

HOW THE SCIENCE OF ETHICS WILL BENEFIT YOU: keys to living successfully

By Marvin C. Katz, Ph.D.

There is a new science developing, and although it is in its early stages it is already growing rapidly. Its name is "Ethics." It deals with moral health. Medical Science is concerned with your physical health. This new science is concerned with your success and happiness. It is derived from Value Science founded by Dr. Robert S. Hartman.

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_S._Hartman

I can report that research centers working in this field are emerging in Salt Lake City, Chicago, Buffalo, Knoxville, Los Angeles, Raleigh, Pittsburgh, Cambridge, Mass., and Upsala, Sweden.

The scientists of Ethics told me that they are not in the practice of instructing others how to live. They do employ a value calculus which demonstrates that those who *compose* value optimize their moral health. What does it mean to "compose value"? To compose value is to enhance it, to upgrade the value, or in one way or another to be constructive. Thus to compose human value is to lift up someone, to be an optimist, to compliment a person, to do acts of kindness, and so forth.

In contrast, those who *transpose* values develop moral disease. To transpose value is to misuse it, to confuse it, to destroy it, to downgrade it in some way. To transpose a human value is to cause pain, to manipulate a person, or to show disrespect. Even worse is to be indifferent to a human being. That is zero value. It is also known as apathy or moral insensitivity. It is a blind spot in the human

character on the part of someone who displays the indifference, and it leads to the transposing of values. Further on we will show how transposition results in a couple of moral fallacies with which everyone should be familiar.

To compose value is to *comp* (for short.) As we said, it means to upgrade value. You gain more value in life when you comp.

To transpose value is to *tran* (for short.) To tran is to confuse, to mix up, to dis, to spoil, to goof, to ruin, to name-call, to put someone down. To tran is to get less value as a result.

Since it is in our self-interest to get the most value out of life it is wiser to comp than to tran. Can we find agreement on that?

Scientists of Ethics have found that in order for a society to maximize value its members need to have a sense of *socialresponsibility* and a sense of *inclusivity*. Responsibility means: ability to respond. Inclusivity means: a tolerance for strangers, a capacity to accept diversity without the loss of a sense of unity. It means being willing to include more persons into one's social circle, and extending the radius of that circle without artificial barriers that would prevent further extension. Most people, it seems, are able to accept a number of strangers within the boundaries that they think of as their own nation; however, there is no logic to stop them from extending the edge of that circle they identify with as 'their own.' Logically the circle could even embrace the entire planet Earth.

THE BASIC ASSUMPTIONS

Let us present some basic assumptions and see if you, the reader, can agree with them.

Assumption (1): We all operate out of self-interest.

Even when we are most altruistic, charitable, or self-sacrificing there is something in it for us. Self-interest 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.

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.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SELF-INTEREST AND SELFISHNESS

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 we are 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. What this means in detail will soon be explained, after we present

Assumption (2). Many of the things all of us do are self-interested but that does not mean we are being selfish. For example, we go to sleep because we are tired. We have acted out of self-interest, but it does not involve another person, so it is not a selfish act.

We are not isolated individuals; we form groups. The more the needs and wants of others are taken into account, the more we can say a person is acting self-interested in a proper manner. A selfish person asks only: What's in it for me? A moral self-interested person asks: What's in it for us?

A case can be made that selfishness is the root cause of all unjust action through the ages. Every crime and injustice has stemmed from selfishness to some extent (except maybe in cases of utter madness.) We are social creatures and being selfish is an impediment to living in society. Ethics can teach us to put ourselves in perspective and thereby to live a better life.

"I try to use challenges as opportunities to grow. I have finally come to learn that if we are not continually growing "upwards" by trying to transform into better versions of ourselves, we are either standing still or going in a downward motion. All our moments are choices, and for today I choose the light over the dark and looking outside of myself instead of focusing in on "me and my problems."

---- Carole Bayer Sager (Composer and song-writer)

Assumption (3): It is in our self-interest to get the most value out of life.

