

**THE
BREAKTHROUGH:
We can get along after all!**

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THE BREAKTHROUGH

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Chapter One

INSIGHT

This essay will instruct on how to find common ground and thus carry on a conversation with anyone. It will show how to disagree without being disagreeable. It will teach skills which facilitate the attainment of good human relations. It will also show how to avoid the emotional pain associated with guilt. Thus it will aid in making good people even stronger, morally speaking. It will make them even wiser than they already are. This essay will provoke some thought and present the reader with some fresh, new, ideas. It will provide material for discussion with your friends, your family, your students, or with people you mentor.

The subtitle of this booklet reads: We can get along after all. As we look around, for anyone to boldly claim that “we can get along” seems highly preposterous! Yet I would remind the reader that as recently as 152 years ago slavery was still a prevalent institution in the U.S.A. It was a common practice to buy, sell, and auction off human beings. Going back a century before that, nearly half the population were slaves. Thus we have come a long way forward to a more-humane society.

Now imagine what life will be like 152 years from now. Even professional futurists cannot tell us what the institutions, mores, and practices of society will be then. Can anyone

say with confidence that the social customs we have today will be prevalent in years to come?

We can, though, predict that due to improved methods of communication, within the next twenty years people of good character, knowing what truly is in their self-interest will outnumber the selfish people. The good people will have more influence in the world and will more determine the shape of world culture than the selfish individuals will.

This is an essay about human relations. It is about how to win the game of life and avoid getting in one's own way. The phrase "human relations" suggests a concern with people.

What is a known fact about people? They want to survive. Yet they want more than mere survival.

What do people really want? Is it money? Or is money merely a means to an end? To what end?

People want to flourish if possible. They want some well-being; they want to have a Quality Life. What is a Quality Life? It's a life rich in meaning, one full of 'mountain-top' experiences and warm memories. It is quality time with those we love. It includes leisure to pursue our hobbies and freely-chosen projects.

(With thanks to Martin Seligman, who pioneered in Positive Psychology) we have **well-being** when we can get into the flow, losing track of time because we are so involved in a project we volunteered to do. It gives us pleasure to accomplish it. We also need for full well-being some warm

human relationships; some sense that we are doing something meaningful to fulfill a worthwhile purpose. Also it helps if we believe that we have some accomplishments to our credit. More feelings of positive emotions, such as joy, bliss, gratitude, delight, satisfaction, happiness, etc. are also components of **well-being**. When we possess well-being, and also we are less argumentative, less disagreeable, more considerate of one another, we then will be living a Quality Life, a richer life.

VALUE CREATION

I am not claiming they are conscious of it, yet today people are hungry ... but they don't know what they are hungry for. However, when they see it, they want it! When they learn about *continuous value-creation*, they know they want it.

Some of us want to change the world for the better. We pioneers are looking for people who are early-responders, trend-setters, who are the first to try a new technology. We praise them for being among those few who are the first to take a look at something new. In this case the something new is what I shall here speak of as **the ethical perspective**. It makes moral sense. For once people know how plausible and sensible this new outlook is, they begin planting seeds - like a farmer who nourishes an entire village. Allow me to explain.

I speak of "seeds." These ideas are seeds. They are kindling and sparks that start a big fire. These ideas - these

sparks - may lead us to keep asking ourselves the Central Question of Life, and ask others to do the same. Here is a paraphrase of the Central Question (first proposed by H. Schoof in 2010.) It is: **How can I create value, here and now? What can I say or do to create the greatest value for all concerned?** For life, from the view of this new perspective, is about creating value. Let's work for this to be the commonsense norm, the prevailing ethos of our culture. In each situation, those with the ethical perspective, those who know their ethics, shall ask themselves this question: How can I, in this interaction, do what is mutually beneficial for all parties?

Now, today, the commonsense norm is: "Life is all about ME. How can I get what I want?" This is a *win/lose mentality*. It may result in ruthless rivalry. That seems to be the prevailing perspective, but it's out of whack.

Here's why. Life isn't about me winning and you losing. It's about us maximizing value (or at least increasing it.)

{Net value - for all concerned - ought to be continually improved. To state it as an imperative: Make things better! If it's already good, make it even better! Be a value-creator. The Universe is infinite in its potential. Value is also infinite. Let's go on the assumption that we can extend our outward horizons.}

There is wide agreement that this world is not perfect. In an imperfect world there are limits. The better we can make the world, though, the more we remove the limitsor at least extend them outward.

The ideal is balance, harmony, and clarity. What does it mean to be 'out of balance'? For example, if *one overvalues things or systems*, then one is doing it at the expense of other factors and qualities which are pushed aside. Our internal life is then out of balance.

Picture if you can a world where things and relations are in balance, a world in which there is wide agreement and harmony! Perhaps what led up to this was our ability to **program a computer** – similar to I.B.M.'s Watson – **to learn**, to improve,, and to fit (formerly random or chaotic) components together into a coherent pattern.

Do we need intelligent learning-machines to teach us? Would a portable personal super-intelligent mini-computer, which was programmed to continue learning more and more, show us what we should want if only we knew what is in our self-interest-for -maximum-benefit? If so, how would that work?

This computer is able to find compatibilities which no one individual – or even a group of them – could ever even imagine. We humans with our limited capacities cannot so far relate harmoniously with one another, yet a computer may be able to manage it. For it is very logical and systematic. It is based upon a system.

Systems (as well as theories, hypotheses, ideologies and -isms) are wonderful in their place. But if – in our thinking habits - a focus on systems results in our dis-valuing **people** then one's life is full of needless stress. Such stress will wear a person down and have other unwanted

consequences. There is a price to pay for distorted thought processes.

Research has shown that some people are so preoccupied with rules, and with authority, that they 'step' on people.

In contrast, those who believe (with all sincerity) the proposition that “the universe is a remarkably harmonious system” tend to be at peace with themselves. They have a serenity that others don't have. But those who overvalue that thought, rank it too high in their personal value pattern (their self-image), they are NOT at peace. They have a high need for inner peace, but haven't a clue as to how to have it. They may be passionate and focused on many other aspects of life, but, as careful studies reveal, serene they are not.

