

**A UNIFIED  
THEORY OF  
ETHICS: With  
Applications to  
Issues**

by

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c. 2010

**Dedicated**

**To**

**Shirley**

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## INTRODUCTION

**This booklet will address questions about morality, as well as about concepts like good and bad, right and wrong, justice, moral excellence, *viz.*, character traits or qualities valued as being good, valued as promoting individual and social well being. In addition it will discuss Meta-ethics, and will operate on the premises that an understanding of the concepts ‘good’ and ‘bad’ is logically prior to a comprehension of the concepts ‘morally good’ and ‘morally bad’, The essay will also address Normative Ethics, and will talk about the practical means of determining a moral course of action. I will further address Applied Ethics, and indicate how moral outcomes can be achieved in specific situations.**

**The concepts in this essay are controversial but that should be no surprise since virtually every proposition in both philosophy and science is controversial. I invite readers to be constructive and either build upon this model for ethics, or offer a superior one and tell exactly why it is superior to the paradigm offered within these pages.**

**As for a discussion as to how moral capacities develop and as to what their nature is; or a description of what values people actually abide by; I will leave that to the field of Moral Psychology. [See [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moral\\_psychology](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moral_psychology) and also <http://faculty.virginia.edu/haidtlab/mft/index.php> for further details and sources.]**

**Generally speaking we defer to evolutionary sociobiology and to evolutionary moral psychology to explain observed moral preferences and choices. Whatever facts these disciplines uncover are automatically embraced by the new paradigm for Ethics**

**suggested in this booklet. Moral Psychology is to be viewed as a subset of the Unified Theory of Ethics – although, no doubt, the psychologists would say it ought to be the other way around. They employ concepts and ideas from moral philosophy as starting points for their research and experiment design. See K. A. Appiah, EXPERIMENTS IN ETHICS (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2008) for a philosopher’s argument that experimentation enhances moral reasoning by supplying a factual basis for some of our claims and thus providing a more solid foundation.**

### **Foreword**

A few people, members of a discussion club, get together to construct a theory for ethics, relevant to everyday life. They hold a conference devoted to this purpose. They do work well together and their attitude is: “We can work it out. It can be done. We’ll give it our best shot, and others can build on it and improve it.” What follows is a transcript of the proceedings.

## **A UNIFIED THEORY OF ETHICS:** with applications to issues.

**Frank:** Welcome one and all to our discussion club.

Our topic is **Ethics**. What shall we mean by that?

Some hold that ethics are an inescapable result of our being a social species. They are recognition of, and they respect the fact that, other beings exist and have unique needs, desires and morals. In short ethics are a way of allowing people to work together and understand each other for the purpose of prospering in a social environment.

Ethics has been defined as a concern with values, principles of conduct, and prescriptions for action. Some believe Ethics answers the question: 'How shall I live?' Others claim Ethics is about the good life for the good individual. Aristotle wrote it is about *flourishing*, which he taught is more than happiness, but includes it. I propose we find a unified theory which embraces all those meanings.

**George:** Some traditional academic schools of thought emphasize rights and principles which apply universally. Some emphasize results and consequences, especially benefits and the happiness of people; while others stress character, and traits or features which a good character would possess, which they call 'virtues', the opposites of which they speak of as 'vices.' Our unified theory should include all those perspectives, and then some. And it ought to clarify some of the key terms of Ethics, such as (moral) good, right, wrong, ought to, morality, happiness, success, conscience, hypocrisy, and responsibility.

**Ida:** I'm glad you mentioned *hypocrisy*. Avoiding hypocrisy is vitally important. I'll tell you what I mean by that. A hypocrite fails to live up to what he (or she) believes. We have certain principles, along with concepts as to what a

good, decent person would be. These may be spoken of as our ideals for ourself. They are our self-ideals. (They're a part of our Self-image.) If our behavior, our conduct, fails to match our self-ideals, we are a hypocrite, we suffer from *hypocrisy*.

**Larry:** Isn't that a form of immorality?

**Ida:** Yes, it is.

**Larry:** So what then is morality?

**Kay:** Morality is moral value.<sup>1</sup> It's self living up to Self-image (Self.) Since – as I'll explain later - valuation is a matching process, morality is thus a matching process: if your observable self, your conduct, matches your beliefs, your 'Self,' and if your beliefs are evolving in a more compassionate, more empathic, more inclusive direction, to that degree you are moral. Your views regarding how to enhance the group(s) to which you belong, as well as how to conduct yourself when you think no one is watching; or, say, how you would behave if you were invisible, Those views comprise what the theory refers to as your 'self-ideals.'

So let us think of "morality" as "self being Self." Hopefully your Self has some high ideals within it that your parents or role models taught you either by their words or – better yet – by their example. These ideals are your true Self. If your actuality – your conduct - matches point-for-point your ideal Self, it is justifiable to say that you are moral (to that extent.) If a full match, you are a "real person," you are genuine. If a partial match, you are to that degree moral. If a very low match, or none at all, you are a phony, a con-artist, or a psychopath. You yourself make the judgment. That part of you which does make such judgments is known as the

“conscience.” Jerry, I think you have something more to say on that topic.

## THE STRUCTURE OF THE CONSCIENCE

**Jerry:** Yes, I do. Thanks Kay. What you just said about degrees of morality that we may possess makes lots of sense. [If I may suggest, a branch of engineering known as Stochastic Approximation could perhaps come in handy in measuring vague concepts such as morality and hypocrisy.]

Before I go any further, we should agree to a definition of “right” and “wrong.” I will define these terms in context, as follows. It is right to be good and to do good. It is wrong to be bad and to do bad. Does anyone here have any objections to those concepts?

**Harry:** They will work fine, if only we knew what “good” and “bad” meant. And if, eventually, we could - from conclusions drawn from the logic - match some real-life experience, fuzzy as it may be, to those conclusions which are derived from the theory.

**Jerry:** Fair enough. Now the question arises: What makes anything *good*? And we also should explain later: How is *bad* related to good? The applications to real-life experience I believe will become apparent as we go along. What do we mean when we describe something as “good”?

**Frank:** I can answer that, thanks to the work of a genius named Robert S. Hartman, who, like Plato, and George Edward Moore, devoted his life to coming up with an answer. Hartman succeeded where the others didn't. We know now that a good item, let's call it X, is indeed a good X if it is all there, in other words, if it meets the standards you set for an item of that kind. A good chair has everything for which you



are willing to settle in your mental picture of a chair. If it has all those features or qualities, you will likely call it “a good chair.” If it only has *some* of the qualities you may speak of it as “a valuable chair” meaning a chair that has *some value*.

To be judged as a good chair it needs to have most everything, to fulfill the picture, to be a real example of the ideal for chairs that the valuer may have in mind. What applies to chairs, applies to every other concept in the universe, and to the universe itself. When a thing, situation, category, or person matches its ideal that the judge may have for it – matches its meaning<sup>2</sup> - s/he will judge it as “a good one” of its kind. And if it only partially matches, he or she judges it as at least having some value. Is that clear?

**Ida:** Having thought about it, it’s clear to me. We say a map is a good one if it – point-for-point – matches its territory. You are generalizing this idea to everything we might prize as good. A good janitor is one who complies with the details of the job description for a janitor. He (or she) ‘does his duty.’ The same with a barber, or any other category. Yet Ethics is concerned with Who is the good individual? What characteristics would a good person have? And, indeed, this is a topic which we will investigate more thoroughly when our guest speaker, Mark, is introduced.

**Jerry:** Yes, we are coming to that later when Mark makes his presentation. Let me now talk about the **conscience**, its role in our lives, and see if what I say resonates with you.

We need our conscience to remind us what the values are that we speak of as ‘moral values’ and to prod us to live up to the best moral values of which we may be aware, such as the imperative to respect our fellow human beings, and be decent toward them. The conscience tells us to put our

highest lights into action; to be true to our principles; to practice what we preach; to observe the Consistency Principle (*viz.*, not to have one moral standard for others and another for ourselves.) When we "know moral values" it is our conscience which does that knowing.

The conscience includes one's sense of what is right and wrong. This may be what some philosophers have called 'basic moral intuitions'. (Who here has never experienced appreciation, or disgust, or that something was out of place, ethically speaking?) We recognize our conscience at work in that nagging feeling that we get about some actions we took, or some experience in which we participated. Sometimes it is an unbearable nagging feeling.

When people refer to conscience they often are alluding to feelings of guilt or angst that accompany certain decisions. It becomes operative when persons suspect they have done a wrong. As John Dewey; B. F. Skinner; and Albert Ellis noted, what is going on here is internal speech: we are telling ourselves over and over that something is wrong, and that we might have contributed to this state of affairs. We might well have made some mistake, and we regret it.

Some folks, confused about morality and ethics, would offer as a primary example of someone listening to his conscience and then deadening its voice and rejecting its admonitions, Mark Twain's Huck Finn. They might phrase it this way: "At one point in the story as the raft drifts down the Mississippi, Huck thinks about doing the right thing, turning in Nigger Jim, who is, after all, a runaway slave. His conscience tells him to do the right thing. But Huck, lacking the morals of many of his neighbors, chooses not to inform on Jim." My response to anyone who proposes this example framed in those terms is this: Huck chooses not to inform on Jim, his dear friend. **THAT IS THE RIGHT THING !** I'll tell you why:

Huckleberry, at the time, has an educated and sensitive conscience, one that is awake, not asleep. He was aware enough to evaluate the correct hierarchy of values, and conclude that Intrinsic Value trumps Systemic Value. [I'll explain this terminology later in our conversation unless one of you does first.] Huck's decision likely was intuitive and not logically reasoned out; but nevertheless it was scientifically correct.

It was his neighbors and others in the culture in which he grew up who were ethically ignorant and mistaken !! To call turning in your friend to a life of slavery "the right thing", reveals a blindspot in one's objective moral insight, as I'd be willing to argue at length. Mark Twain knew his Ethics, and that motivated him to write the book. Some readers "miss the point" sometimes.

Let us define the term "conscience" as "the sentences that we say to ourselves about our Self-image." For example: "I'm not that kind of a girl !" "I don't deserve this treatment." "Maybe I shouldn't have done that to him the other evening."

Now let us partition it into two divisions: (1) the reflective conscience; and (2) the directive conscience --the "R" and the "D." The D-conscience is concerned with avoiding hypocrisy, with applying *in practice* one's ideals.

A thought such as: Do I lead a double life? would be illustrative of the R-conscience, while a thought such as: Do I practice what I preach? would be an instance of the D-conscience in operation. The former reflects upon one's Self, while the latter not only does that but also directs one to have his actions congruent with his ideals for a human being.

Determining, by reflection, who or what you are supposed to be, preserves your autonomy. Giving yourself direction insures that you will be conscientious. But many a person who is very conscientious has an insensitive, or uneducated, conscience.

Some people have reported to scientists of Ethics (ethicists, life coaches, and psychotherapists) that although their conscience bothered them the first time they did something morally questionable, as they continued the practice repeatedly, they note that 'the nagging feeling' was now gone; the conscience was now dormant and desensitized.