The term *value* was just mentioned. What do we know about it today, thanks to Dr. Robert Hartman? We have learned that value depends upon meaning. The more value, the more meaning; and if something is more meaningful to us, it is more valuable to us. And a valuable life is a meaningful life.

To the degree a map matches its territory we would call the map a valuable map, True? And that's what is meant by "value": it measures the degree that something actually is what it is supposed to be. Something has value to the extent its properties match the image you have for things-of-that-sort. This concept will later on be quite important when we want to define 'morality' since morality is *moral value*.

A *good* hammer has *everything* a hammer is supposed to have, in your picture of a hammer. A good person likewise has a full set of features and characteristics that a person would ideally have. To call something "good" is to say it has full value.

According to Value Science there are three types of basic values. They are Systemic Value, Extrinsic Value, and Intrinsic Value. Abbreviated these are S, E, and I. And Dr. Leon Pomeroy tells us that it is as important to know our SEIs as it is to know our ABCs.

Here are some examples:

Thoughts are S-values; things are E-values; persons and involvements are I-values. They result when the basic value dimensions are applied.

People usually S-Value theories, systems, ideologies, blueprints, plans, zip codes, circuit diagrams, technical language, black-and-white thinking, scientific models, and all the "isms." They are appropriately valued Systemically.

E-Value is the valuation people usually place upon things of this world, practicalities, empirical matters, know-how, savoir-faire, social, everyday concerns, functionality, diplomacy, worldly considerations, categories, etc.

You are likely to I-Value your mother, your spouse, your dearest ones, unique persons you love, beloved treasures, masterpieces of art, priceless items, etc. We value those Intrinsically whenever we identify with and bond with them.

Value scientists speak of those three values as "dimensions of value." We need them all. The three value dimensions form a hierarchy with S-value worth the least; E-value worth infinitely more; and I-value the most precious of all - worth far, far more than any E-value. The correct hierarchy of values, in symbols, is $S < E < I$. And thus to place S above I; or to give more weight to E than to I would be a fallacy.

The highest of the three basic values is Intrinsic Value, or I-value. The discipline

these scientists refer to as "Ethics" arises when persons are Intrinsically valued. By valuing persons this way an individual can gain the most value out of life. And that is a fact. In effect the science explains how to "shop for value" in life.

WHAT IS ETHICS?

To be ethical is to I-value oneself and others. How can we tell when someone is I-valuing something? They focus; give it their attention, and come to identify with it. If they I-value a person they get involved with that person. They see qualities in the person that others, who aren't so close, don't see. To illustrate, it is the way many of us felt about our mother when we small children. That is an example of Intrinsic valuation.

Another example may be how a czarina, a Russian princess or queen, felt about her jewelry. Or how we relate to the Mona Lisa or to an original Van Gogh today. Whatever we regard as very special, as a priceless treasure, whatever we value as life itself (unless we are depressed and suicidal) is an application of I-value.

Scientists in the ethics field told me that when people identify and bond with the following they become Intrinsic values: Liberty, Freedom, Integrity, Beauty, Truth, Goodness, Authenticity, Creativity, and so forth. Those are often I-valued. When someone Intrinsically values something they see, they may call it "a beauty" or speak of it as "beautiful." When a person I-values a sound, he or she will call it "music." When I-valuing a person one may speak of that person as "a friend", or as "a partner" or perhaps as "beloved", or one may fall back on poetry, or pet names, or some private, intimate expression that only the two of them understand. Other concepts, which when identified with become I-value applications, are Love, Community, Spirituality, Veracity, Reality, Sharing, Happiness, Ecstasy, Joy, Intuition and Insight.

ARE THERE ETHICAL FALLACIES?

We previously explained that Ethics arises when we I-value persons. This is true by definition.

False logic results in a *fallacy*. Faulty thinking in the field of ethics will be known as ethical fallacy. Now that Ethics has been defined, I shall present two Ethical Fallacies, expressed by Dr. William Kelleher in the following quote.¹

They are The Instrumental Fallacy and the Ideological Fallacy.

