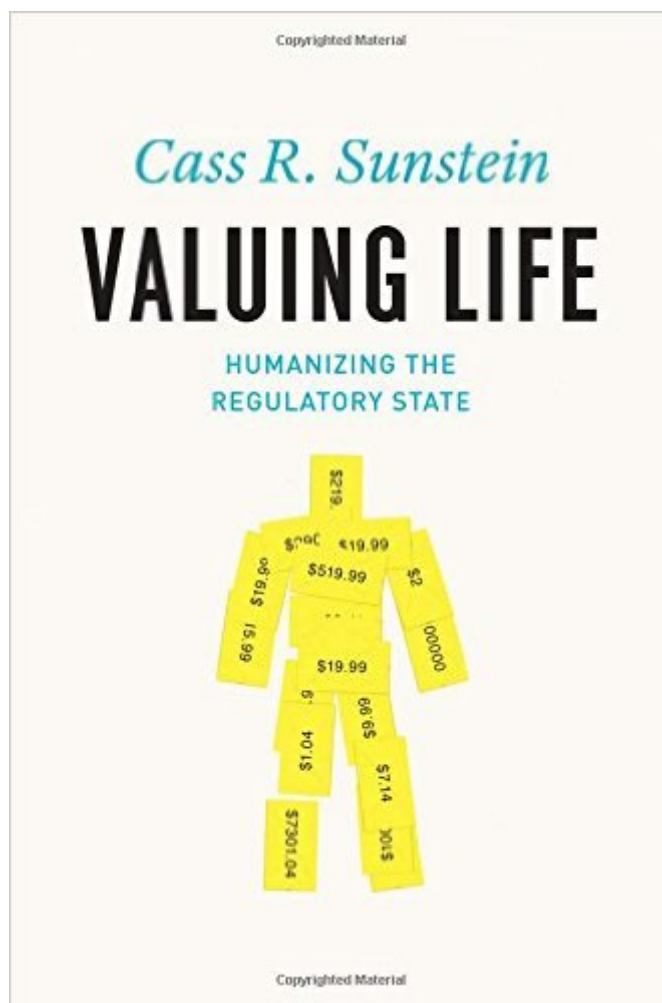


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# Valuing Life: Humanizing The Regulatory State



## Synopsis

The White House Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA) is the United States's regulatory overseer. In *Valuing Life*, Cass R. Sunstein draws on his firsthand experience as the Administrator of OIRA from 2009 to 2012 to argue that we can humanize regulation and save lives in the process. As OIRA Administrator, Sunstein helped oversee regulation in a broad variety of areas, including highway safety, health care, homeland security, immigration, energy, environmental protection, and education. This background allows him to describe OIRA and how it works and how it can work better from an on-the-ground perspective. Using real-world examples, many of them drawn from today's headlines, Sunstein makes a compelling case for improving cost-benefit analysis, a longtime cornerstone of regulatory decision-making, and for taking account of variables that are hard to quantify, such as dignity and personal privacy. He also shows how regulatory decisions about health, safety, and life itself can benefit from taking into account behavioral and psychological research, including new findings about what scares us, and what does not. By better accounting for people's fallibility, Sunstein argues, we can create regulation that is simultaneously more human and more likely to achieve its goals. In this highly readable synthesis of insights from law, policy, economics, and psychology, Sunstein breaks down the intricacies of the regulatory system and offers a new way of thinking about regulation that incorporates human dignity and an insistent focus on the consequences of our choices.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The book does an excellent job of offering a case study of effect process and outcome evaluation. An interesting aspect is the role cost benefit analysis as in the review and comment process.

Sunstein is my favourite academic and has made a big influence on my way of thinking. Unfortunately, I always get disappointed from his books; to clarify, its completely my fault. This book (and several others) are just compilations and slightly edited versions of his papers, which I have already read. If anyone is interested in cost benefit analysis and regulatory policy and hasn't already read all of Sunstein's work, this book is worth reading.

Valuing Life is a very interesting and insightful look into the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA) but it falls short on engagement. It explores many of the fundamental guidelines that regulations are built upon, the biases and issues that get in the way of effective regulation, and the difficulty associated with properly weighing and balancing things that are qualitatively different. I'd imagine this would be a great book to give to anyone on their first day at OIRA but unless you have a very strong interest in the subject-matter, the book will be difficult to get through. If you've read any of the author's other works, you likely know what you're getting yourself in for - it is exhaustively researched (as evidenced by the extensive footnotes), has crisp and direct prose, and focuses on important issues but the book is likely to put most people to sleep due to the author's very academic writing style. It's more akin to a textbook than Gladwell-ian in style. Overall, this is an area of interest of mine and I found the book very worth my time but I wouldn't recommend it to someone who didn't share my interest.

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