

Basic Moral Orientations -Overview

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On what basis do we make moral decisions?

- “Do what the Bible tells you”—
 - Divine Command Theories
- “Follow your conscience”—
 - The Ethics of Conscience
- “Watch out for #1”—
 - Ethical Egoism
- “Do the right thing”—
 - The Ethics of Duty

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On what basis do we make moral decisions?

- “Don’t dis’ me”—
 - The Ethics of Respect
- “...all Men/Women are created ...with certain unalienable Rights”—
 - The Ethics of Rights
- “Make the world a better place”—
 - Utilitarianism
- “Hey!, that’s not fair”—
 - The Ethics of Justice
- “Be a good person”—
 - Virtue Ethics

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"Do what the Bible tells you" Divine Command Theories

□ Being good is equivalent to doing whatever the Bible--or the Qur’an or some other sacred text or source of revelation--tells you to do.



□ “What is right” equals “What God tells me to do.”


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“Follow your conscience” The Ethics of Our Inner Voice


- Conscience tells us what is right or wrong
- Often has a religious source
- May be founded in a notion of human nature
- Is often negative in character, telling us what is not right

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"Watch out for #1" Ethical Egoism




- Says the only person to look out for is yourself
- Ayn Rand, *The Ethics of Selfishness*
- Well known for her novel, especially *Atlas Shrugged*



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"Do the right thing" The Ethics of Duty

- Begins with the conviction that ethics is about doing what is right, about doing your duty.
- Duty may be determined by:
 - Reason
 - Kant: Do what any rational agent should do
 - Professional role
 - A physician's duty to care for the sick
 - Social role
 - A parent's duty to care for his or her children



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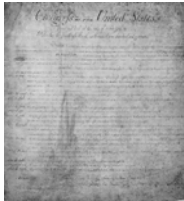
"Don't dis' me" The Ethics of Respect

- Human interactions should be governed by rules of respect
- What counts as respect can vary from one culture to another
 - Examples:
 - Can you think of some?
 - What is it that merits respect?

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"...all Men/Women are created ...with certain unalienable Rights" The Ethics of Rights

- The most influential moral notion of the past two centuries
- Established minimal conditions of human decency



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"Make the world a better place" Utilitarianism




- Seeks to reduce suffering and increase pleasure or happiness
- Demands a high degree of self-sacrifice—we must consider the consequences for everyone.
- Utilitarians claim the purpose of morality is to make the world a better place.

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"Hey!, that's not fair" The Ethics of Justice

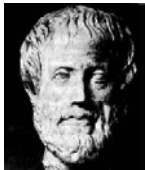
- Begins early in the family with fairness to all family members
- What is fair for one should be fair for all.
- Treating people equally may not mean treating them the same.



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"Be a good person" Virtue Ethics

- Seeks to develop individual character
- Assumes good persons will make good decisions
- Developed by Plato and Aristotle
- Provides a way of integrating all the theories



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Classroom Application

Your Initial Moral Orientation

How important are each of the following in your life?

	E x t r e m e l y	V e r y	A v e r a g e	L i t t l e	N o t a t a l l
Religious Commands					
Conscience					
Selfishness					
Duty					
Respect					
Rights					
Consequences for Everyone					
Justice					
Personal Virtues					

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