A person needs a good self-image rather than a poor one. He needs to know the basic principles of Ethics, the moral law, so to speak, namely that we are to be nice to each other, to be inclusive, to seek to negotiate, to be diplomatic in our dealings with one another rather than abusive and snobbish and non-empathic. And we need to be real, to be congruent, that is, to live up to our highest lights, to our fine impression of ourselves, to express in action our noble beliefs to an extent where they can even be observably measured.

A conscience can be asleep, as it is with a psychopath or sociopath. It can be wide awake and alert as it is with the Dalai Lama or with my next-door neighbor, a former Iraqi, now an American citizen, who often behaves like a living saint -- at least to me. She is kind and is frequently looking for ways to be of service to my family. She lights up the lives of the persons with whom she comes into contact.

"A bad conscience is a good conscience" my teacher taught me. His name was Robert S. Hartman. The "bad" here means "ethically sensitive." The "good" here means "fully functional and operative." The first is a moral usage; the

second is an axiological usage. A good conscience is one that is highly aware of the ethical principles and wants to implement them, put them into action.

Conclusion: We need our consciences, and we need them to be operative. When we give it respect, when we listen for it, our conscience will guide us to the good life.

**Edward:** Very well said. I would add these remarks to fill out a picture on this topic:

The roots of the word conscience are “together” and “knowing.” As you explained, there are two parts to every conscience: the reflective conscience (which does the knowing) and the directive conscience (which tells us to get our act together.) These two parts of ourselves [– *reflections* upon our conduct, and our hypocrisy-avoidance – which *directs* us to live what we believe, to practice what we preach --] are brought together by our conscience, provided it is not “asleep,” not incapacitated.

Our conscience, when it is awake and aware, tells us: Be yourself. Don't be a phony. Be real. It tells you to be a co-knower of yourself: to bring your selves together. You and I, we have a social (or extrinsic) self, and an inner life (which is our intrinsic self, our Self.) The conscience says to us: This is what you must do. You must identify your extrinsic self with your intrinsic Self, with your humble being.

It informs us that we have a oneness with all living things, that we can – as many do – vegetate; or we can be a genius at something ...provided we give ourselves to it intensely and focus on it! We have a great power within; we are not limited. We have a gift. It is up to us to make use of it. Those inner resources are what I refer to as a Self.

The roles we play in the socio-economic, social/psychological, everyday world – e.g., waiter, barber, teacher, manager, parent, etc. - I refer to as our self. The self is observable. The inner strengths are often not so visible – but come to the fore during a crisis.

A genius is in a continual state of crisis, so to speak, in that s/he gets her power all the time. When asked their secret great men and women of science, of art, of sports, frequently respond the same way: “Anyone can do it who doesn’t do anything else day and night.

“I keep the problem continuously before my eyes” they say – whether the “problem” is composing new music, hitting a ball more accurately, finding a new winning strategy, or a new model of cosmology.

[Let’s here define a “saint” as a “genius at goodness.” Such a person lives deeply and compassionately. A saint puts his whole power, all his resources, into his own goodness. He has an active and sensitive conscience.]

The conscience tells us, as R. S. Hartman explains in this quote: “you must be a co-knower of your Self in order to be your Self, i.e., you must identify your extrinsic self with your intrinsic Self, and at the same time identify your Self with everyone. Conscience makes you one with everybody. When you have done something wrong, even though nobody was there and nobody saw you, afterward you feel guilty and (feel) as if everybody knows what you have done.”

If we trace our ancestry back far enough and see the evolution that resulted in the self we have today we may come to realize that we were once fishes – or at least we may come to appreciate that we are all cousins, since the population of our planet was much smaller years ago. When

we come to know ourselves we realize that we are related to other lives and we are grateful for the contribution they have made to our own flourishing.

## TYPES OF VALUES

**Ida:** Earlier Frank reminded us what “value” means. He learned it from Dr. Hartman. As I recall what he taught us, *value* is a partial match between a meaning of an item and the properties or features that this particular item I am now evaluating or judging has. If it meets or complies with its standard, or norm – which is its meaning and the name I have put on it that goes with that meaning – I, the judge, will call it “a value” or say it is “valuable.” The name sets the norm. {By the way, *optimists* are gifted in the art of naming: they find names to put on things so that the thing turns out to be “good.” A ‘good slum dwelling’ is a ‘bad house,’ isn’t it? Well, the optimist would look at this building and refer to it as “slum”; and then he can call it “a good one.” As a slum it is good. He or she is always finding things or situations to be **good**, but only by putting the right names on them.}

Did you know there are different types of values? Robert S. Hartman – who developed a discipline now known as Formal Axiology - value science -- first noticed that there are three major types, which he defined and explored. They’re basic. He called them S, E, and I. It’s as important to know your SEIs as it is to know your ABCs. The letters S, E, and I are shorthand for Systemic Value, Extrinsic Value, and Intrinsic Value. Let us explain each in turn.

Here as an illustration of the basic value types I will remind you what is involved in the process of using a phone. No one could make a telephone call without there first being networks and circuits and switchboards and lines; and these

could not exist without first having diagrams and blueprints for those circuits. These images and codes, these networks – they all have some system to them. They are “systemic.” This kind of value is S-value; and here it was applied to telephoning. S-value is an abbreviation for *Systemic Value*.

The E-value of a telephone would be the handset into which you speak, the receiver, the instrument, the phone itself. “E-value” stands for *Extrinsic Value*.

The Intrinsic Value (or I-value) of telephoning are the meanings intended and communicated in the conversation, the “reaching out and touching someone.”

All of this is involved in the act of telephoning -- all three dimensions come into play.

Most significant is the final communication which takes place, the Intrinsic Value. Isn't that why a person makes a phone call in the first place – to have that communication, to – in a sense – commune with the person at the other end of the line? That conversation or contact is what we value most.

As I said, there's now a science of value itself. ('Science' here is used in its original sense: 'a body of knowledge and analysis.')

The scientists of *value* logically prove that this evaluation we just made about telephoning, namely, that the conversation or communication is valued more than the instrument employed to make the call, and more than the network behind it that arranges the transmission of the signals, that this valuation must be the case: the logic deduces that I-value always is more relevant, more vital, than mere E-value or S-value. *[The reader will find the technical details in the end-papers.<sup>3</sup> For now it suffices to note that the formula **I>E>S** is valid and sound. It*



*constitutes what may be named, "The Existential Hierarchy of Values." It says that life is larger than logic.]*

**Nick:** S, E, and I roughly correspond to the intellectual values (which are S), the functional values (which are E), and the spiritual values (the I-values.) Mind, body, and character are three applications of S, E, and I. There are other common applications of these dimensions of value. <sup>4</sup> Let's fill in the picture by giving some further examples of applications of each of these types.

Intrinsic values are empathy and self-respect;

Extrinsic Values are practical judgment and role-awareness, career goal-setting, sense of timing;

Systemic values are analytical or structured thinking, self-direction, organization and planning.

**Jerry:** I can also give one: Think of a **house**. We can view it in at least three ways:

An architect may call the blueprints "the house." On paper, the house can be said to be "perfect." [That is what a value scientist will speak of as "The S-Value" of this house. S stands for Systemic Value.]

Then there is the actual house (with timbers and bricks and walls and furniture) after it is built. It may be judged "good." Or "bad" if it has some flaws, if it is less than half a match with its 'ideal' picture, its standard. [This is Extrinsic Value: E-Value for short.] But there comes a day perhaps when a "house" becomes a "home". {Picture a hanging on the wall that says: "Home Sweet Home."} [That is what may be designated "The Intrinsic Value", or **I-Value** of that house.] Now it is "unique." It is "**Our lovely home.**" (Perfect, Good, and Unique are three types – or dimensions - of full value )

## WHAT DELINEATES THE FIELD OF ETHICS?

**Harry:** There are three basic ways of studying and talking about an individual (or a group of them.) Let's apply the dimensions of value that we already know. The first is Anatomy/Physiology. It is concerned with *systems* of the body, organ placement, the skeletal and muscle systems among others. This as the Systemic view.

The next is the social/psychological perspective. This looks at an individual (or a group of them) in a more meaningful way. Now we have functions we perform, such as memory, perception, goal-directed behavior, capacity to align ourselves in cohort groups, associate with categories or types, to organize, etc. This view of individuals is the Extrinsic. It is the everyday, socio-economic, role-playing, functional, worldly, pragmatic way of looking at us.

Another perspective, and the one we shall focus on during our project here, is the Intrinsic. When we Intrinsically value we give our undivided attention to whatever we are currently valuing; and we come to identify with it; and we bond with it. We concentrate on it, and get involved with it or with them. We experience it fully. We find uncountable meaning there. A continuum is formed: it is impossible to say where the valuer leaves off and where the item or person valued begins, so intense is the focus.

For this project, let us define "Ethics" as that discipline which arises *when we Intrinsically-value individuals*. We consider them as "having a story to tell." We see them as rich in meaning, as having some depth, as a variety-within-a-unity.

This perspective is distinctly different from the others: here a person is no longer a thing or a number, or a stereotype, an

object of some prejudice we may have. Now a person is not just a label or member of some ideological group. The individual is viewed as a priceless treasure of value, not to be defiled, as having some dignity.

**Frank:** Yes, Harry, I think you're right. I believe that Ethics is a body of knowledge, just as is Medicine or Musicology. It is a perspective on human beings, in which they are regarded in a certain specific way -- namely, as infinitely-valuable treasures -- or if you wish, as of indefinitely-high value -- treasures not to be defiled; as organisms with a wide range of conceptions, perceptions and experience, capable of deep feelings and deep thoughts; as creatures having a story to tell ...if one succeeds in getting them talking about their life, including their inner-life.

Dr. Jonathan Haidt, does research in Moral Psychology, and has a Moral Foundations page on the web in which he describes universal human nature. Whether this nature is based upon our evolutionary and tribal past, or whether we have brain modules for the way we behave, or both, is not the main topic here... but we do tend to behave in certain ways and to believe certain prevalent ideas. Science (especially psychotherapy) has shown this. Procrastination, perfectionism, perversions, fetishisms, over-generalizations are very common among us human beings.

Furthermore, there are ethical fallacies (errors in thinking, confusions) that we often commit, fallacies such as racism, sexism, rankism, ageism, speciesism, regarding persons as mere things -- and thus it's okay to abuse them, or discard them -- or, even worse, treating them as numbers -- and thus it's okay to erase them. Persons are *not* just things or numbers. They are *much more complex*.

If ethics has a purpose, I would say it is for an individual to

integrate his/her outer self with his inner Self; to eventually become aware that we are all one, in a sense. The purpose is to match up with the highest ideals for a human being; to become Cosmic Optimists, to become our humble self, our compassionate self, to gain in empathy, to become aware of where our true interests are: to have Enlightened Self-interest, viz., to know that what helps you, helps me ...if it really helps you ....and conversely.

