

**LIVING WELL: How ethics  
helps us flourish**

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# LIVING WELL: How ethics helps us flourish

## IS ETHICS NECESSARY IN TODAY'S WORLD?

To begin a discussion of this topic I shall start with nature, with some facts about the nature of human beings. Thus we shall now focus on **human nature** as we inquire whether ethics is relevant today. Here are the indisputable facts: We have hormones that activate at puberty. They serve to encourage the propagation of the species; boys are attracted to girls, and vice versa. Without this, the species would die off. A certain amount of births are needed and sexual desire is the vehicle; it attracts us to one another. As a result, we form families. If family members are ignorant in human-relation skills, or decline to defer to one another, or to cooperate, we witness some **conflicts** arising.

If selfishness dominates over the will to harmonious relations, then *tension and serious conflict* is inevitable. We expect children to be self-centered; yet wise parents shape and socialize the child into maturity, into becoming a responsible adult.

Tribalism starts with an extended family. The first tribe was an extended family. From tribes ethnic groups derive. And such groups result in distinctive cultures. When one culture's values are incompatible with another culture's values we are liable to see some tension and some conflict. It is known as "*culture clash*."

When a tribe gets large enough to form a small town, the first building they want to build is a meeting hall – or a building for ceremonial rituals that will encourage bonding. The meeting hall is where the tribal chief, or the most-respected elders of the tribe, will set up government and assign a police force; this will later evolve into an army or guard for the authorities. [Today, every city has a mayor. The local police answer to him or her.]

In earlier times the king, or queen, was considered to be sovereign. Many of them encouraged the spreading of the idea that the sovereign was divine and had a closer connection to the gods than the common folk did. Eventually priests became emperors, and tribal chiefs became shamans. They were the authority that informed ordinary people how to be 'moral' and 'ethical.' [Today, in Moral Philosophy, we note that one school of thought, one ideology, is known as The Divine Command Theory. ...another possible source of conflict.]

We have examined how strife and conflict can originate – even in our intimate settings if we don't know our Ethics. Once we do know Ethics, and how to practice it, we will defer to one another, be considerate, and will, if need be, brush up on our human-relations skills. Is it not about time that we studied, and learned the fundamentals of this body of useful knowledge? Yes, to restore harmony in situations of strife, and for each of us to attain a quality life, **Ethics is definitely needed in today's world.**

Here is how The Institute for Global Ethics explains why ethics is needed:

“Ethics are the heart of any strong organization. Whether you're a Fortune 500 company or a small-town school district, studies have consistently found that **ethical decision-making fosters employee morale, boosts brand reputation, encourages loyalty in customers and employees, and improves your bottom line.** Ethics is more than the right thing to do: it's the smart thing to do.

**An organization formed without ethics is like a cabin built without nails:** no matter how solid it may appear, it will slowly crumble. A culture of ethics is what links people ... connections which, although invisible, make the whole organization immeasurably stronger.

And in this day and age of eroded public trust, ethics are more important than ever. After the mortgage-loan debacle, after Enron, after decades of botched recalls and profit-driven decisions and environmental tragedies, people often assume organizations don't care about them. Trust is no longer given freely.

Once an organization has earned the public's trust, however, that connection becomes its most valuable asset.”

Need one argue any further in support of the view that in this world today we would all be better off if more people conducted themselves ethically? In a future chapter I will explain just how the concepts of Ethics can spread around the world and find wide acceptance.

Since this is a text on the topic as to how Ethics, both theory and practice, helps us flourish, it would be appropriate to define this concept.

## DEFINING ETHICS

Ethics is about evaluating moral values and principles, and is concerned with working out a basis on which to follow these principles. These principles *are neither rules nor absolutes*; they are rather voluntary guidelines designed to make life easier, more comfortable, and more trouble-free. To comply with the moral principles, is "right." Not to, is "wrong."

Compassionate acts, such as are seen when a person gives a helping hand to another individual, something that occurs every day, are evidence of **an objective moral order**. Allow me to explain: Human beings want to survive. Actually they want more than mere survival. We are pre-wired to seek our personal benefit, of which survival is a minimum necessary requirement. What does it take to survive? Well, it is a fact of Biology that for a cell in our body to be healthy it helps if the cells surrounding it are healthy. In the same way, if you, or I, or any individual, gets in trouble then we need our neighbors and family to help us out. We need the people around us. Let's call them "our support group."

