

THE BEAUTIFUL SIMPLICITY OF ETHICAL CONCEPTS

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Chapter One: INSIGHT ON ETHICS

These are facts of Ethics:

A good moral decision depends upon the facts of the situation.

A moral person has authenticity to a large degree.

'Morality' is a personal trait; 'Ethics' is the name of the entire discipline. (That is how these terms are tentatively-employed in this essay.)

It is **ethical** to be considerate of others.

It is ethical to help others without being a martyr.

It is ethical to be helpful, to be of service, to want to cooperate.

It is ethical to foster the well-being of others.

It is ethical to help others rise in the quality of their life.

It is ethical to take on some responsibility and to be accountable for it.

All this will add value to the situation. That, in fact, is what Ethics is about: namely, adding value.

When an individual asks himself: "How can I add some value to this situation?", she or he is being creative. So creativity plays a role in Ethics.

Hence Ethics is about *creating value in human relationships*.

Good human relations are harmonious human relations. They are non-judgmental, morally-speaking; they are merciful and forgiving. They are not selfish, nor self-centered. Yes, we are all self-serving, but to be *selfish*, or *(for a mature adult to be) merely self-centered*, is to be the opposite of *ethical*. To be selfish is to be unethical! Those who allow themselves to get corrupt are selfish. Ethical individuals will avoid corruption.

Ethical conduct makes for good human relations. Ethical conduct results in harmony in human affairs. It tends to result in one being more-likely to have a trouble-free life than if one cheats or 'cuts corners.'

Gravity works in the physical domain. Harmony works in the human domain. As surely as cause leads to effect, both gravity and harmony work. Ethical individuals get the benefits of harmony.

For all the above reasons, when one behaves ethically one is actually pursuing his self-interest.

You can foster the well-being of others by enhancing life, health, knowledge, freedom, abundance, safety, beauty and peace. History shows that when we empathize with others and apply our ingenuity to improving the human condition, we can make progress in doing so, and you can help to continue that progress. --- ---Stephen Pinker

An individual may feel under pressure to do something that is morally questionable. The pressure might come from his peers, his bosses, or from his own desires and temptations to enrich himself. If a person is on the verge of corrupting himself, with regard to the conduct he is being pressured to perform, he should ask himself these questions: "Is it legal?" "Is it respectful?" "Is it honest?" "Is it responsible?" "Is it fair" ...All these questions amount to one question: "Is it moral?" In later chapters we will be explaining what is meant by that.

It is a fact of Ethics that *living morally has more advantages than disadvantages*. In this essay we offer a glimpse into a Unified Theory of Ethics which aims to integrate and synthesize what is known about Ethics in order to provide reliable knowledge. **Moral value** is a species (a subset) of value-in-general. What is known about the concept "**value**"? Up until now it has been vague and intangible. Can we make it more specific? Chapters 2 and 5 will offer more detail.

Chapter Two: **ABOUT VALUE**

Value is a function of **meaning**: the more meaning you find in something, the more value it has for you.

If you see value in either:

(1) in the example set {the practice} by someone you consider to be highly-**ethical and/or moral**, due to the traits he or she possesses, or

(2) if you like the case presented in earlier writings by this author¹ then you shall make (or may want to make) a personal commitment to be a decent human being, which entails your living up to a higher moral standard embracing even more of the Ethical Principles derived in the ethical system proposed in those references. Some of those principles are displayed in Chapter 16, pp. 62-65, of the booklet entitled How to Live Successfully.

[http://mygol.com/wadeharvey/PDFs/HOW%20 ... SFULLY.pdf](http://mygol.com/wadeharvey/PDFs/HOW%20...SFULLY.pdf)

If you live by those Principles, you will then **practice**, more-often than you do now, ethical conduct, (such as those traits suggested above on page 4). You will tend to ask yourself at most encounters with another individual: "**How can I create some value in this situation??**" You will do this consciously until it becomes a subconscious habit in your life. More will be said about value and valuation later.