As you know, thought processes may lead to behavior, but they are not behavior. Those who have tension - due to a habit of overvaluing or undervaluing - tend to develop compensating behaviors ...as research studies show: Due to frustration and anger, instead of "biting your head off", many individuals will bite their tongue - literally! That's behavior.

Now and then the amygdala region in our brain, lights up, it gets stimulated; some event triggers it off. (The “lizard brain,” as this cluster of nerve cells is known colloquially, at that point seems to be hijacking our quest for morality, for our striving to be a good ethical person.) Then we show frustration. *We are quick to anger.* It happens when the event is misinterpreted. But if, at that moment, we ask ourselves a “centering Question” such as the following, the

frustration tends to rapidly dissolve! Here – with thanks to my colleagues P. Demerest and H. Schoof - are some examples:

[With regard to an individual with whom I am interacting, I shall ask myself] What is this person feeling right now? What might be good about what he or she is trying to say? What is important – what matters – to this person?

[With regard to policy] What needs to be done right now? What resources are available and what is the best use of them?

[With regard to a standard or a code] What is the value of having this rule, or of following it? What is right? What is wrong?

Am I employing the assets I have for empathy, practicality, and thinking logically? Do I have a plan for action? Do I shift my perspective to consider the other person's point-of-view?

Centering questions are **tools** that constitute a new technology; the impact they have on us when used may be studied by the Science of the Moral Sense {Moral Psychology} about which you will learn more in the next chapter. The use of these tools will enable us to stay in balance and gain further insight as to how to live a richer life.

A world that works is a world that works for everyone without depriving anyone of their opportunities to rise. Will it take that super-computer-that-learns to find the areas of consensus upon which we may focus? Will it be able to

discover policies beneficial to humankind that we will want to immediately implement in order to solve pressing social problems?

PREDICTIONS TO TEST

Let us test predictions such as, for example, this one:

: A morally-sensitive person, one who The Hartman Value Profile scores as “in balance,” displays behavior that independent observers unhesitatingly-describe as “ethical conduct.”

Here is another prediction to test: If a child is reared in a way where that child is given choices, asked questions, has autonomy recognized, then he or she is more likely to turn out to be a more morally-sensitive person than one who was not asked to choose his own path.

Those who have a good character tend to do the right thing without needing to consult any rules, codes of conduct, or laws. What does it mean” to have a good character”? The next chapter will explain.

Chapter Two

Moral Sense in a nutshell

Human beings are pre-wired to be self-serving. There are two ways of being self-serving: they may *seek their own self-interest*, or they may *be selfish*. To do what is in one's self-interest is to be considerate of others. To be selfish is to be inconsiderate of others.

Is it not in your self-interest to live in a world surrounded by others who bless the day they were born, people who feel at home in this world, people who live up to their own high ethical standards, who are happy, fulfilled, achieving, motivated, and healthy? If you could do something to help them get that way wouldn't that be in your self-interest?

To have a good character is in one's self-interest. If one has a bad character one will eventually have trouble in life. As to what it means to have a "good character," this will soon be explained in detail.

Most people would like to avoid needless pain. Two of the main causes of moral pain are fear and guilt. If a style of living can show a person how to live without fear, and how to be free of guilt, this is useful knowledge. It is in our self-interest to be aware of the following insights.

Any set of concepts is worth studying that can not only show us how to achieve peace-of-mind but also how to develop a

good character and live a trouble-free life. It is in our self-interest to brush up on these concepts.

WHAT IS “A GOOD CHARACTER”/

A person with a good character has a well-developed moral sense. That individual has an intuition that can readily discern right from wrong. S/he has a sensitive conscience, one that functions, and one that is inclined to get us to do the right thing.

What else is true of those who possess a good character? They are authentic. They have integrity. They want to be helpful. They want to take on some responsibility, and be accountable for it. They are forgiving; they show mercy. They avoid judging others. They are not moralists. They do want to leave the world a better place for their having passed through it; they want to help people feel better about themselves; to spread happiness and well-being. They know that morally we are responsible for each other. We are each other's support group. We have to look out for each other. And if we disagree we can disagree in an agreeable way. Disagreement does not have to be conflict; it can be courteous and respectful. It can arise in a context wherein one intrinsically-values the party with whom one is in disagreement.

A critical point to understand is that *criminals* are unethical because they *are selfish*. Yes, most murderers are selfish. For *selfishness* is the opposite of morality and living ethically

Many normal individuals, who are not criminals, are rigidly attached to their belief system, including their set of moral principles. They have an emotional bias concerning their own views, bordering on dogmatism. Many have a need to be right ...and they think this means they have to make the other guy wrong if he has a different view of the matter. They can't allow for multiple perspectives; it seems to threaten their self-esteem. So they get defensive.

It is important to differentiate between the two concepts, self-interest, and selfishness, noting clearly the difference between them. Those ideas are not the same, and should not be confused with one another! The following passage is excerpted from an earlier work by this author, entitled How To Live Successfully.¹

HOW SELF-INTEREST DIFFERS FROM SELFISHNESS

We all are, in a sense, self-serving. Even when we are most altruistic, charitable, or seemingly self-sacrificing, there is something in it for us. In cases like that we are usually operating out of self-interest. Self-interest, however, is not to be confused with selfishness: which is a disregard for others along with a lack of respect for them.

If you perform an act of loving kindness it appears on the surface to be selfless. I hold that there is something in it for you, namely a warm feeling that you have done some good, and you are gratified that in some small

way you have made the world a better place. So it was in your self-interest to do it.

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 is in their interest, Princeton ethics researcher Anthony 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."

In contrast, a selfish person thinks "me first." I must "get mine." He or she shows no respect for others, and thus fails to be ethical. Selfishness is concentrating on one's own advantage with disregard for others and may involve doing something that affects someone else adversely, such as taking something to which one is not entitled (theft); or depriving someone of something to which he/she is entitled.

Selfishness indicates a lack of respect, a failure to value other persons in a way that would be to one's maximum advantage. Optimum moral health is obtained when one Intrinsically-values other persons.