Isn't it so that each of the people around us has people around them who could serve as their support group? This keeps them strong. If one of the people around us, if anyone our support group has an infectious disease it is going to threaten the health of others in the group and make them less strong. This is just plain common sense! So, we

deduce, since you need the people around you as your support, you also need the people around them. And where does it stop? It doesn't. Therefore by logical reasoning we conclude that we need the entire human species as our "support group." It would seem that this is a basic fact of empirical ethics:

The human race is a support group for each human individual.

**We are**, in conclusion, **interdependent**. [Let's be mindful of this so that we may have **awareness**.]

And thus it is in our personal best interest to **cooperate**. Hence, let us seek harmonious cooperation; and we will be "doing the right thing."

The essence of my theory is that "**Ethics**" is a **perspective** ...a perspective on a human individual, or group of them. It arises when we view the human being as highly valuable, of indefinitely-high value. Also, the theory indicates that - if we are ethical - we will make things better, morally better. We are to add value if we want to be ethical. Lots of implications may be deduced from that definition (of the concept "Ethics") and from that basic idea: Make things better! One of them is: **Do no harm!**

This in turn implies a renunciation of violence, cruelty, ruthless exploitation, greed, self-mutilation, lack of humility, etc.

Also, as part of the theory, techniques and methods are proffered which enable us to make things better. In addition, it encourages us to develop new 'moral technologies', that is, technologies which tend to make our lives easier, simpler, more secure and more comfortable. Such innovations are how we "get from here to there" - how we are more likely to live in a more-civilized world, in an ethical world - one that has less incentives for trouble-making, for needless stress of an anxious sort, for crime and maliciousness.

Physics speaks of notions such as "entropy" which refers to dissolution and death, and "negentropy" (also called "syntropy") which means the opposite tendency, toward life, positive value, useful information, etc.

Since *syntropy* (order, value) is every bit as much natural law as is *entropy* (dissolution, destruction) if we want to **live in harmony with nature**, we would *encourage more syntropy*: we would strive to maximize value and to minimize disvalue (chaos, misery, destitution and avoidable suffering.) We would support practical policies that implement this.

Furthermore, research in Brain Neurology has shown that we are pre-wired to seek our own personal benefit. A question that arises is: What is that benefit and how can we attain it? Research by Dr. Post at Case Western Reserve has revealed that **if we make someone else happy we are then happy too. We come to feel our life is making a difference when we make others happy; life seems more meaningful to us; it is a good feeling! It lifts us up. If we trust others, treat them decently, they often tend to treat us the same way. It is a win/win situation, all around.**

Those who apply the basic principle “Make things better” to themselves would strive to become even more ethical and moral than they already are. They would devote themselves to achieving this goal. In the process of doing so they would develop to the point where others might with some accuracy describe them as having ‘a good character.’ Let’s examine this further in the next section.

## **ON HAVING A GOOD CHARACTER**

Wide agreement can be seen on the claim that if one has **a good character**, all else being equal, one will tend to perform worthwhile actions; will tend to “do the right thing.” This set of ideas is an emphasis of that school of thought known as **Virtue Ethics**, an approach to understanding how to live which may be described as ‘character-based.’ **Being** good (by definition and observation) often results in **doing** good but not necessarily the other way around: even criminals may sometimes do something good; but of course cannot accurately be described as having a good character.

Furthermore, if one has a good character one will be likely to keep one's promises, will honor one's contracts, fulfill one's obligations, be responsible, and do one's duty. That sort of conduct is what **Deontologists** advocate. Their school of thought has been described as 'rules-based.'

A person of good character will adhere to ethical principles – such as those offered at the end of the paper by M.C. Katz - Aspects of Ethics; as well as those offered in the final chapter of Ethics for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Keys to the good life - links to these are offered below in the Bibliography -- or at least will strive to do so. S/he realizes however that there are no moral absolutes. Ethical science, in common with other sciences, does not deal in absolutes. [Later on, in this booklet, an experiment in Ethics, designed to increase the enjoyment in life, will be offered, one in which the reader can voluntarily choose to take part.] This write is not interested in, and has no use for, moralism.