Teachers and educators, if they care to, can with the help of this essay learn in more detail what Ethics is and then as a result teach it better. Can the theory of ethics here proposed shed any light on administration or government? The next chapter will have something to say on this topic.

1) {See :**THE BREAKTHROUGH - We Can Get Along After All (2018)** -

[http://mygol.com/wadeharvey/PDFs/BREAKT ... %20all.pdf](http://mygol.com/wadeharvey/PDFs/BREAKT...%20all.pdf)

LIVING WELL: how ethics helps us flourish (2016)

[http://www.mygol.com/wadeharvey/PDFs/LI ... ourish.pdf](http://www.mygol.com/wadeharvey/PDFs/LI...ourish.pdf)

BASIC ETHICS: a systematic approach (2014) <http://tinyurl.com/mfcgzfz>

Chapter Three: **APPLICATIONS TO POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT**

According to Political Science, where it overlaps with Ethics, an administration (or government) is good if it makes the lives of the vast majority of its citizens better than before: if it provides opportunity for advancement in life-quality. People don't just want to "make a living"; they want to make a lifea Quality Life.

Everyone wants to feel needed and relevant (useful and competent), but if they feel emasculated and fearful, or feel that their government is going in the wrong direction, they may vote in a "strong" leader who will make himself more powerful ...until he becomes a despot. He will do this by violating ethical principles and norms. He will live by such moral fallacies as: "The end justifies the means": "Might makes right"; or "Anything goes!"

{Franklin Delano Roosevelt was an exception. He was an exceptional leader who - although he was a member of an elite class - could identify with, and actually care about the downtrodden, the commoner, and the person who was hurting. He was so respected and admired that he was elected President of the U.S.A., and then he **was re-elected three more times!**

Although as a fallible human being he was flawed in many ways, he proposed and implemented policies that actually helped the working person, and gave relief to those unable to obtain meaningful work.}

In the present, and going forward into the future, let us arrange things so that either the government serves as employer of last resort, or that everyone in society gets a Basic Income Grant from a trust fund that has been set aside exclusively for that purpose. This trust fund is likely to grow in size from year to year just as other pension funds or endowment funds that are invested wisely tend to do. The

cash grant (that the fund makes possible) would be designed to replace eventually nearly all other “safety-net” programs. This grant will provide complete liberty and autonomy for individuals to “do their thing,” and to bring out their “inner artist,” their capacities and talents.

What people value they care about. What they care about they give attention to. Thinking along these lines, an insight occurred to this author: How high people value a thing depends upon how many minutes of attention they give it when they describe it, and how many properties of it they list. This is a measure of how meaningful it is to them. Value, as explained earlier, is a function of meaning. Experiments may be devised employing the notion of time-units of attention. In this way, is it possible that Ethics can be ushered into empirical **science**? ²

The question arises: Would it be progress if Ethics became scientific? Are people today confused in their values? Do they know how to go about living a moral life? Do they want to? Is ethical theory a mere intellectual exercise, or should it be applied to life? Shall we human beings become more efficient, and have more know-how, when it comes to being ethical? What would it take to accomplish this?

"Ethics" is a concept which I define as: the discipline arising when conscious individuals {having individuality} are Intrinsically-valued = seen as uncountably-high in value. Every human individual is to be given respect to some degree just for being human.

We can build further on this foundation. A beginning has been made in this project as noted in the content of the above references. Thus researchers will, by creative scientific and experimental design, make ethics a quite-useful body of knowledge - practical, effective, and efficient.

2) {What can be said with scientific confidence is that one person's intension of a thing (or of an individual) may be larger in attributes [descriptors] than another person's is on the same item (or subject.) Then it is safe to conclude that the former individual values that item (or subject) more-highly than the latter individual does. This is true both by definition and by observation.}

We define in this essay the key term in a concise and precise manner, as follows: **Ethics** = the field of study that arises when examining the Intrinsic-valuing of individuals. When one Intrinsically-values another, one is being ethical.³

In contrast, there are philosophers who cannot or won't define how they use the word "Ethics." It is for the readers to decide whether they want an ethical theory that is precise or one which deliberately stays vague and thus slippery and untouchable. When communication is vague no one can be sure what is really meant.