To say it another way, our purpose is to create, and add, value. If we want to gain value in life we will pursue ethics and morality. The most valuable life is the most meaningful life. We will not want to just drift along, nor to vegetate; we will want to create a meaningful life. Finding out how - and doing it - will be the fulfillment of the purpose. I'll have more to say about this later, and will explain in greater detail just how we may truly add value. Right now, I'd like to introduce a guest speaker. His name is Mark, and he knows his values.

Mark, I want to welcome you into our group and ask you to frankly speak your mind. The floor is yours.

## **THE MEANING OF GOOD**

**Mark:** Follow this reasoning with me, please, and tell me if it makes sense.....okay? To begin I'll review: What makes something good? Then I'll explore What makes a person good; but first we have to know what it means to call an item "good."

**What makes anything 'good'?** Take a car, for example. You have a picture in your mind as to what features a car could have; and if this car has all those qualities you'd likely call it a good one. So a 'good car' has everything a car is supposed to have. Of course, everyone might have a different picture with different

qualities in mind, but the basic idea is that what makes anything good is for it to be 'all there' under the name you put on it.

Now that we know what the word "good" means, we can ask the question about what makes a good person. {I am well aware that persons are not cars, and that different criteria apply. Cars are extrinsic values while persons are intrinsic values -- in Hartman's sense, not Dewey's.}

Who is a good person? Well, it would be someone who is 'all there.' A good person would have all the attributes that a person ought to have. That person, it is fair to say, would have *moral value*, would avoid selfishness. Let's describe such a person and see if you would call such an individual 'good.'

That person is one who **educates** himself, or herself, to do what is truly in his self-interest and who is able to see that "selfishness" is something distinctly different than "self-interest." Allow me to explain. *Wisdom* is knowing others and *enlightenment* is knowing yourself [The point to notice is that ethics is not just 'a matter of opinion,' and 'totally subjective,' as some would try to tell you. It can be objective (intersubjectively verifiable) and universal.]

As Dr. Stephen Pinker says, "In many areas of life two parties are **objectively** better off if they both act in a non-selfish way than if each of them acts selfishly. You and I are both better off if we share our surpluses, rescue each other's children in danger, and refrain from shooting at each other, compared with hoarding our surpluses while they rot, letting the other's child drown while we file our nails, or feuding like the Hatfields and McCoys."

**“Granted, I might be a bit better off if I acted selfishly at your expense and you played the sucker, but *the same is true for you with me*, so if each of us tried for these advantages, we’d both end up worse off. Any neutral observer, and you and I if we could talk it over rationally, would have to conclude that *the state we should aim for is the one in which we both are unselfish.*” (emphasis added.)**

**It’s in the nature of things that *if we educate ourselves enough we come to develop this insight* about our *true self-interest*. We reach this understanding. Does that make sense? [Let’s not get into a digression here on Game Theory in Economics. That is artificial: real life is much more complex than any Game.]**

**And do you agree with this? {Also a quote from Dr. Pinker}:**

“If I appeal to you to do anything that affects me – to get off my foot, or tell me the time, or not run me over with your car -- then I can’t do it in a way that privileges my interests over yours (say, retaining my right to run you over with my car) if I want you to take me seriously. I have to state my case in a way that would force me to treat you in kind. I can’t act as if my interests are special just because I’m me and you’re not, any more than I can persuade you that the spot I am standing on is a special place in the universe just because I happen to be standing on it.”

**That last concept is what we might name “The Consistency Principle in Ethics.” It means **No double standards...one for us and one for the other guy. Can you agree with this?****

**The person who sees his true self-interest knows these things. For we are all, in this world, just trying to make a**

life for ourselves. Referring to those who do know what's in their interest, Professor Appiah, put it this way: "We want to make a life for ourselves. We recognize that everybody has a life to make and that we are making our lives together. We recognize value in our own humanity and in doing so we see it as the same humanity we find in others. If my humanity matters, so does yours; if yours doesn't, neither does mine.

## THE ESSENCE OF SOCIAL ETHICS

"We stand or fall together." Can we come together on this? Do we agree? Isn't it so that I'm better off if you're better off; and you are better off if I am better off? Seeing that idea is having "enlightened self-interest." One who operates on that principle that each of us does better if we all do better is fulfilling his/her true self-interest. There is nothing wrong with self-interest -- provided it is enlightened !

What are the qualities of a good person?

A *good person* would be one who has everything you would want a person to have: integrity, authenticity, responsibility, honesty, empathy, compassion, kindness, etc. Such an individual would be *morally* good. He or she would possess morality. For "morality" may be defined as: Moral value. Hence everything known about value would help us understand morality. .

What is known about value? It is a matter of degree. It has dimensions (on a spectrum.)<sup>3</sup> The word 'value' refers to the process, the activity, known as evaluation, which itself is a matching process.

## JUSTICE AND INJUSTICE

One of the sub-topics of Ethics is justice. Let's examine its opposite for a moment. An injustice is a *mismatch* (between someone's happiness and what we take to be their merit). For example, a crook must not live high while his victim suffers. In every injustice something is out of balance.

Justice requires giving others their due. Reparation is a name for the obligation we have to compensate others for past wrongs or for a previous wrongful act. The highest form of justice is reconciliation or rehabilitation. [Vengeance is the lowest form.]

To sum it all up, someone who cares, who has self-respect and enough sense to respect others, would focus upon the facilitating institutions and social arrangements so that human beings are not placed in situations where they will act badly.

For, as Dr. K. A. Appiah, of The Princeton University Center for Human Values, has written "It's good to feel compassion; it's better to have no cause to."

Let's all of us, pursuing our real self-interest, and avoiding selfishness, do what we can to arrange the circumstances in which our excellences can be elicited -  
- the conditions in which we can flourish.

That will be true justice.



**Ida:** Thank you, Mark. Well said. And I do agree. Let me phrase it this way. ...We are still fellow-sufferers. We are still connected in so many ways - connected to one another - although many who lack awareness are still not conscious of that fact. At our inner core, though, we **are** aware of it. That's why it is to our benefit that we come to know our inner Self, come to see the interdependence, the connections.

**"I'll do better if you do better,"** that is to say "if you develop your gifts and talents." My obligation to you is to develop mine -- to get where I'm excellent in some way; and will thus be able to express my gifts, give them to the world; perhaps artistically, perhaps in an entertaining way to fascinate and amuse, or just to use some skill I have to make the world a better place. And also my obligation is to see that by arranging conditions that facilitate this I help you have the opportunity to do the same – to develop your talents and gifts and get to a point where you would want to give yourself, to express some responsibility if you care to do so.

## **GOODNESS AND BADNESS**

As you explained earlier, something is "good" if it has it all. That is, if it has every quality that you suppose things-of-that-sort to have, you will speak of it as good. But what if it has less than all? Then it is "valuable." Then we have other value words, other adjectives, to describe it. I will define some of them here:

If the item had a few less features we can predict a person may call it 'fair' or 'pretty good' or 'not bad.' If it has only half of those you're looking for, you'd likely speak of it as 'average' or 'so-so' or 'mediocre'. If it had less than half, we'd call it 'bad' or 'not so good'; but if the item, say a chair, lacked one of the features that define what a chair in fact is,

then we will evaluate it as 'lousy' or 'terrible.' What is the definition of a 'chair'? It's a 'knee-high structure with a seat and a back.' If it was missing by having a big hole where the seat should be, we might say "it's simply awful." It's terrible.

(Note, however, that under another name, say, 'a prop for a juggler to balance' it could be 'good'! So whether something is 'bad' or 'good' all depends upon the name we put on it. A good nag is a bad horse. A bad residence could be 'a good slum dwelling.' The gift of the optimist is to name things so we can call them "good.". Optimism is a wonderful quality to have. It's an asset. Pessimism is a lack of vision. It's a deficit. The pessimist is out of kilter and is the killer of hope and encouragement. We need more optimists in this world. Every true realist has to be part optimist.)

For further clarification on many of these concepts, see the booklet entitled ETHICS: A College Course, Here, safe to open, is a link to it: <http://tinyurl.com/2mj5b3>

Also, you may want to check out a version of it for the non-philosopher, for the layman. It is more readable. Its title is LIVING THE GOOD LIFE. You will find it Here: <http://tinyurl.com/24swmd>

Those two essays give the required background for comprehending the Unified Theory of Ethics we are constructing here at this gathering.

**Nick:** A student of mine once protested, "*There are people who don't want to be good!*" **I am well-aware of that.** Yet, if someone is aware enough about his own true self-interest and if he wants to optimize the amount of value in his life -- if he "likes to shop for value" rather than over-paying -- then he will listen to the insights of that body of accumulated

knowledge known as Ethics, which tells him how to be morally healthy.

**Key:** It's all about adding value. It is entirely up to an individual if he or she wants to be a good person.

Yet it is clear to me that if one aims for that Self that Mark described,(or some similar high ideal), one will achieve a life of more value; for value is a function of meaning. The more valuable life is the more meaningful life. If you want to attain the most value, this is the way to go: aim to be that ideal good person. Aspire to it. You may fall short, but you'll be way ahead. Authentic (whole) persons may today be rare. But as Spinoza pointed out, the most noble although rare is worth working for. You feel a real sense of achievement when you acquire that which is noble and rare.

**Nick:** Just as one may ignore the principles of how to be physically healthy, and is free to get sick, one is perfectly free to ignore all this. Many do, I grant you. They suffer needless pain, avoidable pain. They do not flourish -- in Aristotle's sense of the word. If that's the kind of life someone wants, good luck to him! He is free, free not to listen to his conscience, not to educate and sensitize it, not to be rational. Let's be clear about this: There is no attempt here to impose upon anyone nor to exercise power. Let us be aware, however, that some people have, in a sense, "bad genes. See, for example, Barbara Oakley's book, EVIL GENES. (2007)

[http://www.amazon.com/review/R1529PSC6Z3M7I/ref=cm\\_cr\\_pr\\_viewpnt#R1529PSC6Z3M7I](http://www.amazon.com/review/R1529PSC6Z3M7I/ref=cm_cr_pr_viewpnt#R1529PSC6Z3M7I)

She informs us that only two percent of the world's population has this personality disorder.

They exhibit immorality. When social deviants and immorally-acting individuals have broken a good law I, for one, will feel

justice is done when they are quarantined from the rest of society, i.e., when the law is enforced. Can we all agree on that?

Psychopathy has been detected in children as young as age 4. They are unfeeling when they cause tears by their actions or when they torture small animals. We KNOW there are difficult cases in this world; there's nothing new about that. The question is how to handle them; how to re-educate or re-train them so that they are not a menace to society. Science is constantly discovering new insights on this. Ethics can incorporate all these advanced techniques in learning how to be more moral. It's all about Self-Improvement. As Kay noted, It's about adding value -- in business and in life.

**Ida:** The latest inter-cultural research shows that human nature is as altruistic as it is selfish. The experiments done by Gintis, *et. al.* demonstrate this as fact. However, there are those with bad genes, and there are adults who were not physically touched, or caressed enough as babies, and thus are immature or psychologically crippled. We live in a world with some difficult people and it would be best if we learn how to cope with them without betraying our own authenticity, without lowering ourselves to their level.