Selfish people are *not* moral; they are not ethical. There is nothing wrong with self-interest, though - provided it is enlightened. It is enlightened when you know what is in your true self-interest. To be enlightened is to put people first,

things next, and ideas last. It is to live by the Hierarchy of Value² discovered by Robert S. Hartman, the wise philosopher-scientist. Chapter Six will provide further details as to what this ordering of value priorities is about.

The point to understand here is that an individual may be altruistic, generous, and even heroic and yet at the same time his conduct can be, and is, in line with his self-interest. He is looking out for his self-interest because he is giving support to his support group.

Who comprises your support group? If you are aware enough, if you realize it, it is the entire human species. And to be enlightened is in your best self-interest.

To have enlightened self-interest is to be aware that what really helps you helps me. Then you will tend **to be ethical** and to have smooth human relations! You will have good manners and you will be friendly. The harmony you feel is an indication that you are winning the game of life.

Then you will gain all the benefits that come with co-operation on shared goals. Benefits will result when you create value in your interactions with others. How can one create value? Some examples as to how it is done follow: Boosting someone up is one way to create value. Make someone feel good about themselves. Another way is handing out sincere compliments. And be ready to be of service.

Selfishness” means "you gain and the other person loses" If you push to the head-of-the-line at a checkout counter,

getting in front of those who were in line ahead of you, or if you grab the biggest slice of cake at a party before others have had a chance to select a slice, you are being selfish. If you take what doesn't belong to you (theft), or deprive someone else of what they have a right to, you are being selfish.

The opposite way of conducting yourself is to be considerate of others. That is the ethical way.

A third alternative is to give others a cold shoulder, to be indifferent to them, to ignore them. This will not 'grease the wheels' for human relations, for group living. We are a social species.

DO YOU KNOW YOUR SELF-INTEREST?

What is in your self-interest? Would a world to live in with less poverty and with more ethical people be in your self-interest? Would it reduce the threat to your health and safety? Would it enable you to not merely survive, but even to flourish?

Would you not flourish more if you gained value in your life? If yes, then let's investigate: what is this thing called "value"? And how do we gain more of it?

WHAT IS VALUE?

If I start describing a rug on the floor, and I go on and on about it, giving it so much attention, you are justified in inferring that I find **value** in that rug! Each adjective I use to describe it attributes another property to the rug. If I asked you to describe to me your mother or your best-friend, you wouldn't know where to begin – because, for you, there are so many properties there! It turns out that “value” is a function of properties: the more properties an individual finds in something, the more likely that it has some value for that individual. The value something has to us depends on the meaning we give it.

[In Logic, meaning is a set of predicates, known as ‘the *intension of the concept*.’ These predicates (descriptive adjectives or “attributes”) are the names of properties.]

Everybody loves a bargain! When we speak of a bargain, we call it “a value.” So why not optimize the amount of value we get in our lives? Why not ‘squeeze every drop’ of value possible out of life? How arrange this? What can we do?

One way is – in our personal interactions – to make everyone involved feel like a winner. Let the encounter be one in which you create value, and have it be mutually beneficial: you boost someone up, make someone smile, offer a sincere compliment, show heartfelt appreciation, give the other person recognition, listen intently, show courtesy, offer respect, etc. On a larger scale we take steps to reduce poverty and misery, we help people find meaningful work to

do if they are out of work, we volunteer to serve by taking on a responsibility, and we are ready to be accountable that we aimed for excellence in our performance.

In every situation we look to see how we can add value. And **that is in our true self-interest**. A better world is in our self-interest. Thus the question arises: What actually is your conception of 'a better world'? And if I, along with others, agree on that ideal you have, **what are the steps that help us get there?** If we arrive at a consensus on what we all concur is a worthwhile goal, then what steps lead to it, and how do we implement those steps with a minimum expenditure of time, energy and capital? *How do we efficiently begin the process? Those are the relevant questions, the ones of top priority.* So let's get busy on some of the top-priority matters listed at the outset of Chapter Six below.

ZONE OF CONCERN

The concept: "zone of concern" is unfamiliar to most people. Some explanation would help. It starts with our own self. It extends to our inner circle of family, close friends and loved ones; then to our office mates, neighbors and acquaintances. Then we may extend it to strangers, if we have developed our character enough to be able to do that. A "great soul" will easily extend it to include the human

family in its entirety. A narrow-minded constipated soul will have a small circle as their zone of concern, a circle with a short, stunted and blunted diameter.

It starts with oneself in the center of the zone. Most of the work has to be done here. Only when we have a better understanding do we get to expand the Zone.

So to the question, "Who is our neighbor?" becomes: Who is in our zone of concern?"

One more observation.... Selfishness is not in our self-interest. Neither is impulsiveness rather than long-range considerations. It is in our best interest to think long-term as well as short-term. As we noted earlier, *being selfish violates ethics*. When we have a "me-first" attitude, and we worship money as a god, we are being selfish.

Ethics makes for harmonious interactions, while selfishness causes friction and hard feelings. In life it is wise to be careful to avoid selfishness! In the popular media self-interest is often confused with selfishness but they are polar opposites.

It is in our self-interest to employ means compatible with our ends-in-view. If we want love in our life, use loving means. If we want peace, use peaceful means, that is, live peaceably. Harm no one intentionally. On a personal level, maintain serenity; on a social level "sign non-aggression pacts" so to speak, with everyone. Call no one your "enemy." Regard every stranger as a friend – until you develop an awareness that there are no strangers. Seek to understand

the other person. Consider each individual as highly-valuable. That is what it takes to be ethical.

Those who believe that "the end justifies the means" (and the means they will use are morally-questionable) are just deceiving themselves. They will inhabit a world that they cannot fully admire. Their progeny will not be proud of the mess their forebears left them.

SOCIAL BIOLOGY AND THE EMERGENCE OF COOPERATION

Richard Dawkins, a social-biologist, collaborated with philosophers, Robert Axelrod, Martin A. Nowak, Peter Singer, and others, to do research on how cooperation evolved.⁴ They concluded that the human species is no exception to what other animals learned: namely, that **it is better to cooperate** than not to.