**Consequentialists** suggest we may want to abstain from certain activities because undesirable effects will result. That they say is the reason why we should not murder, rape, kidnap, steal, or cheat. They hold that some outcomes, such as the greatest happiness for the most folks, are more desirable than others. The description of this school of moral philosophy is 'ends-based.' {"Ends" refers to goals, results, and objectives.}

John Stuart Mill would argue that it is not only the number of people who experience the happiness but also the duration of the happiness must be considered. Also the **quality** of it matters: was it derived by pursuing, and coming close to reaching, a worthwhile goal? Such a goal, one of high value, would contribute to the end of helping each individual flourish, would enhance individual well-being. I will have more to say about this soon when I speak of maximizing one's joy score.

Thus we see there need not be any conflict between the actual outcomes, in practice, of the three most-dominant contemporary normative ethical theories. They are each tools in a toolbox to be used when appropriate; each approach has its limitations, its weaknesses,



and its strengths. Let's take a closer look at the benefits of employing these tools, of actually applying this knowledge in daily life.

## **HOW THE VARIOUS SCHOOLS OF ETHICS CAN HELP YOU**

If we make explicit the moral principles which the major academic schools express and imply, it will help you (and thus help us all) to have a better life, for what really helps you helps me; and what really helps me helps you. We are -- and this includes every individual on the face of the planet -- in a symbiotic relationship.

All the three major schools deal with quality-of-life issues, and they all praise and encourage responsibility as a way to express one's morality,

**Modern Virtue Theory**, which – as I shall indicate below - value-science analyzes to be the most Intrinsically-valuable of the basic schools of moral thought, teaches that we have a responsibility to care for our family as a first priority, and a responsibility to ourselves to strive to be of virtuous character.

It also teaches prudence: as we go through life: neither over-do nor under-do. Both excess and deficit are vices (the opposite of virtue.)

[More (excess) or less (deficit) are mathematical notions, so Virtue Theory has a logic to it.]

Virtue Theory seems to be the most morally-sensitive of the three approaches with its emphasis on individual moral courage. By listing 'vices' it spells out ways to be immoral, yet it shows how to avoid immorality and various specific forms of personal corruption. As mentioned, it recommends prudence and moderation. It reveals many subtleties as well as making clear how to live the good life by striving to acquire the characteristics that a good person would want to have.

As explained in some detail in the booklet, **BASIC ETHICS: a systematic approach**, when **Extrinsic Value** (one of the major dimensions of value) is applied to schools of ethical thought, it yields **Consequentialism**. Adherents to this approach are concerned with the impact that specific actions and policies will have on human flourishing. [The advocates of this school – or perspective -- grant that “flourishing” is a shifting and expanding concept – as more is learned about it.) Consequentialism recommends “the greatest happiness for the greatest number”; it thus gives us a sense of direction, a goal to aim for. It provides guidance for sound decision-making.

**Consequentialism** deals with the external everyday world, the socio-economic policy matters. It is concerned with practical decisions, with the effect of actions on human well-being and happiness. An action is right if it leads to more happiness in your life provided you take into consideration the welfare of others; and can sidestep “zero-sum games,” those where there must be a loser if there is a winner. Game theories which have finite rewards and penalties fit here. Also associated are concepts such as determinism; behavioral conditioning; political affairs; *the common good*; public policies. Common goods are public health measures, emergency-management agencies like F.E.M.A., the protection of the environment (clean air and water), peace-keeping and other police work, fire-prevention, etc.

**Deontology** is concerned with promises, contracts, rights, duties, obligations and imperatives (which it claims are universal and categorical.) **Systemic Value**, applied to this topic, results in **Deontology**, with its rules to live by, its categories and categoricals, its declarations of human rights, and lists of obligations. Here systematically doing one’s duty is the emphasis – staying within the boundaries of proper behavior. It does, to its credit, demand that we treat others as ends, not as mere means to an end. Thus one who takes this imperative seriously eschews the manipulation of other people, one carefully avoids exploiting others.

We need all three sets of tools in our toolbox, for as we have shown, there are strengths in all three schools of thought.

As one lives a good (virtuous) life one does not have to measure in advance each act as to its moral rightness or wrongness; instead, by **the habits one has developed, a person usually spontaneously “does the right thing.” – once a person has a good character.**

He/she deliberately builds an admirable character by **the techniques of habit formation** ...unless one is acculturated into it early in life by one’s parents, guardians, or family; or tribe, or community [“it takes a village”]. Hence, for these and other reasons, I argue that **Intrinsic Value**, when applied, fits most closely to Virtue Theory.