## ADDING VALUE – A CENTRAL PRINCIPLE

**Harry:** Frank mentioned in his presentation, - and Ida, Kay, and Nick spoke of it as well – the concept that ethical conduct serves to add value to situations. I should like to expand upon that theme by offering these perspectives.

An ethical objective is to add value to the situations in which one finds himself or herself.

To live smoothly within the various groups (with which we find ourselves involved) we behave civilly and show courtesy and manners. This is one of the ways we add value to social interactions.

Some writers here have argued that that is all there is to ethics – that all ethics is Social Ethics. Some who have reflected on the concerns of moral philosophy insist that how we express respect in the groups to which we belong – the degree of closeness we have to our families and our other social circles – is the proper study for ethics. This defines the field of Social Ethics. It emphasizes the human capacity to put oneself ‘in another individual’s shoes’; to practice some version of the “Golden Rule.”

*An individual’s decision whether to take recreational drugs, or to mutilate himself, or to be a grumpy cynic, or to be a cheater and conniver; or – in contrast – whether to eat so as to stay healthy - are ethical concerns as well. This is the field of Individual Ethics. It involves questions we may ask ourselves, such as: Shall I make self-improvement a goal? Shall I aim for (moral) goodness? Do I want to take on responsibility? Do I care if others endure needless suffering? And if so, can I, or will I, intervene in some way to help relieve that suffering? In other words: Do I aspire to add value?*

This area of ethics – Individual Ethics – logically takes priority over Social Ethics because if one is a sadist, a psychopath with some violent tendencies, or if a person takes glee in cruelty, this will definitely affect how a person will behave in a group.

**Frank:** In the layman’s mind, ethics has to do with conduct in one’s profession or associations, and – many believe mistakenly – ethical standards are restrictive of a person’s natural tendencies. They claim it is human nature to cheat, steal, cut corners, bait-and-switch in one’s business dealings, and get away with as little output for as much return as he can. Some believe it is human nature to be manipulative, because they see it all around them every day. [The latter, however, is a narrow perspective: rural villagers in Africa, say, or in China, are communal-minded and live in a kind of loving, sharing harmony. Once they migrate to a city they acquire greed and insecurity.] Ethical standards are not restrictive; they are liberating. And human nature is not necessarily manipulative.

I propose that adding value be the one norm, or operating principle that we need to have to incentivize and *to motivate* us in the ethical direction.

{It already is an imperative *in business* among the enlightened. When applied to a subset of Ethics known as Business Ethics it implies that an owner, or a proprietor, or a CEO, would give equal attention to profits, to customers, to employees and staff, to the community where it does business, and to the environment. Consideration to “the bottom line”, to profits, enables the firm to stay in business; consideration to the other factors enables it to be fully ethical. *And yes, I know there are differences between business and the moral life of individuals: I am not conflating the two.*}

## ON MOTIVATION

**Key:** With regard to motivation, self-definition plays a large role: If one defines himself as one who loves or enjoys x, then it will be so much easier to accomplish x than if one does not. "x" here may be, for example, exercise; or doing math; or complimenting others sincerely at every opportunity. All of these may be good ways of adding value. Your Self-development can add value by your becoming a role model for other members of society. The more you add value to yourself, the more you can contribute.

This has been just a glimpse at some of the applications of what may turn out to be a central principle for Ethics. The notion of *adding value* may be just what we have been searching for, as we seek to know the truth in this field of study known as Ethics.

*Carl walks in on the discussion, and is greeted by the entire company, by the other searchers for truth. He speaks up.*

**Carl:** I would like to call everyone's attention to this op-ed editorial that came out in April of 2009 by David Brooks. It is controversial but it makes some good points:

[http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/07/opinion/07Brooks.html?\\_r=1&scp=1sq=The%20end%20of%20Philosophy%20by%20David%20Brooks&st=cse](http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/07/opinion/07Brooks.html?_r=1&scp=1sq=The%20end%20of%20Philosophy%20by%20David%20Brooks&st=cse)

I would particularly stress some of the cogent ideas expressed in his final summary paragraphs, such as the following:

The scientists who study morality, he tells us, referring to those who work in the specialty known as Moral Psychology, are "good at explaining how people make judgments about harm and fairness, but they still struggle to explain the feelings of awe, transcendence, patriotism, joy and self-sacrifice, which are not ancillary to most people's moral experiences, but central."

As you know, I recently proposed an evolutionary basis for our

altruistic impulses and our co-operative behavior. Brooks warns us however:

*"The evolutionary approach also leads many scientists to neglect the concept of individual responsibility and makes it hard for them to appreciate that most people struggle toward goodness, not as a means, but as an end in itself."*

The paradigm offered in the text on ethics which Dr. Katz entitled the COLLEGE COURSE, does not neglect individual responsibility but instead emphasizes it, as seen in the novel definition of "morality" presented there. It indicates that we should commit ourselves to improving our self-concept by reaching for higher self-ideals, and actualizing them by aiming to live up to them, as a personal challenge and as a goal we seriously intend to attain. This can be a joyous endeavor, a 'fun-project'.

I thoroughly agree with Brooks' observation that we make snap moral judgments, that we live by our intuitions, that our factual conclusions are permeated by values, that we evaluate while we are perceiving the world, that we are ruled by our emotions of awe, beauty, appreciation; yes, and disgust. Reason and emotion are inextricable.

We need a shake-up in ethics because the majority in the world are very unclear about their values, very confused -- as evidenced by the moral muck and rampant corruption we find all around. [Anyone of us could easily give examples of this.]

There will be no shake-up (let alone revolution) in ethics unless emotion drives the reasoning, just as well as *vice versa*. For, as I have said before, emotion is to beliefs as the weather is to the barometer readings. But beliefs can be specified and managed whereas we can't define, explain, nor predict emotions: we can analyze propositions; but we know next to nothing about emotions. No psychologist of which I am aware has a comprehensive theory of emotions which I find emotionally-satisfying (i.e., persuasive to me.)

**Nick:** Thank you, Carl, for reminding us of some relevant points. I would add this contribution to what Harry told us



about adding value. We seek a central principle that unifies the field, such as, for example, what some have called “the double win.” They have recommended win/win relationships and the mutual benefit that follows. To seek such relations is still another way of *adding value*. And let us not forget the importance of differentiation, especially - when applied to ethics - of self-differentiation. As we differentiate ourselves, define how we can make a difference in this world, so that we did not live in vain, we go through stages.

We may speak of them as the Four Cs of Ethics, even though they do not all begin with a C. They are: Know yourself. Choose yourself. Create yourself. Give yourself. The first comes from what the Oracle at Delphi told Socrates. The next was stressed highly by Soren Kierkegaard. As we develop our gifts and talents we are creating ourself. Then, as Carl R. Rogers, the renowned therapist pointed out, as we heal, as we grow, as we reach maturity, (and this can occur at any age) we tend to give ourself, we ask to take on responsibility. Each of these Cs could constitute a book in itself. I just summarized them, in passing here.

**Ed:** How does one achieve this added value? One must be aware of him/herself and be detached from the negative thoughts, impulses, and negative conditioning from external sources. Therefore, one needs to know how to work on him/herself.

Maybe the next step is to put together some ways in which people can practice working on their being so they can achieve what Harry and Nick have so beautifully expressed.

**Frank:** That is a task for another gathering of our group once it expands. We cannot figure out everything ourselves.

**Larry:** Yes. I agree. Self-improvement is a way of adding value to the world. There are many sites on the internet which have something to say in this regard. They give free lessons on how it is done. And we should also be cognizant of the perspective of Steven H. Strogatz. See his book, SYNC: The Emerging Science of Spontaneous Order. This will broaden our awareness. It is a good read!

**Kay:** I discussed the concept of adding value with my friend, Jim, the other day, and he remarked: “To complete this analysis of value-added ethics, it seems two questions suggest themselves.

First, how is the value-to-be-added determined?  
Second, in the case of general values (say of the group or humanity as a whole) conflicting with personal values, how and who determines which set of values wins?”

## **SOME VALUES RICHER IN MEANING THAN OTHERS**

I replied by saying: **Thank you, Jim, for the good questions.**

**The more people know about values and the “existential hierarchy of values” that is generated by Formal Axiology the easier it will be for them to determine which is the most appropriate value to add to the specific situation. That hierarchy is summed up by the formula: I > E > S. Intrinsic Value trumps Extrinsic Value which, in turn, trumps Systemic Value. We can't go wrong if we bring love into the situation, if we affirm life, or joy, or create a random act of beauty or kindness.**

The hierarchy implies that all the theories and ideologies in the world aren't worth as much as one material thing; and all the things in the world aren't worth as much as one individual life. Some of the Intrinsic values are mentioned in this list: integrity, liberty, fellowship, community, responsibility, involvement, empathy, etc.

For details, see the paper The Measurement of Value by R. S. Hartman. Here is a link to it: [The Measurement of Value](#)

You ask about the value to be added. If when you enter a room you radiate a healing blessing, and people there feel like a plant that has been watered, you are adding the right value.

You further inquire: "...in the case of general values (say of the group or humanity as a whole) conflicting with personal values, how and who determines which set of values wins?"

Before I can answer that, Jim, beyond what has been said above, it would help to know what specific conflict you have in mind. I need a specific case to analyze. I believe I have already given you the guideline clues so that you can answer this yourself. There are though two books I could recommend:

R. M. Kidder, HOW GOOD PEOPLE MAKE TOUGH CHOICES: Resolving the dilemmas of ethical living (NY:Simon & Schuster Fireside Books, 1995). See especially pp. 220-221.

Wayne W. Dyer, THERE'S A SPIRITUAL SOLUTION TO EVERY PROBLEM (NY: HarperCollins, 2001)

**Jerry:** The question was raised: "Just how do we add value?" I would reply: It is by fulfilling your purpose:

The meaning or purpose of life is to express love, truth, beauty, creativity, and individuality (and the other Intrinsic Values.).

I am well aware that there are nihilists among us who claim that (to them) life has no meaning. Perhaps someone can suggest a better meaning of human life than the one I offered here. I'd be very happy to consider it.

**Mark:** I might add that the more we learn about the human mind and the rest of human nature the easier it will be to live the really good life; and eventually there will be more of us who work for peace and harmony and wish to put an end to violence -- using strictly nonviolent means to do so. [For we will realize that if we employ violence to "put an end to violence" it won't really happen.]

**George:** What you just mentioned introduces us to an analysis of the relationship of ends to means. Let us now give it some deep thought. Okay?

## DO THE ENDS JUSTIFY THE MEANS?

**Harry:** On the topic of The MEANS-ENDS relationship, I may be wrong, but it seem to me that ends are related to means used: if you want peace, use peaceful means. If love is your end (your goal), use loving means to get to it. If you want stability in a marriage, or in the world, then stable means are required to reach your end-in-view.

Isn't it reasonable to be aware that chaotic or destructive means will not in themselves result in a stable, sustainable state of affairs. A state of justice is a state of balance; to be in balance we cannot use means that are out of balance.