We humans are all (distant or more-closely-related) cousins, since we are descended from a population on Earth that years ago was much, much smaller; so when we are altruistic, or share, or cooperate on a common goal, we are interrelating with our kin. We are literally one human family - although many of us lack awareness of this.

Let us discuss two insignificant ideas: caring and valuing. What we care about we give our attention to; and what we give our attention we care about, at least to some degree. Caring, and giving attention precedes sharing and collaborating. Before we share, we care.

Caring – and giving our full attention to – is akin to giving **love**. And from this emotion other important values are generated.

In summary, to have enlightened self-interest is to know that "what helps you, if it really helps you, helps me. We go up or down together." It also is wise to realize that we can create value or destroy it, when we encounter another individual. Creating value is better since we thereby gain more value in life. Doing this brings us closer to a Quality Life, a life of well-being, a life in which we thrive ...a life which Aristotle spoke of as having *eudemonia* and *arête*, happiness and high standards of excellence.

The moral values held by an individual give us information about that person. This information is a fact about that individual. Moral values are facts about conscious human beings. Facts are objective. Thus moral values are objective. They are also subjective at the same time.⁵

Life coaches counsel their clients to keep growing and improving, morally speaking, throughout their entire lifetime. What does this entail specifically? What is this thing called "self-development"? A new chapter is required to discuss this.

Chapter Three

SELF-DEVELOPMENT

While believing in oneself and having self-confidence is advisable, there is a danger in over-valuing, as well as in under-valuing, the self.

To over-value your own safety is to live in *fear*. Under-valuing a concern for others is known as ‘indifference’ and ‘apathy.’ Both fear and indifference are moral mistakes. They indicate a lack of moral health. Extreme fear and suspicion results in Paranoia; there is no room for Paranoia in a healthy mind.

Disvaluing oneself for a mistake made in the past is known as ‘**guilt**.’ There is no room for constant guilt in a healthy mind. If one would rather have done something differently in the past, it is preferable that one resolve not to make the same mistake again. At the same time one works out a program so as not to make such a mistake, and commits oneself to that program! That is the sensible way to cope with guilt.

Robert S. Hartman, the wise philosopher-scientist, proposed four stages of human development: Know yourself; Accept yourself; Create yourself; and Give yourself.

To be physically and morally healthy is to win the game of life. Moral health includes putting into practice for oneself Hartman’s four stages.

Define who you are and be aware of how others see you. Accept yourself with all the defects, shortcomings, vulnerabilities and fallibilities you may have. Then choose to be yourself. Be true to your own true self. Live up to your highest principles. Let your conduct reflect the aspirations you have for what a decent human being of integrity and good character would be.

The next step is to create yourself. This means: develop your talents, improve your skills, and learn new skillsets. Bring out your 'inner artist.' Then give yourself to the world. Take on some responsibility. If you are an artist, perform in public. Or entertain people. Give yourself away, and the rewards will follow. As you help make the world a better place you will benefit by living in a better world. Life is about giving. So express your gifts to the world at large. Positive value will result. And thus you will exemplify moral health.

People believe that they know what they want. They often complain and protest that they are not getting what they see that others have managed to obtain. What can be done about this? Are there any guidelines? Perhaps the insights revealed in the next chapter can be of help.

Chapter Four

GETTING WHAT YOU WANT

There are prerequisites to getting what you want. It is often the case that people want *to have*; they want to have money, possessions, or influence. But before they **have** they need to **do**. Still, before they **do**, they need to **be**. By “to be” is meant in this context their personal value-structure. Morally speaking, “to be” is to observe that they need to get their values straight. They need to know what is important.

Once they know this, they will ‘put people first; things next (below people); and systemic values – such as for example the financial system – last. Also, other systemic matters are ideologies, dogmas, opinions not backed by evidence; these all have *the least value*. Our priorities ought to reflect that fact. The **people-values rank higher than the material-values**; and even one piece of material is worth more than all the dogmas and half-baked theories in the world.

The sensible *order of priorities* {OP} is to have a high regard for each member of our species, to value yourself and others. Then, in the ideal order of priorities, comes stuff; and lastly in the OP, fall into place: theories, ideas, opinions and numbers.

We learned, from Dr. Robert S. Hartman’s contribution in explaining the structure of value, that the intellectual values are Systemic Values, **S-values**; the socio-economic, worldly values are Extrinsic Values, **E-values**; and emphasis, emotion, feelings, inspiration, enthusiasm, *satori*, empathy etc. are Intrinsic Values, **I-values**.²

Ethics is the result of applying I-value to life; (specifically, it means experiencing each individual as Intrinsically-valuable. Ethics is an Intrinsic-value perspective - with all that that suggests and implies. Ethical issues and concerns often arise at the intersection of feelings with actual realities. Social Ethics deals with social realities.

To have clarity with regard to values it is necessary to comply with **the formula**, with that hierarchy of values (presented and proved in my earlier work entitled Basic Ethics.) The formula reads as follows: **I > E > S**. If one wants to maximize value, one lives in accordance with the value-relationship shown in that formula.³ Recall that value is that which adds quality to life.

[“Morality” to the Ethicist is a technical term which connotes authenticity as well as the opposite of hypocrisy and phoniness’. It denotes that you practice what you preach: your observable self corresponds to your ideal self-image. As you gain in ethical insight your behavior (conduct) corresponds to your continuously-improving self-identity.]

As a result of understanding the moral sense, we may conclude that everyone is to be regarded as if they are of limitless value! Try to imagine what implications follow from that understanding. One such deduction is to do no harm. Furthermore, if one holds a moral perspective, one will strive to have good manners, and to be courteous. One will avoid using words that hurt. Instead we will use words that heal, words that serve to boost people up. When we enter a room people will feel like a plant that has just been watered.

Empathy and enmity coexist within the individual and between individuals. Empirical evidence confirms one or the other holds the dominant position in an individual, although the time that the dominance lasts can vary. Eventually, as we evolve, it is highly probable for the following reasons that empathy will achieve dominance over enmity.