Note that on pp. 79-82 of the Living Successfully booklet - [http://myqol.com/wadeharvey/PDFs/HOW%20 ... SFULLY.pdf](http://myqol.com/wadeharvey/PDFs/HOW%20...SFULLY.pdf) the author offers some studies that were carefully recorded and done with a high degree of correlation with respected scientific method available to them at the time. In order to do more, I need your cooperation as you take up careers in this new field.

What do you believe is the status of ethics today? Do Ethical theories get any respect? What does the general public think about ethical and/or moral concerns? If Ethics were a science, and had its practical technologies that people felt were useful to improve their lives, would Ethics be regarded more highly?

3) [Robert S. Hartman, my friend and mentor, in his magnum opus, THE STRUCTURE OF VALUE, had something important to say about the concept "value," and how an understanding of value gives us insight about moral value. He assigned a measure to "Intrinsic value" and he showed us that there exists a hierarchy of value in the universe. His contribution is known as Formal Axiology. He concluded that Ethics has Axiology as its meta-language. He managed to define the term "good" employing formal Logic. No one else had ever done this. It was a momentous breakthrough.]

Chapter Four: **FURTHER IMPLICATIONS OF THE NEW APPROACH**

One example of important work being done today is that of economists and others who are exploring the idea of how trusting societies are. They have found a way to rate states and nations ranking them on a scale. See the extensive work done on this branch of Ethics known as The Ethics of Trust.

<https://www.google.com/search?source=hp&ei=ES2GW5WtK4qb5gLI657QBg&q=the+ethics+of+trust&oq=the+ethics+of+trust&gs>

Their analysis and research reveals that a lack of trust is expensive since it often causes a society to invest money, and time in courts and lawyers. This rating enables them to assess which societies trust each other, and to what degree. Scandinavian societies rank high on the list. Further down are the USA and Great Britain. Near the bottom of the list of ranking are those nations where perhaps nobody trusts anyone at all. (Colombia and Peru are among them.)*

These economists cannot yet actually measure trust itself, so they collect indices of other things that correlate with trust; and from those they extrapolate a concept of trust.

Rankings of - for some examples - "Best places in a nation to work;" "The best locales in which to live;" comparative international "Happiness" scales; or "Degrees of corruption," scales; are very useful and helpful in the study of Applied Ethics.

There are today rigorous scientific studies under the rubric **Moral Psychology**. These deal with aspects traditionally studied as "ethics." The latter may eventually be known as **The Science of the Moral Sense**. It does not matter what name it is called by; it is the results of its technologies that matter, and how it improves the quality of our lives.

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

*) See <https://ourworldindata.org/trust>

<https://blogs.imf.org/2017/05/10/the-economics-of-trust/>

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 as having *eudaimonia* 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.

As I see it, Ethics is the same as good human relations.

And if one regards the people he or she (ordinarily) encounters as "a treasure", with a story to tell - from which one can learn something - one will perform a service just by listening to them. If one then asks, "Can I be of service in some way?" this often has a multiplier effect, like ripples in a stream. The individuals involved may want to do each other favors. If they possess a sensitive conscience, they may want to match the blessing bestowed on them. Soon it becomes evident that, in a sense, giving and receiving are the same.

Your goodness, your kind act, may initiate a chain reaction of "paying it forward."

This video is well worth seeing again, even if one has seen it before:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l7AWnfFRc7g> - "The Empathic Civilization."

And this one merits one's listening to. It is relevant to the topic of how to spread the word about an aspect of ethics: putting materialism in its place. It also suggests to whom *especially* to spread the word, namely, little kids. Click on this link to: B. J. Thomas – "Using Things and Loving People." Here is a link to it:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J_K9NtiLi_E

Chapter Five: **TOWARD A DEEPER UNDERSTANDING**

Value - by definition - involves a match... to put it in plain language: a match between the ideal and the actual. When the actual fulfills the ideal, there is value.⁴

Ethical values thus also involve a match. **Morality** {- by definition within the Unified Theory of Ethics -} is a match between one's observable self [one's conduct] and the highest ideal for a human being that one can conceive. It is a match between the actual self and the ideal self. Of course, it is the individual himself who determines his self-identity. It is you who defines yourself.