That to me is the most basic point to learn about The Means/Ends relationship. The means ought to be compatible with the ends desired.

(For example, Woodrow Wilson said that World War I would be "a war to end all war.") You don't end war by waging it.

**Ida:** It works for me !

**Jerry:** Furthermore, what is an 'end' today was a 'means' yesterday. For example, an *engagement (getting engaged)* is an end to dating around, and is a means to a marriage. It is both, a means, and an end. Doesn't this imply that means must be compatible with ends?

That's why the means/ends relationship is important. What do the rest of you think about this crucial ethical principle?

[For a more detailed and thorough argument on the topic, see Chapter 12 of the manual, a link to which is offered HERE: <http://tinyurl.com/2mj5b3> ]

Nick has invited his friend, Jeb, to sit in with the research group and if he has something to say, to speak up.

**Jeb:** But we cannot deny that the ends can justify the means; that doing things that would be wrong otherwise can be right because of the end result!

An example that supports what you say is this: let's say we had a terrorist in custody, and were debating whether it was ethical to torture him in order to gain information about follow up terrorist attacks so we could save thousands of innocent lives. One could use a narrow minded "the ends justify the means" argument to say so.

Now in actuality, it turns out the terrorist is just some random guy we picked up in Iraq, he doesn't know anything, and that torture is not a reliable method. So this example shows the danger of using "the ends justify the means" reasoning without thinking it through.

Another modern example might be wiretapping. The ends (catching criminals) are used to justify the means (invading privacy). And indeed, as you would fear, the government attempts to use "ends justify the means" reasoning to wiretap to an excessive degree. But the way you have phrased it you go too far, and argue against wiretapping completely. You said "you don't end war by waging it". So then, we can't catch criminals by having cops engage in criminal activities (undercover)? We can't use lethal force to capture a serial killer?

**Jerry:** I thank you for the two examples which you offer. They do indeed support my argument. But you spoil it (and do not offer any good examples to support your ethical fallacy) when you state, in your first sentence: *"But we cannot deny that the ends can justify the means; that doing things that would be wrong otherwise can be right because of the end result."* ***I can deny it, and I do deny it, for I detect that it is an ethical mistake.***

This was the same ideology the Soviet Union was said to uphold to justify what they did with their invasions, gulags, cultural suppressions, and denial of civil liberties to the Ukrainians, Latvians, Hungarians, etc.

This is also used by every empire (including the USA) to justify every preemptive occupation of another nation by armed forces; and every other morally-questionable conduct. "We are doing it in the name of a noble end-in-view --- so it's okay" is the gist of the propaganda and talking points used to make it sound good. The fine-sounding end may be Freedom; Democracy; Socialism; To End All War; Safety and Security; etc., etc.

Now as to your wire-tapping example, here we have to weigh the value to us of 'catching criminals' versus 'privacy.' We have to conclude that these days there is no longer any such thing as privacy. So my position is not to rule out wire-tapping and also undercover police operations and even some sting-operations ...as long as they are accompanied with safeguards, supervision by Congress or other legislative bodies, open reporting, and enforced regulations governing them. An undercover cop who harasses someone, or arrests someone, and does not identify himself as a cop, is behaving immorally. Yet this happens every day; and it is NOT right.

**My clearly-stated position is: THE USE OF IMMORAL MEANS TO GET TO NOBLE ENDS IS NOT JUSTIFIED. THE ENDS DO NOT JUSTIFY THE MEANS IF THE MEANS ARE MORALLY-QUESTIONABLE. Why? Because in an important sense means are ends; and ends are means. Thus they must be *compatible* with one another. If an ethical end is desired, ethical means are to be used to get there !**

**Ken:** Whether the ends justify the means always depends on what is the end, and what is the means. There can be no general answer to the question. And, what are ends in one context, may be the means in a different context. I work (means) to make money (end). But money (means) is earned to purchase a car (end). And, the car (means) is purchased to get to the job (end) (means) to make money. Ends and means are always relative to one another. Nothing is an absolute means, nor an absolute end.

**Jerry:** Are you claiming, Ken, that it is all relative to context? If so, that's a rationalization for immoral activity: it gives us an excuse if we want to cheat. "I want this item very badly, so I will shop-lift it After all, I'm poorer than the owner of this store."

**Ken rejoins:** "All I said is that whether the ends are worth the means depends on what are the ends, and on what are the means in a particular case. Don't you agree with that? I don't see how that would justify shop-lifting. Do you?"

**Jerry:** True, what you said does *not* justify shop-lifting. I was illustrating the concept 'rationalization.' I'm sorry if this caused a misunderstanding.

Yes, it is important to consider what are the ends? And what are the means? Much depends upon that. It is good to see things in context. I agree.

My prescription, derived from the unified theory of Ethics - that ends depend upon means used, and result from the means used - still stands. "Peace is the step on the road to peace." So if we say that world peace is our end-in-view, it is essential that we use *peaceful* means to get there. Why is this so hard for some people to understand?!



In general, it is dangerous to live by the concept "The end justifies the means." It permits all kinds of unethical behavior to slip by.

**Kay:** It is a fact that people today do things that are counter to their own professed interests. The job of a good theory of Ethics would be to show them how to do effectively what is in harmony with their interests.

I am often asked, "Do you think a pacifist approach would have worked in World War II to achieve a desirable result against Hitler, once he rose to power?" I recommend, as an alternative, that we be alert enough to catch the rise of a Hitler and his movement, his following, early, and do something to head it off **before** it becomes such a menace to the world..

It's possible to achieve a just and fair society without literally fighting, without employing violence. How many consider that possibility in a serious manner? We need to be smart, not tough. We need cleverness and skill more than we need militant warriors. We ought to set out to "win hearts and minds," to persuade, to set a shining example (in our own nation) of how to *flourish*, in Aristotle's sense of the term.

We need to have a focused purpose to teach the world what Ethics is all about, and why they should soon adopt it. First, though, we have to understand the principles ourselves.

**Harry:** Thank you, Kay, for those cogent words. In summary, it seems to me obvious that one should select appropriate means to achieve one's ends. And I am not saying that the means need to **resemble** the ends, but rather that compatibility is required. After all, it is a matter of perspective whether a specific event is labeled as a means, or as an end. The main point of which we should be aware is that if an ethical end-in-view is

chosen as a goal, immoral means will very likely not get us there. You can probably think of some examples.

**Jerry:** I can. For example, if **Freedom** is a goal for our nation, the denial of freedom to a cohort of our citizens will not get us to our goal. (While not denying that we should incarcerate perpetrators of criminal acts, ideally we should rehabilitate - or at least strive to do so - those we arrest, rather than just locking them up and warehousing them. It is stupid to imprison people who are later released and who have been made worse for the experience - which is often the case now.) One should not violate the Bill of Rights in order to defend the Bill of Rights.

For another example, if a man wants an honest relationship with his wife, and knows that she will not accept philandering, then having an affair would not be compatible with what he wants.

## **THE TROLLEY DILEMMA REVISITED**

**George:** Consider this scenario: There are five people on a train track and a train is on a collision course for them. The only way to save them is to switch the track to where another person is working, killing the one but saving the five. Most people theoretically choose to save the five over the one in this situation. Who knows what they would do when confronted with an actual emergency? [The secret of good living is to avoid emergencies.]

**Larry:** One could shout to that worker to dodge out of the way, so that the switch is not the *only way* to save him. And it wouldn't be ethically wrong if he somehow saved himself, for a person has the right to do so, even if it leaves the other five to their fate. A person with a choice cannot be expected - or forced - to sacrifice himself for a supposed greater cause. When it happens it is only a gift, not an obligation.

There is nothing moral about sentencing yourself to misery, just as there is nothing immoral about avoiding it.

You could make the dilemma stricter, George, by phrasing it this way: A trolley is running out of control down a track. In its path are five people who have been tied to the track. Fortunately, you can flip a switch, which will lead the trolley down a different track to safety. Unfortunately, there is a single person tied to that track. Should you flip the switch?

**Ida:** And you can make this question even more of a dilemma by stipulating that the single person is a close relative of yours, say your son or your daughter.

**Ed:** Humans are extremely biased, but not aware that they are. We prefer helping friends and family rather than strangers. We prefer our own preconceptions over evidence to the contrary. We prefer generalizations and categorizations rather than individual exceptions. Ethical dilemmas help to expose these biases and turn our biases against us by showing them to be inconsistent or irrational.

**George:** I believe there is a chance to save a life every single moment and the fact that we are unaware of this possibility shows how strong the bias is -- especially in wealthy, comfortable countries.

**Ed:** These counterfactual hypotheticals are a game people play. They have some value in revealing one's biases but there are enough factual dilemmas in the real world to ponder, and hopefully solve, without our having to make some up. Philosophy serves us by its continuous clarification and analysis of vague concepts, making them more precise. While much philosophical discussion does

clarify concepts, much is a pointless exercise in self-confusion.

This Trolley 'mind experiment' may serve to clarify many students' thinking; yet more likely it will just confirm biases they already hold. It's true that discussions in philosophy – when done well - can result in an explicit awareness of our presuppositions, and also can reveal that they may not be factual or may themselves require rational support. Also counterfactual hypotheses sometimes can reveal entailments that we had not realized (ranging from unintended consequences to logical absurdities.)

**Larry:** It is a fact that people feel that their loved ones' lives are more important, more valuable, than a stranger's life; and our ethical system must take that into account. They judge, and will continue to judge, that in these circumstances ***one life is worth many.*** *What if we generalized this principle for purposes of constructing a good ethical theory?*

What if we operated in keeping with the novel premise that *"one person is to be treasured as much as many -- say as much as one hundred persons"*? What kind of world would we have? Would we continue to wage bloody wars? Would we then choose to willfully kill a person in the name of any good cause, such as "to save more"? And how do we ever know we really will save more?

What if one of the individuals that *we save* is a *serial killer* who commits monstrous crimes and the one we killed was an innocent who everyone would describe as 'a good person.'? What if you had good reason to believe the one we sacrificed (by switching the onrushing trolley into his path) would have gone on to invent something that would have made life more comfortable for millions, say, a superior

design for a city neighborhood that enhanced moral growth and enabled the people to flourish? Would it make any difference in your calculations?

**Kay:** If people are polled currently, many would vote to kill one to save five. Could they be wrong in their beliefs that lead to this conclusion? A majority of people in the West once believed the Earth was flat. Did that make it so? Were they wrong? So let's not get 'hung up' on what people do – or do believe - at present -- as if "50 million individuals" can't be wrong. Let's not speak about how people live now, and what they believe now, as if it's fixed for all time. People can, and do, change their views, learn new values, and as a result behavior changes accordingly.

**George:** To play along with The Trolley Dilemma you pose, I would make this observation: If you *know* pulling the switch will kill one to save five, then you intend to kill one to save five when you pull the switch. This is an *intentional transgression* because you know it is a crime (by Kant's definition of the term). I have a friend whose name is Charley. He told me that he would not pull the switch and that his position is justified on this basis. He would not commit that crime.