Morality is not just something that people learn, argues Yale psychologist Paul Bloom: *It is something we are all born with*. At birth, babies are endowed with compassion, with empathy, with the beginnings of a sense of fairness. It is from these beginnings, he argues, in his book **Just Babies**, that adults develop their sense of right and wrong, their desire to do good — and, at times, their capacity to do terrible things. <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/just-babies/>

<http://www.nytimes.com/2013/12/29/books/review/just-babies-the-origins-of-good-and-evil-by-paul-bloom.html>

In their DNA humans are endowed with Mirror Neurons which are responsible for empathy. As we evolve the number of such neurons increase. These researchers offer the evidence:

:Stephanie Preston and Frans de Waal,[53] Jean Decety,[54][55] and Vittorio Gallese[56][57] and Christian Keysers[3] have independently posited that the mirror

neuron system is involved in empathy. See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mirror_neuron#Empathy

Though it may take one hundred years, eventually evolution will tip the balance to suppress and modulate the older neural circuits responsible for enmity.

Currently we are witnessing an exponential expansion of knowledge and technology. Advances are especially being made in the fields of neuroscience and gene research. It is likely that many factors will contribute to a greater activation of empathy in the future.

Chapter Five

Basic questions of the moral life

Here are some questions upon which I have been reflecting lately, and for which I invite you to think of some solutions:

How can we maximize human fun and minimize human suffering?

How can we attain widespread prosperity?

How can we – perhaps with the help of machines that learn – converge on answers to the major problems holding back human progress?

Will it take a super-intelligent learning machine to teach us that ***each human can only get by if that individual helps make it possible for others to get by.*** What are our goals as individuals and as a society?

How can we best align our shared goals with the goals programmed into Artificial Intelligence learning machines? The era of artificial intelligence is underway; it is best that we adapt to it.

This current essay may have some answers to the above concerns. These are suggested for your earnest consideration. We want to maximize value in life, to gain the most value out of it, to enjoy life while we can. Therefore it would help to know as much as we can about *value* in this discussion. Value is that which adds quality⁶ to life. A Quality Life is a life full of value, rich with value. It is in our **interest** to gain maximum value, and we all – with the

exception of those who are selfish - operate from self-interest. The more people that have a Quality Life the better off we all are. [Recall the case that was made for that in the early chapters.]

Thus we have a goal for which to aim. Let's spread the good life around. We may speak of this as "the ultimate goal of human relationships." Benefits will ensue if we commit and devote ourselves to adding value in relationships. How can we create value in our encounters with people? Being kind and considerate, and ready to serve; being cooperative, helpful and giving; being of generous spirit; **virtue-finding instead of fault-finding** – all these are ways to add value. Sharing our advantage with those who need a helping hand is also a way to add value. In fact, in every interaction with another human being, one either adds nothing, one creates value, or one destroys value.

Therefore, if we want to maximize value we would in many situations in which we find ourselves ask: How can I create value here and now? Can I in some way upgrade, improve, enhance? [Once we **make that commitment to create value**, it is the same as assuming a norm for ourselves, an 'obligatory norm.' This means we now are obliged to live up to our own personal norm.] We, in effect, resolve to be a decent human being, one devoted to creating value.

Then when we read what someone wrote (in, say, a paper, a treatise, a blog, or in a contribution to an internet Forum) we would thus look at it constructively. One would ask of oneself: How can I find some value here? Is there some way

I can improve upon this - together with the contributor? How build it out? How upgrade it?

We would have a helpful, cooperative attitude. The alternative is to pick holes in the effort, to look for weakness in it (all the while rationalizing that "this is a search for truth," when actually it is destroying value.) Fault-finding is prevalent in many circles, but it is not constructive, nor is it the ethical way to live.

What is the ethical way to live? It is to boost someone up rather than tear them down! It is to bestow a genuine compliment whenever possible. This makes for superior human relations.

In the new paradigm for excellent human relations, this concept of looking to find how one may create value is known as: The **Principle of Value-Generation**. Creating value when you encounter another individual entails going in the direction of what the genius philosopher, Robert S. Hartman spoke of as "Intrinsic value."

Reviewing some of the main points, there is nothing wrong with an individual thinking of #1 (of one's own enhancement) as long as s/he is aware that s/he is a member of a species that needs to cooperate on shared worthwhile goals, and s/he is willing and ready to do so - for the mutual benefit that will result.

The new way of looking at human relations, the new paradigm, teaches the precise value to be gained in our engaging in win-win interactions. So let's seek out noble goals and cooperate on achieving them efficiently and effectively.

It is highly-probable that anyone who takes the content of this book seriously will have a more-harmonious life, a happier life, and thus, in this sense, have a more-successful life. The unselfish reader will be pursuing his own personal optimal self-interest - and we will all be winners to that extent.

To summarize, if we want a Quality Life we will Intrinsically-value our self and others. We acknowledge the fact that human life is valuable; even more, it is uncountably valuable. Hence we subscribe to the principle: Do no harm! We will use words that heal **not** words that hurt.

It follows that the more value creators there are the more harmonious a society we will have. How would such a society of unselfish people behave? What policies would it pursue?

FOREIGN POLICY

As members of a harmonious society we would thus want to engage in a 'Peace Race.' We would encourage our nation to offer a mutual non-aggression pact to other nations in order to make those societies feel more secure. Our government would, by its example, challenge other great powers to proclaim: "We're more peaceful than you are!!"

Those who, as a result of what they learned from this document, devote themselves to live an ethical life will be aware that the best way to teach ethics is by **setting an example**, in contrast to merely discussing concepts. As we know, actions speak louder than words.

Let us now examine **some recent findings**:

In a study of 5000 men and women who were given a values inventory to complete the results revealed that 98% of them showed “a need to be right.” They over-valued personal beliefs; this indicated a tendency towards dogmatism.

The study concluded that the vast majority of those tested, in order to maintain their own self-esteem, held a concept such as: “I have to stick to my idea; if we have opposing ideas then one of us must be wrong and the other right. And I am not wrong.” They believed that. Yet as we know there are situations in life when our conceptions do not match reality.