Many Deontologists today are aware that a strict adherence to rules could blind one to the variability and variety of life-styles that produce a high quality-of-life.

Living well means having a **quality life**, one which enables individuals to flourish and blossom. They are then most likely to be creative since they have the means and the leisure to indulge in the pursuit of a worthwhile project.

A virtue-theorist may point out that one’s vices may interfere or even prevent one’s adherence to the imperatives. So first and foremost, they would say, cultivate the virtues. They are the good-making features of a moral individual. If one wants to be good, one now knows how to do it: form good, moral habits, using every technique known to Psychology for habit formation – such as affirming daily, and personalizing, the ideal human you would like to become and to be. Saying affirmations may be, for some, one route to moral success.

Richard J. Davidson, in his new book, THE EMOTIONAL LIFE OF YOUR BRAIN, based upon different activity scans of the brain done by his neurological team, highlights six moral qualities it would be desirable to have, and gives exercises that enable an individual to

acquire them: resilience; social intuition; self-awareness; sensitivity to context; and sharp focus and attention. These can all be measured with precision by modern technology.

*Aside to students of Moral Philosophy:* Is it not the case that one's actions are a reflection of one's inner morality? This was discussed and analyzed on pages 29-35 of the booklet, Basic Ethics: a systematic approach. {See link to it in the Bibliography.} One's actions and conduct are very closely related to one's character and may be the behavioral expression of one's self-image, one's self-identity.

The contemporary Ethics Theory offered within these pages, this new paradigm for ethics, I have named the Unified Theory of Ethics. It is a subsection or department of the vast and comprehensive science of Ethics which includes theory, practice, and empirical evidence. I have shown [in both Basic Ethics: A systematic approach –see the link below- and in the more-recent Ethics for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century essay] that the three dominant normative ethical theories can be, and are, generated by an application of more basic analytical tools, i.e., the primary value dimensions discovered and named by my friend and teacher Dr. R. S. Hartman (1910-1973.) <https://www.hartmaninstitute.org/about/about-robert-s-hartman/>

Is it reasonable to claim that a theory that can accomplish this is superior to, and more-acceptable, than one which cannot? Also, one of those value dimensions is used to define what the field of Ethics is. In the Hartman/Katz system, once “Intrinsic Value” is defined, “Ethics” is then defined as: the application of Intrinsic Value [In-value] to the individual, or to a group of individuals. Then the theory proceeds to define and explain “authenticity,” “morality,” “integrity,” “conscience,” “hypocrisy,” “altruism,” “war,” “compassion,” “need,” “success,” “moral action,” and other relevant terms, relating them to one another.. One might venture to inquire: has any other Ethical Theory done this or is even capable of doing this? Often one may overhear the expression “The end justified the means.” Does this make any sense ethically-speaking? The next section will respond to this question.

## ENDS AND MEANS TO THE ENDS

Some advocates of the 'ends-based' school would argue that "the ends justify the means" although they rarely if ever explain what they mean by "justify" in this context. When discussing what is fundamental in Ethics (both the theoretical and empirical study I call the Science of Ethics) we ought to keep in mind the relation of Means to Ends

In that regard I would make this observation: Ends are related to means used: if you want peace, use peaceful means. If love is your end (your goal), use loving means to get to it. If you want stability, then stable means are required to reach your end-in-view.

Is this so hard to understand? *Chaotic or destructive means will not result in a stable, sustainable state of affairs. A state of justice is a state of balance; to be in balance we cannot use means that are out of balance.*

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

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

**We will not get to moral ends by the use of immoral means.** Once in a great while a weird accident may occur which provides an exception, but in general this relationship holds.

If you want peace in the world, we need to employ peaceful means to arrive at that end. **If we want an ethical world then only moral means will get us there.**

Ethics, the new paradigm on how to live well, indicates we are to minimize disvalue (confusion, destruction, and chaos) and maximize value (order, balance, what works and what fits). While we are actively

engaged in minimizing disvalue for the Individual person, engaged in reducing human suffering, poverty, and misery, we ought to keep in mind that our Ends do not justify the Means unless the Ends-in-view are thoroughly compatible with the Means we use to get to those Ends. It is good to empower the Individual, and provide opportunities for advancement and success for the Individual - and avoid violating the Autonomy of the individual, and encouraging self-management, self-leadership. All this will add value to situations, and even multiply value.