If you define yourself as 'an authentic and highly-moral person' then it is you who would live up to that self-image in order to fulfill your self-concept, and thus in practice actually be a highly-moral individual. You would teach others by your good example.

From the point-of-view of this new paradigm, **Ethics begins with the perspective that every individual is of uncountably-high value, (i.e., of Intrinsic value.)**⁵

4) {The notion of "fulfilment" does not imply that the actual and the ideal reach each other; but it does mean that there is a correspondence between the two which mathematicians refer to as 'bijective.']} On pp. 7-9 of the manual, ETHICS: A College Course the concept "value" is precisely defined in a professional manner. – <http://tinyurl.com/24cs9y7>

5) {While this proposition may seem to some as counter-intuitive, so also are many physical science concepts. This fact has not deterred technological progress. Isn't it time we observed such progress in the moral field?}

Here is the rational argument for the claim: Any single individual – if one takes the trouble to look - has more features than you or I can count, since each of his/her myriad properties has its own (long list of) properties. **The amount of value**, by definition and by observation, is based on **the amount of properties that one finds as one concentrates on, identifies with, and gets involved with that which one is valuing**. Experimental studies show that normal people tend to identify with and get involved with other persons; they do not do this as much with regard to things and stuff (unless one is a fetishist; or is a hoarder with an obsessive-compulsive disorder.) Greedy people – those who suffer from a condition known as **greed** – do have this disorder. Normal folks recognize that human life is valuable and priceless. Our moral sense tells us that what is priceless is worth a lot and is not for sale.

We would have an ethical world if the vast majority - as a result of education - believed strongly the idea that each individual is worth many mega-trillions in value. Let's take that as our assumption - our hypothesis to be fulfilled - and see what would happen.

One consideration that may come up in Ethics is the notion - which shall remain undefined for now - of respect: respect for other individuals and respect for oneself.

The concept, of course, means different things to different people. Yet if you can't manage to respect certain individuals, you can at least show some politeness and courtesy just because you possess a good character.

If one does respect another person one will not want to do anything that will cause him harm. One

will then use words that heal rather than words that hurt. One will avoid any actions that could be considered abuse of that person.⁶

Those who know their Ethics likely will do all they can to provide opportunity for others to flourish. They will perform acts of kindness. They will be courteous and civil. And they will extend their ethical radius, and become more inclusive.

People who have **self-respect** will strive to avoid hypocrisy, corruption, and selfishness. They will have some self-discipline. They will not easily yield to temptations, and they will avoid self-abuse (such as drug-addiction.) They will watch their health, eat healthily, exercise, make sure they get plenty of sleep, etc. They will ask to take on some responsibility and be accountable for it. They will observe the Principle of Moral Consistency: they won't have one standard for others and another standard for themselves. They will seek **nonviolent** solutions to any human relations problem. Such an individual will not be a phony; and will avoid double standards.

One who knows his ethics will seek to create value in each situation in which he finds himself. (He will want to be a creator.)

Furthermore he will understand the Logical Existential Hierarchy of Value formula which R. S.

6) {Of course it is good to be aware that the *psychopath* is a special case, one with brain damage, and do not expect that respect will prevent a violent psychopath from committing a crime; but even this individual ought to get our compassion. And if one has none to give, one possibly is bordering on psychopathy or sociopathy oneself.}

Hartman discovered: this formula, when interpreted, informs us that Life and Love are worth infinitely-more than Materialism and worldly matters. In turn, worldly concerns and practical considerations are worth far, far more than ideologies, dogmas and systems not backed by evidence. (All the opinions, creeds, and dogmas in the world are not worth one material thing; and all the things in the world are not worth one human life.)