In that same survey, conducted by H. Schoof & P. Demerest, it turns out that a majority, 64%, have a need for instant gratification – rather than a capacity to delay gratification when appropriate. These test-takers also identified themselves by the work they do; their self-image depended on this. This finding also has implications for moral growth-and-development research. It can serve as a guide for educators, coaches, and therapists as to where some emphasis is needed in their efforts to aid the self-management and self-leadership skills on the part of their clients.

According to Webster's II Dictionary, a definition of "ethics" is this: "a system of moral values that guides conduct."

A system of ethics deals with questions such as "What is the opposite of being ethical?" "How shall I live?" "What is a good life?" "Do I have any obligations?"

The new knowledge in human relations informs us that some opposites of being ethical are being selfish, or being corrupt, being inauthentic, or being hypocritical; or any combination of these.

More questions to investigate, (and for which to find solutions) are these: What is "moral value"? If something is 'morally right' does that make it 'a human right'? How shall we treat others, and for what reasons?

Chapter Six

PRIORITIES

Priority One, the top priority, most urgent of all is to protect and preserve the human race from the danger of becoming nearly extinct. Hundreds and hundreds of species have become extinct over the years. As the planet temperature rises – which, as an indisputable matter of fact, it is doing - and as the level of discomfort increases, humans may clash with each other as to who gets to live in the remaining caves, or other structures, which are still cool-enough to sustain life at a tolerable level., Let's protect people who live on islands that now are slightly-above sea-level, and thereby reduce the incentives for mass migrations and the uprooting this entails with all the accompanying chaos.

To care about individual human lives includes protecting the planet, Earth, which is our habitat. As the planet gets warmer in the arctic regions we note the melting of arctic ice, which eventually releases vast amounts of methane gas from the oceans. This intensifies the 'greenhouse effect.' There is a danger of the Earth tipping on its axis as its weight shifts. This likely will lead to more severe **climate changes** than we are now experiencing; and lately we have seen some extreme weather phenomena – tsunamis, typhoons, flooding, droughts, expansion of deserts, cyclones, bitter polar-cold waves, more-intense hurricanes, more-extensive wildfires, etc. If we continue desecrating our habitat, the Earth, our species is threatened with the very real danger of extinction. Nuclear war is another danger to

guard against. The resulting radio-active fallout will not respect any man-made borders. It is another form of pollution, another attack on the planet which is our home.

Priority Two is to decide on which constructive policies to support. These would be policies to which most all of us can agree. Say, for example, we set a goal to repair old bridges that are highly-trafficked and are in danger of collapsing. Once we have settled on such a goal, where we concur that the benefits outweigh the costs, the next step is to trace backwards from that goal to where we are currently, noting the steps along the way. Then we proceed to fill in the steps that will get us to that goal going forward. This work can be done better by use of super-computers which supplement the human brain.

The high-speed computer with Big Data fed into it will sort it out: it will set aside the inputs which are incompatible with each other, all of the conflicting viewpoints, stacking them into an incongruity file. What will remain are data which are compatible, which unify, which fit together well and which are placed in a logical order. The report emerging from all this computation will be very persuasive to a large majority who will find the logic and sense of these conclusions to be practically irresistible. In this way a consensus can be attained both as to what goals we want to reach for, and as to how to best implement those policies.

In an ethical world people will live in harmony. The opposite of harmony is conflict, chaos, murder, and war.

Those who, as a result of what they learned from this document, devote themselves to live an ethical life will be aware that the best way to teach ethics is by **setting an example,**

Some guiding principles that have been suggested are these:

LIVE WELL AND HELP OTHERS DO THE SAME ...UNTIL EVERYONE DOES!

GIVE MORE THAN WHAT YOU TAKE.

CONTRIBUTE TO YOUR COMMUNITY.

The logical case being made here is:

- 1) The more ethical individuals there are, the nearer we all are to living in an ethical world.

- 2) An ethical individual would find life to be meaningful, would evaluate life as having some meaning.

- 3) Those who find meaning in life, in living in this world, do not usually commit suicide (unless they are suffering from unbearable pain.)

- 4) If a state or society (or local region) arranges its policies so that crime rates are close to zero, and suicide rates have drastically declined, then it is justifiable to conclude that the society or region is an ethical one. [If someone is

experiencing agonizing pain and feels ready to die, one of course has a human right to end one's life; this is not in dispute here.]

5) The more regions of this planet that are ethical, the closer we have come to an ethical world.

6) What is meaningful to us we speak of as having value.

7) Some display indifference to the intrinsic value of the human person, in all of its beautiful depth and complexity. It could be said of some of them that they further the degradation of society if and when they are destructive either to themselves or to others. They then spread the opposite of harmony. Their conduct results in chaos and/or confusion.

Evolutionary Biologists explain that we want values that have adaptive advantages which make for a sustainable ecology. And we want values that help individuals thrive, families thrive, and society thrive, today and into the future. Thriving, at a minimum, requires the survival of the species. As noted at the outset, we want more than mere survival; we want a state of balance across time – **an equilibrium** that allows for, and even encourages, growth and moral development.

A primary question - for Ethicists and for everyone who wants good human relationships - is: How should we act in the world? Our actions follow from our sense of identity,

from who we think we are. We will be better able to thrive if we overcome tribalism and xenophobia; do science; and build institutions that last for generations. One way to act in this world is to pursue science, to do what we can to encourage it, understanding that science is a better way than others to find solutions to problems.

We achieve a better life when we value and pursue solutions to problems. Such an advocacy precedes the finding of facts. Values precede facts. And facts lead to solutions. Solutions are facts. Science is permeated with values such as truth, honesty, sharing, creating and caring.

CHAPTER SEVEN

APPLYING MORAL SENSE TO SITUATIONS

A principle that emerges time and again in scientific Ethics is “Do no harm.” Here are some examples of harm being done:

Forcing a woman to carry to term the baby of a man who raped her; or to bring into the world a baby she cannot financially afford to feed. This is likely to be psychologically harmful to the woman.