At the same time as we are minimizing disvalue we are optimizing positive value. Yet let us make sure our means are consonant with our ends. If we want love in our life, let's employ loving means; let's express love, and shower others with love. It's elementary, yet hard for folks to grasp.

If you love Peace, then be peaceful. Engage in nonviolent direct action against injustice; exercise *truthforce*. There is no peace without justice. So work to establish Justice. And remember that Lives Matter! Each individual is to be Intrinsically valued.

The claim has been made, by Anthony Appiah among others, that Ethics can employ scientific methods. Among these is experimentation. In the next section we shall suggest for the reader an informal experiment.

## **TECHNICAL THEORY AND A FUN EXPERIMENT**

You or I may live a quality life, just live, without thinking consciously about the following, but a scientist of Ethics may find this theoretical formulation useful since it is suggested by Integral Calculus:

Let's say there are  $x$  waking hours in a day; and that **joy** (by which I mean enjoyment, happiness, pleasure, satisfaction, delight, entertainment, amusement, sublimity, ecstasy, etc.) - joy ranges from 1 to 5 - - with 5 being the most. And do you realize - are you aware - that

every opportunity for service to others is a potential source of joy? Ethics, the science, does not recommend that one be a martyr. Yet *there is a satisfaction in knowing that you have been really helpful to someone, and thus have made a difference. You did not live in vain.*

Now, at the end of the day, as a fun experiment, after x hours have elapsed, sum up the total joy-score you experienced so far, from the beginning of the day, as you rated each hour from 1 to 5. Divide that number by x in order to find your **max-joy** score.

Did you attain the maximum joy-per-day possible?

And are you aware that if you have more years in your life your max-joy score can get larger? And if you deliberately aim for health, and for what makes us healthy, your chances of living longer are increased. Isn't that true? And if you share, your score goes up. If you work to find common ground with others you raise your score. If one does not **maintain a harmony with one's surroundings**, one is constantly threatened and thus not achieving the highest hope-fulfillment that would be attained if one lived in harmony; and thus one could not then experience the highest degree of joy

What are some implications of this ethical system for Political Science? Let us strive to achieve **transparency** in administration at all levels of government all the time, for, as it has been written: *"As long as the authority is secretive, the population will be subjugated."* Let open meetings be the rule rather than the exception. In a democracy what is there to hide. See this relevant link: <http://anticorruptionact.org/> which discusses the plan to criminalize corruption and reward transparency.

Furthermore, we need not look upon others as our "enemy." Instead we can define each of them as a fellow human being, vulnerable and capable of suffering, no doubt misguided in some ways. We are all prone to exaggeration, conclusion-leaping, fumbling, making stupid mistakes - perhaps a touch of paranoia. Until we kill the ego, we are defensive of it. Once we gain true humility we are no longer defensive/offensive....we see no need "to go to war." We don't want to

commit harm. We renounce violence. We want to arrange our lives so that others are happy to see us and ourselves happy to see other people. In pursuit of this goal we shall strive to take other people's interests seriously, take them into account, learn about other people's situations, and then use our imaginations to walk a while in their moccasins. It's not easy but it's worth the effort.

Furthermore, once we become wise, we will then agree with the quotation, "The Wise gather together to help one another in every aspect of living."

This profound insight conveys the thought that **cooperation is central** to ethical living, to living an ethical life.

Plato offered a metaphor comparing the individual to a chariot driver who had two steeds pulling his chariot: one was reason, the other was emotion. The implication was that reason needs to manage the emotions. Today we speak of therapies such as Anger Management. It is generally agreed that it is desirable to control one's temper. Even more valuable would be to gain peace of mind, to live serenely. But how? The next section will offer a method used by the ancient Stoics then adapted creatively by Albert Ellis (1913 -2007) who was my friend and inspiration.

## **ON ACHIEVING EMOTIONAL PEACE**

We can teach an intelligent child at an early age the basics, the ABCs so to speak, of emotional stability. They are:

- A) Something happens in your life.
  
- B) You (the child – or **anyone**, since this works for adults too) interpret it; you form an interpretation.



C) You feel good or you feel bad. (Those are the ABCs.)

