
How to Live in an Ethical World while avoiding Utopianism

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Here we shall clarify and analyze several concepts. Among them are: “ethical world,” “utopian,” “goal setting,” and “goal attainment.”

An ethical world is one where the vast majority of the Earth’s human inhabitants know their Ethics, and they know why they are ethical. In effect, they know this in their mind, heart, and body. They know it emotionally. They know it’s in their self-interest to have this educated, sensitized conscience which they have acquired ...along with many additional traits and qualities of a good character.

Their sensitivity enables them to early detect when they are in the presence of, or have in some way encountered, a man or woman with a *bad character*. {Later we will, if interest is expressed, spell out in some detail how to recognize this type.} The good people, though, have a Reflective Conscience, one which can detect a phony, or dishonesty, the moment they confront it.

Then their Directive Conscience directs them to neutralize or to avoid this bad conduct, this

misguided behavior. All this may seem rather visionary – even utopian – but allow me to explain why it is not, by delineating some steps that lead up to this state of affairs. A policy proposal is said to be utopian if no steps are given as to “how to get from “here to there.” This is to say how to get from the current state to the proposed long-range goal.

{In order to achieve a long-range goal it helps to work backward from the goal, by filling in the small steps that result in attaining that eventual goal. One does this - this process of goal-setting - until one arrives at the present state; for when we arrive at our current conditions the process is nearly complete. Then one moves forward to implement each smaller attainable step.}

Before we can live in an ethical world, what is required is that the then latest-version of formal, systematic Ethics shall be taught to 9th-graders in the public schools (in language they can comprehend and easily grasp). {The object

of this goal is that the ethics concepts will be taught at least to those in the 9th-grade (and maybe eventually to even-younger students, say in the 2nd grade.) Ethics – for this goal to be reached - has to be taught in classrooms as part of the standard curriculum.

Yet before that can happen, the teachers will be taught the basics of Ethics in either Teachers' Colleges or in the Universities where they obtained their degree. Though why would courses in Ethics, as high-school education, be made available? These schools shall be aware that for their teaching personnel to offer Ethics classes to their students this will produce leaders who will influence society in the fields of Industry, Business, and Education. The university realizes that it wants to turn out ethical people because such graduates will represent the quality of that college or university. The institution officers are aware that the students who had - perhaps as an assignment - exercises in "paying it forward," will likely believe in giving back to their alma mater.

As part of their course they were taught generosity is one of the traits of good persons. These future leaders learned to cooperate, to share, and the concept: ‘to get back more from life we first must give more.’ They learned a spirit of generosity. One may wonder “What would these classes include as their content?”

What the students in these Ethics courses would learn first are the following basics, these “ABCs”:

A) That individuals having a personality are highly-valuable ...yet even more: uncountably-valuable. They are to be intrinsically valued.

B) Therefore to harm them would be a sad mistake. Hence, we arrive at an early moral guide. It reads: “Do others no harm nor injury” – -- and why not apply this to yourself also. This moral standard, do no harm, may serve as a good principle to live by. Another is: Be a role model by setting a good example.

[When the term “moral” is used here it refers to humans rather than, or more than, to other living organisms.]

**Living ethically creates moral value. In fact, ethics is about creating value in human interactions. The emphasis on character, both good and bad, shows the influence of Aristotle, in his lectures, as he explained what ethics means to him. He was a student of Plato, who in turn was a student of Socrates (470-398 BC). The latter genius had ethics as one of his main interests. Aristotle was a polymath who held that goodness of character is pre-requisite to attaining well-being and happiness, *i.e.*, the good life. For details, [see_](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aristotelian_ethics#Aristotle_as_a_Socratic)
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aristotelian_ethics#Aristotle_as_a_Socratic**

C) And aware members of society shall impart to their friends and neighbors for their attention and possible adoption any further moral principles that one cares about. Perhaps informing those they converse with, “It works for me!” In this way influencers will help make a good list of moral standards a part of society’s ethos. [This is the conventional understanding of “morality.”]

Those are the three fundamentals, the ABCs, of the ethics course being herewith proposed.

Note that these moral standards which may be suggested, are to be offered as tentative guidelines, not absolutes; they are flexible not rigid. They are not to be imposed on anyone! They are of course relative to circumstances that arise. They are proposed as solutions to moral problems that life presents us.

Each individual teacher, and each student in an Ethics course, would be encouraged to form a list of such practical principles that will help life go smoother, tend to endow an individual with peace-of-mind, and with a positive constructive attitude. The teacher would strive to explain (in age-appropriate language) that ethics is about creating value in human interaction with the result that everyone involved feels they have gained some value, that they are ‘a winner.’

Still before teachers in their classes will be imparting these ethical basics to their students in an a high-school Ethics class, a philanthropic foundation -- such as The Ford Foundation, or the Carnegie, or the Kellogg Foundation -- will be giving a grant to the state’s Board of Education

in the USA (or to an equivalent institution in some other nation or territory) to carry out this program to support high school ethics education. The grant would be generous enough so as to make it seem a bit difficult not to accept it. After all, it is the job of the Development Office in a private university to seriously consider receiving such a grant.

Yet before this can occur someone who has skill as a grant-writer is to be engaged in this project. Perhaps this person shall be hired with donated funds that those who want to live in an ethical world have voluntarily contributed.

In this way, with these empirical steps that lead to the original largest goal, what at first seemed like a utopian vision is now seen as practical and quite do-able.

For further details, see this safe-to-open, eye-opening document – including the items by this writer listed in the Bibliography, *q.v.*
<http://www.myqol.com/wadeharvey/PDFs/THE%20STRUCTURE%20OF%20ETHICS.pdf>