Another instance would occur when a dying patient is on hospital life support even though that individual would prefer to die in the course of nature without artificial intervention. That imposition, many would argue, is doing harm to the individual.

Another example of doing harm is forcing a parent to keep alive an extremely-deformed infant who has brain damage.

Labeling a physician “unethical” (if he or she declines to prescribe an antibiotic to a patient who has severe advanced Alzheimer’s disease) may well be harmful to the best interests of society.

These examples are due to the renowned moral philosopher, Peter Singer, a man not afraid of controversy. He took a stand on these and other moral issues, and I appreciate his thoughtful considerations. Writing in 1993, in his book, HOW ARE WE TO LIVE? He suggested that people who take an ethical approach to life often avoid the trap of meaninglessness, finding a deeper satisfaction in what they

are doing than those people whose goals are narrower and more self-centered. He spells out what he means by an ethical approach to life and shows that “it can bring about significant and far-reaching changes to one's life.” In that work he stressed the importance of reducing suffering whenever and wherever we can – the present writer heartedly concurs! Further, I believe Peter Singer would today agree with the distinction offered in Chapter Two above between selfishness and self-interest - as two ways of being self-serving - although In his book he on several occasions employs the term “self-interest” to designate what this writer alludes to as “selfishness” or as being “self-centered.”

What is important to keep in mind is that it is better to alleviate the suffering of the miserable, given a choice, than it is to help the affluent become even wealthier. Fortunately we don't have to make such a choice. For it is a good working assumption that those who give gifts, give of themselves, also receive gifts. It is still true that “what goes around comes around” – or as Emerson wrote in his famous essay, Compensation, there is eventually justice in this universe.

CHAPTER EIGHT

SCIENCE IS ABOUT WHAT WORKS

This essay does not discuss animal ethics, but the principles in it can easily be extended to include animals. The author thinks it would be plenty of an achievement to get humans to the point where they understood the priorities that are in their best self-interest - as the scientific findings indicate. Science shows how the human species can continue to exist, can even flourish. It will do this by - among other things - finding a balance, becoming aware of the web of the universe, seeing how everything fits.

This awareness, though, is an advanced stage of development which will be attained after everyone (or at least a critical mass) comprehend and practice the ideas to which this booklet (among many other media) calls attention ... and a tipping point is then reached. Early education will play a large role - and, what the author refers to as "ethical technologies," will also help eventually to bring about an ethical world.

It is highly-probable that anyone who takes the content of this booklet seriously learns from it, and implements what is learned, will have a more-harmonious life, a happier life, and thus, in this sense, have **a more-successful life**. The reader expressing a high degree of morality will by his (or her) living example be pursuing his own personal optimal self-interest - and **we will all be winners** to that extent.

Since science is about *what works* the claim is being made here {as well as in the earlier book How to Live Successfully, which goes into more detail} is that if you live by the principles offered in this booklet, then it not only will **work** in your own life, but also work to benefit the entire human race, in that it will make an ethical world more probable **by the example you present** and represent.

Living ethically will help you have a harmonious life. This is a testable hypothesis. And it is falsifiable; for if you ignore the principles and behave in a contrary way the theory predicts you will have friction and disharmony in your life.

Once a goal is projected it is possible to objectively determine the most effective way of achieving the goal. It is possible to evaluate how realistic it is, by calculating the probability of that goal being achieved at all. Once agreement is gained that moral health is a desirable goal, because of the value and benefits that result, the sciences can help. They can answer questions such as: What are the features of moral health? How can one achieve it? What are steps that may be taken to reach this goal? What usually happens, in fact, to those who lack moral health?

Gravity still works. And harmony still works. Life has value. Value is based upon meaning. Every individual wants life to have some meaning. For if not, life is empty, devoid of meaning. When life has no meaning for an individual, he or she is likely to commit suicide, to end life. In an ethical

society, one made up of ethical individuals, we can predict that spousal-abuse rates, crime rates, suicide-due-to-anomie rates, and murder rates will be way down. And war will be nearly absent. Statistical studies will confirm this. Such a society, region, or culture may have earned the right to regard itself *as ethical, as morally-healthy, or as **having moral sense.***

Some do things they will regret. They especially will feel regret if they later in life develop an awakened, sensitive, educated **conscience**. For it may then bother them for the remainder of their years. It is best to avoid a guilty conscience in the first place. A person of **good character** knows this. *He or she will not permit himself to be dominated by, nor intimidated by, a selfish individual.* In the long run the unselfish people who practice harmonious human relations will triumph. **Harmony still works.**

We want values that have adaptive advantages which make for a sustainable ecology. And we want values that help individuals thrive, families thrive, and society thrive, today and into the future. Thriving, at a minimum, requires the survival of the species. Wise people want more than that: they want a state of balance across time – an equilibrium that allows for, and even encourages, growth and moral development.

Many moral philosophers today, influenced by Prof. Immanuel Kant's reasoning, agree on the moral imperative:

Do no harm. Living by this principle in daily life

includes refraining from psychological abuse-such as name-calling; and from committing violence; and from directly participating in a war.

The "Do no harm!" imperative has lots of implications for the setting of policy. Torture, of course, is then out of the question; as is also ruthless rivalry (cf. the plot of the motion picture, "There Will Be Blood," about the early years of the oil industry.)

"Force" is often used as a synonym for "violence"? Yet note that to restrain someone in a state of panic who you are rescuing from drowning is an example of the use of *force* with no violent intent. The rescuer subdues the struggling individual who is drowning in order to bring the drowning party to shore, to safety. The rescue is made in a context of a commitment to create value in that situation, that is to say, the rescuer cares about the quality of life of the person who may be rescued, as well as he cares about his own self-interest. He (or she) does not want to experience the destruction of value that would occur if a life is lost. In contrast, one *who commits violence usually does not value intrinsically the individual who is the recipient of that violence. That failure is, of course, an ethical mistake.*

As the project to advance the new perspective makes progress, and as the findings get reported, people will come to see how everything you know about ethics fits together and is explained and ordered by the new paradigm. The reader will comprehend and understand the fact that **The Science of the Moral Sense is an empirical science with**

replicable experiments and the use of scientific methods of research.