You don't have to feel bad. You can spare yourself this emotional pain. You can begin to experience, or keep, your state of serenity or joy. You can maintain your exuberance, your optimism, your curiosity, your hope. How? You merely change your interpretation of event A: you work on step B. "B" stands for your **b**eliefs about what occurred at A. You challenge those beliefs. You dispute that interpretation to see if it was silly; or to see if it's logical, to see if you have *evidence* for believing it. This is step **D** – for **D**ispute. The idea is to challenge or dispute erroneous or mistaken beliefs. Find a positive and friendly interpretation for **A**. Figure out a new way of understanding **A** that is not threatening. Find the love in it. Remember that love triumphs over fear.

Once you do this successfully, you will have a new feeling, and this is step **E**: a new peaceful **e**motion, one that you can enjoy. Those are the ABCDEs of emotional peace.

Persons of any age and location who understand the method can utilize it to gain the resulting advantages.

All spoken of earlier may sound like something for the future until one is keenly aware as to "how to get from here to there." It would therefore be helpful to discuss some possible steps that could be taken, and actually are at present being taken, to make ethics a living reality. Let's turn to this now.

## **HOW ETHICS PREVAILS AND SPREADS OVER THE WORLD**

The way it would work is this. Ethics becomes a disciplined body of reliable knowledge. It uses scientific methods and evidence to reach its conclusions. The experimental branch of the Science of Ethics is known today as the science of Moral Psychology. It manages to come

up with a startling result you wouldn't have likely expected. The mass media then broadcast these facts as (interesting) news. It gets on CNN, and even on some of the major networks. It seeps into the popular magazines and e-zines of the day. People might Twitter about it. Facebook spreads the news about this interesting finding. Some creative person figures out a way to make it entertaining and even to perform it; it gets portrayed on You-Tube. Folks start to have some respect for the science of Ethics - just as many do now for the science of Physics.

{Although the latter is 400 years older and its data are more regular -- having less individuality than the data of Ethics, but perhaps as much spontaneity -- they both are sciences.} Why does Physics have some prestige in the eyes of the laymen, the so-called "people in the street"? Because they are aware of the technologies it generates - they even use some of them.

You might ask what would be the analogy for Ethics? Could it have its own technologies? Why sure it could. And it does. They are, among others, techniques of self-improvement. Such techniques are more-effective ways of living so that one gains a sense of well-being, one flourishes, one feels that s/he has many "Ah Hah" and "Ta da!" moments during the day. When someone asks you how you feel, you respond "Bodacious" or "Succulent" or "Dazzling" or "Fantastic" or "Terrific," or "Awesome," or some such exuberant response. And you sincerely mean it. And you live with efficacy. You have more confidence. Dr. Bandura describes the concept "efficacy" in Aspects of Ethics: Views through a new lens, pages 11-14, - <http://tinyurl.com/36u6gpo>  
If one has efficacy, he informs us, one feels more like an outright success; one knows how to reach the noble goals one sets for oneself.

The Internet is **now** brimming over with methodologies for becoming a more-effective individual, in mind (which is **S-value**); in body and in the material world (which is **E-value**); and in spirit (**I-value**.) Ethics will help in getting people to want to avail themselves of all these ways to further continuous self-improvement. Yes, Ethics can – and does - have its technologies, increasing in number at an exponential rate !. And *they exist here and now*.

Today people have, and appreciate having, what no one had a hundred years ago: washing machines, autos, air conditioners, portable phones, clean streets, flush toilets and other measures of public sanitation. These are the fruits of physical science and its applications. In years to

come people will live in environments that are more humane, behave toward each other more decently, will be glad that they speak so honestly to one another, and yet diplomatically. They will have these skills for living that now we only dream about.

They will appreciate how everyone all around seeks to maximize the net value in each situation, while avoiding disvalue. The way they will do that is to know their values: they will know that one Life (an I-value) is worth more than all the material things in the world (E-values), and that one thing is worth more than all the theories, systems, ideologies put together! An individual's life and dignity is worth more than a thing; and a thing is worth more than a number. They will see this clearly -- as a result of basic Ethics being taught in kindergarten. It will be taught there because some adults placed it into the curriculum for that age group, thereby setting a good example for the rest of the world to do likewise. And just as Western fashions, fads, convenience-foods, and music today spread rapidly around the world, even to countries and cultures you never would have predicted they would, so it will be with Ethical memes and ideas.