This formula directs us to place in our priorities people above things; and things above ideas or unsubstantiated opinions.

Earlier we asked what would happen if people lived by the Ethical perspective⁷ which arises when each individual is seen as of uncountably-high value. There are many social-ethical implications. Let us list a few:

It would turn out that we would treasure people more, and thus, as a way of applying ethics to life, would have active campaigns to feed the hungry, defend the children, get rid of spousal abuse. Also we likely would teach kids in elementary school how to live nonviolently, how not to have violent arguments, how to cope with antagonism, and what to do if picked on by a bully.

7) {To learn more about the new paradigm for ethics, see the PDF files (safe to open): - LIVING THE GOOD LIFE - <http://tinyurl.com/28mtn56>
A UNIFIED THEORY OF ETHICS - <http://tinyurl.com/crz6xea>
ETHICAL ADVENTURES - <http://wadeharvey.myqol.com/wadeharvey/... NTURES.pdf>
and the paper, ETHICAL EXPLORATIONS - <http://tinyurl.com/22ohd2x> }

We would do these things because we care, and if we care enough our priorities would be straight. For example, we would urge the entire Congress in the U.S.A. to pass the Youth Promise Act. We would also likely encourage the immediate passage of that

bill which is lingering in Congress to set up a Peace Department to counterbalance the War Department (what today is known as "the Defense Department.")

We would sign as-air-tight-as-possible Mutual Nonaggression Pacts with every nation on earth. We would unilaterally scrap all our mass-destruction weapons (except one teeny one) to set a good example for the world - and advertise widely that we had done so - thus reducing drastically the threat level of an unintended accident. We would study the arts of peace as actively as we now study war. In these ways we would get closer to the objective of living in an ethical world.

At this point a critic may raise a question:

Q: In Colorado, a man raped and strangled to death a girl of 12 who was mentally handicapped. He then dumped her body out in a field, in a garbage bag. Is that man is someone who I should respect?

A: No, you don't have to respect him. You are correct to see his deeds as Transpositions of Value [value confusions.]. His behavior is to be condemned;

8) {There will be less crime if we detect and intercept early those who are prone to violence, noticing it by the age of 4, and redirecting these special-needs children to institutions where they may get some rehabilitation. There already exist tests that can detect such anti-social tendencies, but the concern of parents, who are worried that the results will have unpleasant feedback, must be considered. Many parents are reluctant to give permission. {All that teachers and therapists have to go by today is behavior of the child, such as when, for example, a kid grabs the toy held by another kid, and is indifferent to the crying of the child thus deprived. Or, as another example, a child is noticed to be mean to an animal.}}

[though for one's own well-being it is not recommended that one be morally judgmental. Avoid being a moralist. Surely it is wise to get a rapist, or a murderer, out of circulation.⁸ He doesn't belong in society, mingling with people who know

their Ethics, that is, people who have formed a habit of living ethically.

No one is obliged to give respect, nor to comply with any other of the ethical principles. They are suggested guidelines – not rules.

There are those who fault Ethics for not showing respect enough for victims of crime. The science of Ethics does not show respect any more than the science of Botany smells. Roses smell. Botany analyzes and classifies them.

Ethics analyzes self-images and then compares them with the actual behavior of the self that possesses them to see if there is a good match. If there is, that is the degree of morality shown at that moment. To learn of this data, this helpful self-knowledge, an individual may take a value inventory when his or her life-coach offers the opportunity to 'Know yourself!' Education is a branch of Ethics, as is also Life-Coaching and Therapy.

Professionals in the field of Ethics do in fact respect victims, yet they do what they can to arrange that there are fewer victims in this world. When something goes wrong, is it moral to blame an individual to his face?

Blaming or fault-finding is not a good way to go through life; it is a sign of immaturity according to the latest research in psychiatry and therapeutic counseling. Readiness to blame does not rate as Emotional Intelligence. It violates inner peace. Serenity is a good quality to have; it adds value to life. {As to how to achieve it, see Chapter 22 of the Living Successfully booklet.}

I wish for you a quality life !

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