The theoretical framework offered here is **responsive to an ever-changing moral climate** and is capable of transcending many contemporary mores. Every proposition in science is highly-tentative, subject to revision when better models come along.

Scientists usually **I**-value their theories; that is to say, they **I**ntrinsically-value their theories. They see beauty in their models, and (due to their personal tastes) select the area in which they choose to do research ...all of which are instances of Intrinsic valuation. They compose the value of the mere mental conceptions by Intrinsically-valuing them: This also illustrates *value composition*. All this will become quite clear as you peruse with care the documents cited in the Bibliography.

When one Intrinsically-values individuals, one will not want to harm them. To do harm, whether it be physical, psychological, or social, devalues the human being as nothing more than an object of self-gratification or personal gain.

Yes, we can get along with each other. One additional reason is that The Science of the Moral Sense, when applied, will encourage the development of individuals who intuitively know the right way to choose in tough situations. Or they have this capacity because of the habits they have formed from early childhood. Teachers in the field of early

education also may in the future become adept at applying the Science of the Moral Sense – also known as Moral Psychology.

With this new knowledge put into practice, our relations with one another will markedly improve. There will be less heated quarrels, more anger management, more harmony, and more peace of mind. Families will know how to be functional rather than dysfunctional. Members of the family will defer to one another, will show respect. It begins at home and radiates outward from there.



END NOTES

1) **HOW TO LIVE SUCCESSFULLY: New knowledge in human relations (2017)** <https://www.amazon.com/LIVING-SUCCESSFULLY-science-Ethics-benefit-ebook/dp/B01NBKS42C>

2) Creating value means heading in the **Intrinsic** direction of the formula. This following explanation may prove helpful:

Value science, is the metalanguage for Ethics. The founder of this science is the philosophical genius, Robert S. Hartman. He discovered (not invented) the Dimensions of Value. The three most-basic ones are **S**, **E**, and **I**. For example, when applied to mental affects, these dimensions give us three definitions:
S: Conception **E**: Perception **I**: Experience.

*Think of a sunset, as an illustration. You may conceive of a sunset in your imagination. It's a mere image. It's only a conception. It is a Systemic value. Or instead you can enumerate the properties, round, yellow-orange, bright, in the West, seeming to sink below the horizon, etc., as **what the senses perceive**. Perceptions are Extrinsic values.*

But if you ever viewed a sunset on an island off the East Coast of the U.S.A., - as I once did in a kind of ceremonial event with a group of people together. As the Sun slowly sunk out of sight I was impressed its warm glow, and its enormous size. The experience for me was unforgettable. If one who witnessed this was asked to describe it, one perhaps could go on-and-on about it. Or one might exclaim, "it's beyond words!"

Such an experience is an Intrinsic value, one that takes in as a whole the valuer together with what is being valued, one to which we give our full attention. For further details, see:

<https://www.amazon.com/LIVING-SUCCESSFULLY-science-Ethics-benefit-ebook/dp/B01NBKS42C>

S, E, and I are symbols abbreviating Systemic-value, Extrinsic-value, and Intrinsic-value. The S-values are the Intellectual values; the E-values are the bodily, worldly, every-day, pragmatic, socio-economic values; and the I-values are inspiration, enthusiasm, integrity, empathy, morality, beauty, truth, liberty and honesty, etc., etc.

3) The three basic dimensions of value form a hierarchy with regard to how valuable they are, as values, with I-values being worth the most; E-values far less; and S-values the least ...among these three basic values. The formula for it is:
I > E > S.

When one I-values an individual, one has entered the field of Ethics. That is how "Ethics" is defined in the system.

*[The perceptual features comprise a countable list, but the experiential properties far outnumber them, and are even nondenumerable (uncountable). For the experience is **so rich in properties**. The more-appropriate number to assign to this is aleph- one: {It is the number of points in a line segment.} In an experience the valuer forms a continuum with what is being valued.*

Universals are **S**; Particulars are **E**; Singulars (uniquenesses) are **I**.

S: Essence; **E**: Existence; **I**: Reality.

[They are degrees of substance, or modes of being.]

Now the reader may have a better understanding of S, E, and I than before. [For more details, see the first few pages of BASIC ETHICS, which is listed in the Bibliography below. It will 'connect the dots'.

4) See: [https://blogs.scientificamerican.com/gu ... cooperate/](https://blogs.scientificamerican.com/gu...cooperate/)

Also see: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Evolu ... ooperation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Evolu...ooperation) and

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5) Those who engage in black-or-white, either/or, thinking will insist that this cannot be both at the same time. That kind of thinking exhibits a mental blind spot, since in the actual world there are shades of gray as well as other colors – not merely black and white. It is narrow-minded to insist, “It’s got to be this or that! By now the objectivity of morality has been demonstrated.

6) The curious, at this point, may ask: What is “quality”? We respond: A quality is either a property, or a name of a property. Dr. Robert S. Hartman, the founder of value science, proposed the axiom that a thing has value to the extent that it has the properties it needs to fulfil its meaning,

or its purpose. If it has them all we may speak of it as “good.”]

To *fulfill* a meaning is to match one-to-one the cluster of properties (the meaning) that the judge-of-value has in mind.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The author of this booklet owes a great debt to the Philosopher/Scientist Robert S. Hartman (1910-1973) who was my teacher and mentor. This essay would not have been possible without the influence of his creative genius.

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For awareness as to what physical and cultural developments are coming in the future, click on this link: https://cdn2.hubspot.net/hubfs/2973685/Countdown%20to%20the%20Singularity_final.pdf

Marvin C. Katz, Ph.D.- How to Live Successfully
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Here is a review of this book by R. Brandt, a philosopher who writes using the pseudonym "Commonsense."

"How to Live Successfully is well written, is both comprehensive and succinct at the same time. Katz not only codifies the attributes of being an ethically-healthy person, but also gives readily comprehensible explanations of important concepts from value science."

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