I agree with his stance, which is this: “I do not feel obligated to save any number of people if it entails committing an *intentional transgression*. The omission is but one link in the chain of causal connection, since, in part, my omission helps to cause the deaths of five people; but it is misleading to say that I am *the* cause of the deaths.

I would assert that the act of commission is worse than the act of omission in this case.”

He is right, ethically-speaking. What he argues reflects what he learned from studying Immanuel Kant, METAPHYSICS OF MORALS, also known as the *Grundlagen*. This is not mere opinion; Kant was onto something here that is really fundamental.

The Unified Theory of Ethics shows that it is wrong to use a person as a thing, or as a number. To do so is the commission of an Ethical Fallacy. To deliberately kill a person (except in immediate direct self-defense) is to commit an evil: it is the denigration or devaluation of a person. Whether it is done by a system, by a thing, or by another person, it is still wrong.

I would not flip the switch .. If you do nothing, you are simply letting things happen. If you flip the switch, you are a murderer, willfully killing the lone person.

**Ed:** I agree, George, because inaction is not action. To be a murderer, you must do something. Letting someone die is not murder. To think otherwise would require condemning all doctors as murderers who do not always go to extraordinary lengths to keep someone alive, even if only for another second. Are the doctors who do not *always* attempt resuscitation murderers? Of course not. Yet It is their failure to act that indirectly results in the death at that time.

**Ida:** To have a moral obligation to help someone, it must be possible to do so in a manner that is not objectionable. You are morally responsible for your decision in every situation which occurs in your life. But that does not mean you are responsible for the situations themselves.

Murder, by definition, is the killing of another human being under conditions specifically covered in law. In the U.S.,

special statutory definitions include murder committed with malice aforethought, characterized by deliberation or premeditation or occurring during the commission of another serious crime, as robbery or arson (first-degree murder), and murder by intent but without deliberation or premeditation (second-degree murder). In order to murder, one must kill, and in order to kill, one must act. Inaction is never murder, though it may be negligence in some cases.

One is responsible for one's actions, and for one's inactions, insofar as action is possible (which is added because, of course, one is not responsible for not doing what is impossible). But the question is, is it right to murder one person in order to save the lives of five people? The answer to that question is, "no", it is not right.

**George:** People are not consistent, and do not make decisions rationally when it comes to explaining – as the scenario is given in a variant of the Trolley Dilemma -- what is different about pushing a big, heavyset man with their own hands off a footbridge to interfere with an onrushing trolley versus throwing a switch intentionally which they are sure will kill a person,, and why they *would not do the former but would do the latter*. They cannot give a rational explanation for their reluctance to act in the former case.

Neurologists, though, have attempted to explain it by showing that a brain scan during deliberation in the former case lights up in the lower anterior part of the brain, while those considering whether to throw a switch to divert the trolley are calculating with their cerebral cortex. That is the part of the brain that lights up in their brain scans. People with brain damage in certain areas of the brain will have no problem at all with any of those situations, and quickly decide to kill.

**Nick:** What if the dilemma were stated in such a way that the only way to save five people would be by jumping in front of the train yourself? A lot of people, in theory at least, would find this acceptable since self-sacrifice is often honored in society. In Western culture we share a taboo against directly harming a single individual in any pursuit. Fortuitously this is in harmony with the Unified Theory of Ethics we are in the process of constructing.

The problem with the Trolley Dilemma, and its variants, is that they force us to make an either-or choice. It's got to be this or that. No other alternatives. Black or White; no shades of Gray. Such thinking is Systemic thinking ...very limited and narrow, **not** at all **lifelike**. In life there are many subtleties, many options. As we philosophize here let us not abandon clear thinking and good reasoning.

**Kay:** Earlier, George, I heard you once speak of the ethical enterprise. What did you mean when you used the expression "the ethical enterprise"?

**George:** By "the ethical enterprise" I meant: the study and practice of Ethics. I also meant to include any research done to expand the theoretical and empirical import (as spoken of by philosophers of science such as Gustav Hempel) of this branch of study.

I believe we all do the best we know how. If we knew any better, we would do better. We are ignorant (of what is in our best interest; or of what is the best way to behave and to live.) And if we are not ignorant of what to do, we are ignorant of how to do it best, or of how to motivate ourselves to get going doing it.



So once we really know these things, we will know enough to act on them. And we will be a better people.

It is the task of Ethics to teach us, to dispel this ignorance; to civilize us, to make us more effective human beings; to make it clear without question, beyond any doubt, that we are all one family of brothers and sisters, the human species. Let's briefly describe this species.

## **HOW HUMANS DIFFER FROM OTHER ANIMALS**

**Nick:** According to the findings of the science of Physical Anthropology humans are animals. We are playful bipeds who love our games, our sports, and love solving puzzles; who speak advanced tongues; who write poetry and compose funky pictures; film movies; who reflect on our own reflections, who define ourselves,

We have vivid, even over-powering imaginations.<sup>5</sup> We can go insane. We project goals. We have desires, and principles, and as far as we know (or don't know) so do other animals. We do have a talent for putting others into cages and, at times, for doing incredibly-stupid things for no good reason.

Humans are distinguished from other animals by our versatility due to brain size.

Thus we can write, we can use complex speech and evolve subtle languages. We are capable of expressing abstract, and at times imaginative, thoughts. Some of these thoughts result in inventions – both musical and technological.

Other animals *do not have the brains* for ethics (and at the moment it seems that many humans don't either! This, though, can change in a relatively-short period of time, as education and instructional techniques become more effective, and as new generations evolve.)

There is a sector in the architecture of the human brain that controls the use of our hands. Finger manipulation and the opposable thumb is lacking in other creatures. We have also developed more tools - such as, for instance, computer programs and robots.

Furthermore we have cultural evolution with elaborate rituals and advanced systems of Mathematics and Logic.

Does all this make us superior to those animals who do not have these attributes? Hardly. Those of you who have a pet as part of your family – whether a cat, dog, horse, bird or hamster - will agree readily that your pet is superior to many humans you have known.

## ON BUSINESS ETHICS

**George:** Many, if not most, employers believe that they should treat each employee *alike*. This is not the ethical thing to do: Each employee should be treated as *unique*, and be given a project and the responsibility for completing it successfully, with the authority to recruit the necessary means. This will help them grow, and make their work more meaningful and interesting to them. This may sound naïve but it is what some very successful businessmen are already doing. We should ask the CEO or the small-business owner if it wouldn't be ideal to develop each member of your staff so that s/he shows some managerial capacity if at all capable of it.

Any business that does not give equal emphasis and attention to its customers, its profit (the shareholders), its employees, its environment, and to its community is not being fully ethical. If a business wants to live up to the standards of ethics, this is what it must do. If business owners, were clear about this and put it into practice they would find that maximum value would result.

**Ida:** Leaders, managers, foundations, and corporations should ask: How can we design competitions that have a positive effect on the evolution of excellence?

Also check out the videos and the columns at this link:

<http://www.dennisbakke.com/pages/>

The experience of this CEO suggests that work can be a joy for some workers. Learn how he managed to achieve it for so many of his employees as well as for himself.

## THE STRUCTURE OF INTEGRITY

**Jerry:** Here is another model that can be used in Ethics. Dr. James Weller has shown that fractal geometry can partially account for both the concepts: integrity and refinement.

If we say that 'an individual has integrity' what is implied by that?

Here is a proposed definition of '*integrity*' : a self-similar value pattern that is morally stable; one that replicates itself at all levels, in all settings, and across time -- throughout one's life. .... I believe that's a pretty-good definition!

Such a pattern Weller tells us is *a fractal*. And this is explicated best by the mathematics of fractal geometry.

Here are some links to learn more about fractals:

[Fractal - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia](#) }

<http://classes.yale.edu/fractals/>

Dr. Weller has shown that fractals can also explain personal moral refinement. Here is an excerpt from a recent issue of *The Journal of Formal Axiology: Theory and Practice*, (Volume 2, 2009), p. 142.

"The fractal model" he writes, points to "an endless road of personal refinement. An individual may quickly sense that it is wrong to kill, but applying that principle at a new level, he sees that threatening a person's social life is similar to threatening their physical life, so he chooses not to slander."

"Later he may become even more refined and acknowledge the harm

that he does to himself by harboring angry fantasies about another. He is step-by-step turning away from contention and abuse, and towards attitudes of peace at progressively deeper levels within himself."

He gives us more details as to where such a model can lead when he writes:

"By moving the conscious effort away from resisting grossly violent acts and towards adopting smaller, more peaceful impulses, he builds a broader barrier between himself and unethical behavior."

He explains that as s/he effects these tiny changes near the core of who she is, "the resulting pattern of being expands its way back up into her behavioral life to make largely visible differences ....In other words, while refining a *just* lifestyle she is also developing a *merciful* one."

I, for one, believe this research is highly-relevant to Ethics and commend it to everyone's attention. Ethicists can build upon this and carry the research forward. A study of the fractal geometry when its major terms and relations are interpreted in terms of *ethics* (terms such as, for example, altruism or happiness) may well reveal some hidden relationship which would not otherwise occur to us.

Finding such logical models and elaborating upon them is how we are going to make real progress in Ethics. The testable hypotheses will then follow; the measurements will be made; and the world will know that Ethics is a body of knowledge essential to the development of moral health on a massive scale. What Musicology does for music appreciation, Ethics does - or will do - for self-improvement.

**Larry:** Do you recall that premise I recommended earlier? I suggested: Let's assume from now on that one person is as valuable as many are, as even an indefinitely-large number of others are. (Yes, it is counter-intuitive; but then

so is what biology and physics tells us about our bodies, i.e., that we are composed mostly of water; or of swirling electron clouds that are only probability states. Those are counter-intuitive but no one seems to mind.)

That assumption that an individual is to be valued as of uncountably-high worth could have a profound impact on ethical theory. As a new way of looking at things, it would be an improvement. Then, when this is taught in the law schools, the community colleges, the universities, let's determine if we – the human family - are all better off than we were before it was taught.

Living ethically is not just minimizing suffering but is also exercising the capacity we humans have to put ourselves in the position of other people, to see things from a broader perspective than merely thinking of ourselves. As a person matures he comes to see that his suffering is not more special than anyone else's suffering. He acquires the ability to reason. He does not just think of himself. He is able to imagine what it's like for others to be affected by his actions. He is able to live ethically.

## EPILOGUE

**George:** Many philosophy students wonder: What is Ethics? And Why bother studying it? Aristotle can be rightly said to be the founder (or compiler) of our field of study. Learning from Socrates, Plato, and other philosophers – of which there were many in the heyday of the classical Athens city-state – he, Aristotle, gave a series of lectures at his school, adding in his own ideas, and he entitled his lecture series *Ethica*, thus giving our field its name.

Although Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, and Machiavelli (during their pessimistic moods) have strayed from the wisdom taught by Aristotle, I believe Aristotle was correct in viewing our topic of study as ‘The good life for the good person.’ That’s what ethics is.

