

booth calls down for a review. You turn to your friend: “Look at that! What a great catch! He was totally in. Why are they even reviewing it?” Your friend scowls. “That was completely out! I can’t believe the ref didn’t see it! You must be crazy to think that was in!”

What just happened? Was your friend the Giants fan just experiencing wishful thinking? Was he deceiving himself? Worse, was he lying? Or had his loyalty to his team—and his anticipation of its win—completely, truly, and deeply clouded his judgment?

I was thinking about that one evening, as I strolled through Cambridge and over to MIT’s Walker Memorial Building. How could two friends—two honest guys—see one soaring pass in two different ways? In fact, how could any two parties look at precisely the same event and interpret it as supporting their opposing points of view? How could Democrats and Republicans look at a single schoolchild who is unable to read, and take such bitterly different positions on the same issue? How could a couple embroiled in a fight see the causes of their argument so differently?

A friend of mine who had spent time in Belfast, Ireland, as a foreign correspondent, once described a meeting he had arranged with members of the IRA. During the interview, news came that the governor of the Maze prison, a winding row of cell blocks that held many IRA operatives, had been assassinated. The IRA members standing around my friend, quite understandably, received the news with satisfaction—as a victory for their cause. The British, of course, didn’t see it in those terms at all. The headlines in London the next day boiled with anger and calls for retribution. In fact, the British saw the event as proof that discussions with the IRA would lead nowhere and that the IRA should be crushed. I am an Israeli, and no stranger