The writer does not agree with the pessimistic view that it is already too late for the human race. We may, though, undergo a bankruptcy and reorganization of a sort, and/or suffer through a bout of excessive inflation. There is another option: we may support leaders who are willing and ready to tax the billionaires who in fact comprise a tiny percentage of the population. They would be taxed perhaps to the level of taxation that prevailed during the Eisenhower administration, when the USA was thriving and people were flourishing compared with today. With that revenue the government would rebuild the crumbling infrastructure. If we do elect such leaders, who want to go ahead with all deliberate speed in developing clean, green, decentralized energy, and who encourage workers cooperatives, or at least profit-sharing businesses, there is still hope for us. For these are policies that democratically empower people, and thus are ethical policies.

It is recommended that one study the papers and essays to which links are given here, to get a better feel for Ethics. You will then know why Intrinsic value trumps Extrinsic value which in turn is more vital than Systemic value - though, personally we need a balance of all of them.

In other words, the references will aid one to know *exactly* why it is the case, as the old saying has it "Life is larger than logic."

(One way to contribute to the enterprise is to rephrase the ideas offered in this current paper into academic jargon with will be acceptable in the college classrooms. Better yet, get a friend who has the talent for it, to put the moral principles into Children's-book stories, and illustrate the stories with attractive graphics. And don't forget the illustrated comic-book forms of presentation; and power-point slide shows.)

You don't need to determine your highest Self-ideal immediately, as long as each month you are determining more of what it takes to Know Yourself. And how to Accept yourself. And acquiring smooth ways to Create yourself (i.e., to bring out your gifts and talents, to learn how best to express them. At that point you will very likely want to Give Yourself (namely, to take on responsibility, or, to perform before the public as you express your gifts, your strengths.) As (most) each individual does this, "humanity" will take care of itself. Thus Ethics will help us flourish, and we will be living well.

You may, along the way take tests such as the Hartman Value Inventory - which will efficiently enable you to learn what your strengths are in the least amount of time. {You may want to, for example, visit the <http://axiogenics.com/practicum/> website and take advantage of what is presented there.} Or you may take Preference Tests to clarify to yourself what your major interests are, the better for you to define yourself, and thus get in the groove. Your work, your activity, will then be your play. You will come to love life. You will in effect be shouting out - silently to yourself - how great it is to be alive. You will feel a deep serenity, will know that you are at peace.

You will be a conscientious objector to any behavior that violates persons, such as psychological or physical abuse, tyranny, war, forced conformity, or any impingements upon autonomy and authenticity.

When people hear about "the good life", the morally-healthy life, you won't have to nudge them: they'll run toward it. Nearly all immorality is based on ignorance. If we knew better, if we really truly knew how, we would do better. A coherent, logical theory of Ethics dispels ignorance.

Of course, there might always be a few exceptions, but they will be such a tiny minority, relative to the prevailing planetary ethos. This will be due, in part, to the improvements coming along in communication.

Today we have something we didn't have a mere 57 years ago - the World Brain - the internet. I cannot even imagine what the human race will be like once knowledge of Ethics spreads around. Boosting up one another will replace put-downs. Optimism will replace pessimism. The spirit of "*Yes we can*" will replace views such as: "It's impossible; it can't be done; forget it, there is no way."

What Lincoln referred to as "the angels of our better nature" are emerging. Each generation is becoming smarter and has better values, on the whole, than the previous one. There is more volunteering, more altruism, more acts of kindness - as reported in Yes Magazine <http://www.yesmagazine.org/> and in The Optimist Magazine <http://www.theoptimist.com/> Ethics is catching on! This is happening now.

With regard to the goal of becoming a more-ideal person, note that we have to first want that goal with firm determination. But if we know keenly before our minds the benefits that ensue, we will be glad to set a specific goal of self-improvement for ourselves, we will go after it, we will pursue the goal. The ultimate goal for most people once they have attained sufficient understanding will be to **provide a Quality Life for one and all**. That is what is meant by *Living Well*.

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# **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

**For further reading and insight into the topics of Ethics check out these links, and thereby add to your reading enjoyment:**

## **ETHICS FOR THE 21st CENTURY (2015)**

<http://www.myqol.com/wadeharvey/PDFs/ETHICS%20FOR%20THE%2021ST%20CENTURY.pdf>

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

## **LIVING THE GOOD LIFE**

[http://wadeharvey.myqol.com/wadeharvey/Living\\_The\\_Good\\_Lifef.pdf](http://wadeharvey.myqol.com/wadeharvey/Living_The_Good_Lifef.pdf)

## **ETHICAL ADVENTURES**

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## **ETHICS: A College Course.**

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