This is how we are to look at ethics. We had to answer two major questions:

- 1) Who is the *good* person?
- 2) What would be the *good* life for that person, or for a group of such persons? And what *good* attitudes and prevailing character traits are *good*, are appropriate, for such a life?

Therefore - since "good" is the basic notion here - it was logical and reasonable for us to consider the Form of the Good (which was the major concern of Plato, according to Raphael Demos, Paul Friedlander and other Plato scholars.) Plato’s quest, his objective, was to seek a definition of “good.” {See the *Eidos* and the *Republic*, 504d.} And he was

referring to moral virtue when he ranked this inquiry as the most important of all topics. I think we are all agreed here in this room that value-theory shall serve as the meta-language for ethical theory. Do I hear any objections?

**Nick:** From the silence I would infer that we are in agreement here. It's a consensus view that we need to understand what is a "good x", a good anything, before we can know what is a good person or a good life. So we had to find out what the adjective 'good' means, and what 'value' means. It turned out that they imply 'fulfilled meaning,' value denotes *some* fulfillment of meaning; good denotes *total* fulfillment.

**Jerry:** From the axiom of value - its definition, as a function of meaning – we were able to derive three dimensions of value based upon how rich they are in meaning: They are named, respectively, from least to most, Systemic Value, Extrinsic Value, and Intrinsic Value. They are abbreviated: S, E, and I. As we noted that chart (**in Endnote 4**) these dimensions have many philosophically-relevant applications. I counted at least 108 definitions generated. The fertility of these dimensions is evident.

**Frank:** Employing these dimensions of value as tools we are enabled to derive an entire ethical model, a rudimentary theory of Ethics upon which others can build. It leads to many fertile branches of research. [A reader of the College Course document may want to skip over the technicalities, the foundational stuff, and go direct to the section What Is Ethics? which constitutes chapter 6 ff, ]

**Ida:** Recall what the Oracle at Delphi is said to have told Socrates: Know thyself ! This paradigm for ethics we worked on here puts a focus on *knowing oneself*. Kierkegaard stressed the process of creating and becoming



oneself (on moral growth and development). Hence we conclude that self-improvement is a large part of the ethical enterprise, which is to live the good life – the good life as we have understood it here.

As we become more effective, more moral, and more efficient in our morality we set an example for others to do the same. As ethical behavior spreads, all human activity becomes more harmonious and fulfilling. The individual and society will then flourish, as Aristotle (and many others since) envisioned. This is how I would venture to answer the perennial question What is Ethics?

**Harry:** Some economists (such as Steven D. Levitt, [http://www.amazon.com/SuperFreakonomics-Cooling-Patriotic-Prostitutes-Insurance/dp/0060889578/ref=ntt\\_at\\_ep\\_dpt\\_1](http://www.amazon.com/SuperFreakonomics-Cooling-Patriotic-Prostitutes-Insurance/dp/0060889578/ref=ntt_at_ep_dpt_1)) hold that individuals who we would usually describe as “good persons” will, given *strong enough incentives*, behave badly occasionally. These do not have to be monetary incentives but could be rather intangible, such as acting selfishly because of a perceived look on the face of one who is cherished and adored, **a look** interpreted as encouraging the morally-questionable behavior – or perhaps one construed to be implying “don’t be a fool by avoiding the behavior.’ And some who everyone always rated as “good” have been known to murder in the name of love – thereby not rating a high morality score any longer. Murder, we all agreed, is immoral behavior.

That is why the Unified Theory of Ethics does not focus on behavior but instead on character. If a person’s **goal** in life (among others one may pursue) **is to be a good person**; and if in addition one **clearly understands** both what that means, as well as how specific small steps result in goals becoming fulfilled – one grasps **the implementation process** – then one is probably less likely to stray into immorality. It is best to focus on **how** to break bad habits,

and **how** to arrange incentives that reinforce and strengthen good character – **how** to support and maintain it. It is a task of Ethics as a discipline, as a body of knowledge, to explain these matters.

**Frank:** You're saying that success may be an ethical concept.

**Harry:** Yes.

**Jerry:** Might I venture to say that the purpose of life is to be morally healthy, and as a result to achieve a state of happiness. What is moral health? It is enjoying life through continuous self-improvement, knowing clearly how to build morally-good habits in an effective manner, thus enabling us to resist temptations that destroy us or that hold us back.

**Nick:** True. And self-improvement means gaining in the strength to overcome each challenge that may come along in life.

**Ida:** Oh, yes, they will come along. We will receive challenges!

**George:** So I return to the question: Why bother studying Ethics?

**Ed:** It will help make one a good person. And when the 'open source' enterprise - of building a unified theory and artistically applying it - is successful, the discipline of Ethics will provide guidelines to the really good life. Then, as Ida earlier reminded us, we all can *flourish*. Anyone who wants to avail himself of the knowledge will have what Aristotle spoke of as *practical wisdom* as well as *happiness*. The

good person often expresses compassion; and from that kindness frequently results.

## ON COMPASSION

**Larry:** **Speaking of compassion,** you may have heard of Dacher Keltner. He is a professor of psychology at the University of California, Berkeley, the executive editor of *Greater Good*, an internet site, and the author of the book *Born to Be Good*. [He is also a co-editor of the new *Greater Good* anthology, [\*The Compassionate Instinct\*](#).]

Dr. Keltner tells us about some scientific studies that reveal a side of human nature that is compassionate. Here is quote from a column he wrote:

“Joshua Greene and Jonathan Cohen of Princeton University found that when subjects contemplated harm being done to others, a similar network of regions in their brains lit up. Our children and victims of violence—two very different subjects, yet united by the similar neurological reactions they provoke. This consistency strongly suggests that compassion isn’t simply a fickle or irrational emotion, but rather an innate human response embedded into the folds of our brains.”

In other research by Emory University neuroscientists James Rilling and Gregory Berns, participants were given the chance to help someone else while their brain activity was recorded. Helping others triggered activity in the caudate nucleus and anterior cingulate, portions of the brain that turn on when people receive rewards or experience pleasure. This is a rather remarkable finding: helping others brings the same pleasure we get from the gratification of personal desire.

The brain, then, seems wired up to respond to others' suffering—indeed, it makes us feel good when we can alleviate that suffering.”

Keltner also calls attention to the fact that University of Wisconsin psychologist Jack Nitschke found a biological basis for compassion in some experiments he has run.

In addition, it turns out that other experimenters discovered, according to measurements they made of the autonomic nervous system, that when young children and adults feel compassion for others, this emotion is reflected in very real physiological changes: Their heart-rate goes down from baseline levels, which prepares them (*not* to fight or flee – for then the heart rate would speed up -- but instead) to approach and sooth. I concur with George that from compassion kindness often follows. What can we say about kindness?

## **THE PRAGMATIC VALUE OF KINDNESS**

**Ed:** Allow me to explain the pragmatic value of kindness. It helps to hold us together as a people.

**Kindness may be regarded as the foundation for individual tranquility and positive social interaction.**

**If most *everyone* behaved *morally* towards one another we would have a shared experience free of war, theft, deceit, and maybe even famine and poverty - as the money spent on weapons could be used for food, education, farming, and industrialization.**

In contrast, if most everyone behaved *entirely immorally* towards one another we would bring about our own extinction.

These are testable predictions but I'd rather see the former tested rather than the latter: Let's strive to find out what outcomes are obtained when more persons behave morally toward one another, when they treat each other decently, with good manners, using words that heal rather than hurt ...in other words, when they apply in practice a sound ethical theory.

## ON THE PLACE OF EXPERIMENTS IN ETHICS

**Frank:** As I see it, the experimental approach in Ethics would include the testing of a person's values early on in his career to reveal to him at what he would excel so that he can better do what he loves and what brings out his best strengths; as well as the accompanying life-coaching to help him (via encouragement) pursue some noble goal that he freely chose for himself.

Those value tests, such as especially the HVP – alluded to in Appendix One of ETHICS; A COLLEGE COURSE -- can be used [and are being used by life-coaches, therapists, success counselors and value consultants in several nations] to learn what a person is doing that is self-defeating and counter-productive. And furthermore to learn what strengths an individual can emphasize to live more effectively. Results learned by the community of ethicists can lead to better, more relevant and vital, life-coaching in the future. This is ongoing education for adults.

One example of experimentation relevant to Ethics that

**Dr Appiah tells about is an experiment that shows that if people smell pleasant odors they are more likely to be a 'good samaritan' than if they didn't The external conditions put them into 'a good mood.'**

**Philosophers will note that the new science of Moral Psychology, within which the latter study occurred, complies with and fulfills James Rachel's two criteria: the Ontological and the Epistemological.**

## **AFTERWORD**

**Jerry: Let's get down to basics:** Human nature hasn't changed that much in 3000 years: with very few exceptions, we still operate out of self-interest, though it often is on the subconscious level.

So the question then becomes: ***What is truly in our self-interest?***

Wise men say, to have health is in our self-interest. To have some wealth is also -- at least enough to sustain us and to fulfill some of our basic needs.

Happiness has been held up as a goal for which to aim. No one can deny that it is well to have money, health and happiness.

Yet there is an even higher **goal**, one **that gives us even greater fulfillment**: it is to have **a meaningful life**. ...And that's what the ethical adventure is all about.

**Kay:** How is this achieved?

**Nick:** One way is to get involved in a project that many would agree is extremely worthwhile. For example, answering the two questions: What does it take to make **peace**? And will we do what it takes to make peace?

**George:** Other ways to help make social ethics a living reality is to in our own unique manner implement in concrete ways the motto, "Each for all and all for each." To do that is to bring social ethics to life. It is an awareness that we each will flourish best when all others have the opportunity to bring out their talents and develop their unique gifts. A recommended affirmation is "I'm aware that I'll do better when everyone does better."

Let us, one and all, find new and creative ways to add value, and to be living expressions of the good life, the ethical life.

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## **ENDNOTES**

(1) It is a known fact that people are bound together by the mores in their specific culture. Mores are not to be confused with Morality, although too often it is the case that they are. As I have proposed, in this new paradigm for ethics, the word "morality" shall refer to the process of living up to an ideal (such as the description of "the good person" that Mark suggested for us - on page 21.) Morality means: moral value. And value (valuation) is a matching process: it means being partially or fully in correspondence (one-to-one) with the meaning of the concept. As the reader recalls, x is valuable if it to some degree fulfills the meaning of the concept under

which x falls. If the concept is "a person" then x, the individual, is designated by a proper name, X. And X can more or less live up to what he believes a person ought to be. {To fully match up is to be good. x is a good C when x totally exemplifies C-ness.} Earlier Mark offered a picture of a possible ideal to help stimulate the imagination. If one has a low ideal for himself he will not rate high in morality, in the new sense of the term as employed in the Unified Theory (UT) Thus, if an individual complies with the model I am proposing, from now on **morality** means: *increasing correspondence with an improving self-ideal*. This is a very dynamic process because the individual must be increasingly implementing the ideal; and it must be an improving ideal. That is to say, such a person wants to be reaching higher. One then prefers to not get into a rut, but would instead prefer to learn and to grow morally.

(2) Q: To ask the meaning of something is to ask what...?

A: It can indicate: What is your intention? What is your motivation? What does that connote?

One way to pin down "meaning" so that it is amenable to Logic and to Set Theory is to say it will refer to a set of descriptive adjectives (predicates) or to a definition (which is a finite set of predicates). Often when one asks "What do you mean?" offering a definition of your terms, rephrasing what you said, or giving an itemization or a description will satisfy the inquirer. This is the approach we shall utilize here, as we construct a unified theory of ethics. Some say 'Meanings are caught, not taught.' This implies that to comprehend the meaning of what another says, we must both "resonate on the same frequency." To A. N. Whitehead, in his book on process philosophy, *PROCESS AND REALITY* (N.Y., Macmillan, 1929) it was best to refer to meanings as "prehensions." This neologism refers to apprehension by the senses, or total comprehension.

(3) Technical note: The basic value dimensions which can be differentiated on the values spectrum – similar to the various visible light colors that can be discerned on the electromagnetic spectrum. {The radiation beams are said to be “tangible” while values are well-known intangible entities. Yet both are measurable.} I-value is richer in meaning than E-value, and E-value is richer in meaning than S-value. Each dimension has, by definition, a measure (a size, a cardinality) which tells the number of predicates that define the dimension: for Intrinsic Value it is the power of the continuum; for Extrinsic Value it is the size of the integers; and Systemic Values are finite, but elastic in size. For more detail and a lucid explanation, see the paper "*Axiology as a Science*" by R. S. Hartman, <http://www.hartmaninstitute.org/html/AxiologyAsAScience.html>

(4) In the following table the reader will find applications of the basic value types and the definitions that are generated as a result. Robert S. Hartman, Ph.D. suggested many of these definitions to me. They result from the application of the



value dimensions to some basic categories. When applied, those value dimensions yield *new definitions*, such as, for example, “possibility” is “the Systemic valuation of process.” Or “causality: is “Extrinsic succession.” “Poetry” is “the Intrinsic valuation of words.” “Music” (not listed in the table below) is “Intrinsically-valued sound.” “Nationalism” is Extrinsic patriotism. Etc.

|                         | <b>SYSTEMIC VALUE</b>                                          | <b>EXTRINSIC VALUE</b>                                              | <b>INTRINSIC VALUE</b>                                                    |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>truth</b>            | <b>validity (coherence)</b>                                    | <b>Objectivity (correspondence)</b>                                 | <b>compenetration (The Truth)</b><br>Kierkegaard, Hegel, Bergson, Bradley |
| <b>self recognition</b> | <b>self importance (neurosis)</b>                              | <b>self esteem</b>                                                  | <b>self respect</b>                                                       |
| <b>chaos</b>            | <b>confusion</b>                                               | <b>destruction</b>                                                  | <b>indifference (to an intrinsic value)</b>                               |
| <b>Being</b>            | <b>essence</b>                                                 | <b>existence</b>                                                    | <b>reality</b><br>Plato, Bradley, Hegel                                   |
| <b>time</b>             | <b>linear time (coordinate system time) (space ÷ velocity)</b> | <b>chronology (clock and calendar time) (past, present, future)</b> | <b>eschatology (eternity) (duration) (The fullness of time)</b>           |
| <b>space</b>            | <b>mathematical space</b>                                      | <b>aeronautical, and geographical space</b>                         | <b>paradise</b>                                                           |
| <b>succession</b>       | <b>deduction</b>                                               | <b>causality</b>                                                    | <b>growth</b>                                                             |
| <b>complete value</b>   | <b>perfection (Perfect)</b>                                    | <b>goodness (Good)</b>                                              | <b>uniqueness (Unique)</b>                                                |
| <b>process</b>          | <b>possibility</b>                                             | <b>probability</b>                                                  | <b>creativity (love) (appreciation)</b>                                   |
| <b>knowledge</b>        | <b>formal and technical</b>                                    | <b>observational, empirical, objective and subjective</b>           | <b>insight, intuition, empathy, satori, deja vu, clairvoyance</b>         |
| <b>relevance</b>        | <b>significance</b>                                            | <b>meaningfulness</b>                                               | <b>importance (vitality)</b>                                              |
| <b>entities</b>         | <b>universals (generalities)</b>                               | <b>particulars</b>                                                  | <b>individuals</b>                                                        |
| <b>gratification</b>    | <b>satisfaction</b>                                            | <b>pleasure</b>                                                     | <b>joy</b>                                                                |
| <b>justice</b>          | <b>equal treatment under law (equality)</b>                    | <b>compensation; equity</b>                                         | <b>rehabilitation (reconciliation)</b>                                    |

|                                         |                                                    |                                    |                                                                                                                     |
|-----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>patriotism</b>                       | <b>chauvinism</b>                                  | <b>nationalism</b>                 | <b>universalism<br/>(world citizenship)</b>                                                                         |
| <b>affects (i.e., internal facts)</b>   | <b>conception (mind)</b>                           | <b>perception (senses)</b>         | <b>experience (openness to inner life) (self) (individuality)</b>                                                   |
| <b>thinking</b>                         | <b>memory</b>                                      | <b>apperception</b>                | <b>awareness</b>                                                                                                    |
| <b>anticipation</b>                     | <b>planning</b>                                    | <b>expectancy</b>                  | <b>hope</b>                                                                                                         |
| <b>relationship</b>                     | <b>dependence</b>                                  | <b>independence</b>                | <b>interdependence</b>                                                                                              |
| <b>modes of knowing</b>                 | <b>casual acquaintance</b>                         | <b>familiarization</b>             | <b>involvement</b>                                                                                                  |
| <b>social pattern</b>                   | <b>uniformity and conformity</b>                   | <b>individualism</b>               | <b>individuality</b>                                                                                                |
| <b>energy in motion</b>                 | <b>mind</b>                                        | <b>matter</b>                      | <b>spirit</b>                                                                                                       |
| <b>recursion (recursive functions)</b>  | <b>History of Ideas</b>                            | <b>Material Progress</b>           | <b>Theology</b>                                                                                                     |
| <b>Theology</b>                         | <b>Systematic Theology</b>                         | <b>Comparative World Religions</b> | <b>Gestalt Psychology of Religion; Study of Mystic Experiences; Worship; Existential Encounter with Creativity.</b> |
| <b>belief pattern</b>                   | <b>ideology</b>                                    | <b>conviction</b>                  | <b>faith</b>                                                                                                        |
| <b>loyalty</b>                          | <b>to the state or system</b>                      | <b>to social pressure</b>          | <b>to the conscience</b>                                                                                            |
| <b>international relations</b>          | <b>international law</b>                           | <b>expediency</b>                  | <b>interpersonal fellowship</b>                                                                                     |
| <b>world</b>                            | <b>of maps and formulas</b>                        | <b>of senses</b>                   | <b>of organic unities (ends in themselves) (highest values)</b>                                                     |
| <b>plurality of elements (or parts)</b> | <b>all identical, replaceable, interchangeable</b> | <b>multiplicity</b>                | <b>maximum of variety-in-unity</b>                                                                                  |
| <b>universe</b>                         | <b>as viewed by Spinoza</b>                        | <b>as viewed by Leibniz</b>        | <b>as viewed by Goethe</b>                                                                                          |

|                                       |                                                    |                                       |                                                                    |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>mode of subsistence</b>            | <b>consist</b>                                     | <b>exist</b>                          | <b>persist (abide)</b>                                             |
| <b>language</b>                       | <b>technical (formal)</b>                          | <b>social conversational</b>          | <b>private (personal) metaphorical</b>                             |
| <b>words</b>                          | <b>lexicography, grammar</b>                       | <b>philology, rhetoric, semantics</b> | <b>poetry</b>                                                      |
| <b>commitment</b>                     | <b>loyalty</b>                                     | <b>devotion</b>                       | <b>faithfulness and consecration</b>                               |
| <b>human group</b>                    | <b>society</b>                                     | <b>collectivity</b>                   | <b>community (family spirit)</b>                                   |
| <b>personality type</b>               | <b>conformist (dreamer) (pessimist) (neurotic)</b> | <b>politician</b>                     | <b>realist-idealist (optimist, unique individual)</b>              |
| <b>athletics</b>                      | <b>coaching</b>                                    | <b>exercise</b>                       | <b>sport</b>                                                       |
| <b>love</b>                           | <b>benevolence and charity (philia)</b>            | <b>sex (eros)</b>                     | <b>true love, understanding and commitment (agape)</b>             |
| <b>sciences of individual persons</b> | <b>physiology and anatomy</b>                      | <b>psychology</b>                     | <b>ethics</b>                                                      |
| <b>the universe</b>                   | <b>symbolic (scientific) (theoretic)</b>           | <b>ordinary (everyday)</b>            | <b>I and Thou (the entity valued <u>is</u> the whole universe)</b> |
| <b>the nature of knowledge</b>        | <b>valid</b>                                       | <b>objective and subjective</b>       | <b>absolute (Cf. Ramanuja, F.H. Bradley, Bergson, etc.)</b>        |

(5) Rick Ringel, a computer-lab Director, suggests that human individuals are not so much *self-contradictory* (which they often appear to be) as they are *complex*. He explains that some of the tools that Complexity theorists use are appropriate for Ethics, especially for the Self-Concept and its accompanying Self-Image. By a model derived from that theory it is possible to conclude that the easiest way to overcome a bad habit – or even a bad character trait -- is through new circumstances, rather than attempting to change that behavior in the existing environment. In other words, Chaos Theory when applied to these concerns indicates that we

can chip away at our vices by bringing good habits into environments that get incrementally more similar to the problem environment.. Some examples are offered in the booklet,, written by the current author, entitled Living the Good Life. There further details may be found. Ringel further informs us that among other breakthroughs in the field of self-improvement research, a branch of math called Non-linear Dynamic Equations can be used to account for the multiple roles we play in life, the many faces we present to others, what psychologists would call our "multiple selves." All of these variable selves combine to be equivalent to our one Self-Concept.

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<http://www.oup.com/us/catalog/general/subject/Philosophy/EthicsMoralPhilosophy/?view=usa&ci=9780198249924> It tells how Ethics is based upon our ability to reason.

**Robert S. Hartman**, **The Structure of Value** (Southern Illinois University Press, 1967) ISBN 9780809302383 0809302381  
[http://www.worldcat.org/title/structure-of-value-foundations-of-scientific-axiology/oclc/217841&referer=brief\\_results](http://www.worldcat.org/title/structure-of-value-foundations-of-scientific-axiology/oclc/217841&referer=brief_results) This is available at many university libraries. It is Hartman's magnum opus. It has an Introduction by Paul Weiss, Chairman, Department of Philosophy, Yale University.

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[http://www.worldcat.org/title/sync-the-emerging-science-of-spontaneous-order/oclc/50511177&referer=brief\\_results](http://www.worldcat.org/title/sync-the-emerging-science-of-spontaneous-order/oclc/50511177&referer=brief_results) It relates and explains how order emerges from chaos in the universe, nature,, and in daily life.

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