"The Instrumental Fallacy To use a person solely as a means to achieve some end entails a negative regard for that person. Using reduces a person to the value of a thing, an instrument. No matter how highly prized, a thing is always potential trash. Every new car will some day be junk. But a person, so long as he or she is a self-conscious, thinking, feeling human being ought never be regarded as useless trash." The formula depicting this situation is $E > I$, obviously a fallacy, since science has established that $I > E$.

When persons are I-valued they are receiving positive regard, and Ethics - by definition - tells us that individuals always deserve to be viewed in this light; it tells us that all persons always deserve positive regard.

"The Ideological Fallacy: This is the false assumption that ideas are more important than persons are" is the way Dr. Kelleher explains it. Whenever the idea of "gender," or of "race," or "rank" - all intellectual constructs, or conceptions - which have no actual physical existence - are used to separate members of the human community, and to enable some to claim superiority over others, this is a violation of Ethics. Why? Because it indicates a failure to I-value persons. To hold any of those "isms": racism, sexism, or rankism, is to commit The Ideological Fallacy. In symbols this situation is $S > I$, again, a fallacy.

In contrast, Dr. Kelleher has proposed two value axioms. The first is Instrumental Enhancement. What does this mean?

Instrumental Enhancement "Providing a service to people that helps to improve

the quality of their lives" would be an Instrumental Enhancement. He offers several examples:

Public education when it values a student as a unique, intelligent, creative person with potential for growth and development;

Sending someone who needs it - a person who has been convicted of a crime, or a drug addict -- into rehab is another example of Instrumental Enhancement;

Medical treatment, including surgery, is meant to enhance the quality of life and provide a benefit.

The second value axiom applied to Ethics is what we shall designate as:

Ideological Enhancement. This is an idea that tends to encourage giving positive regard to people. The idea of Human Rights - such as the right to an opportunity to earn a living; or the right to be free from the fear of detention just for expressing political views - the human rights concept is an Ideological Enhancement.

To comp value is to provide enhancement. Persons of good character do that. In the next section we aim to explain how this works a little more fully.

ON CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

Let's examine what character is all about. Scientific Ethics is not based on rules that tell us the right action to do at any given moment; rather the answer to "How to be morally healthy" is that one is to have a good character. Many of the modern perspectives are derived from insights already well-known by the ancient Greeks. For example, the science confirms that if we realize that treating others with kindness is appropriate and we feel positive feelings toward others, we are likely to in fact use kindness in our dealings with others. The scientists in the field of ethics are interested in what kinds of persons will live the good life, and it

turns out that character development plays a large role in this.

We all have natural inclinations that influence how we act within our environment and how we relate to others. Our innate personality traits are impacted by what we experienced in our upbringing and into adulthood. We learn what works for us and what doesn't, and when we function at a high level, we hold onto the behaviors that help us and let go of those that hold us back.

Training in empathic development - developing our empathy -- is a major part of Applied Ethics. One of the major applications of this science called Ethics is known as Education; and another is Life Coaching. Having positive role models early in one's life is usually essential to moral development. Through regularly engaging in kind, thoughtful actions, we can develop and increase the degree of our morality. The good person has acquired a sense of values and understands why a specific action - that you or I may say is "doing the right thing" -- is the appropriate response. The living of a good life transcends particular actions and the local social customs and cultural practices. Over time, choosing right over wrong requires less thought and is habitual. Loving kindness is chosen knowingly for its own sake. The habits we form in life are critical to our having a high degree of morality.

The development of moral character used to take a whole life-time but now there are techniques for speeding up the process. Once someone has established his/her moral character, for the most part that person's behavior will keep in line with that character. The behavior will follow a pattern and typically be predictable. This hypothesis has been tested and found to be a reliable fact in a number of independent experiments.

A good person consciously chooses the right action most of the time. It is not accidental, but rather a deliberate decision to choose kindness. At first, before it becomes intuitive, a highly moral personality will consciously choose and affirm goodness. He or she will recite ethical affirmations as a way of ingraining the principles. Eventually the ethical precepts become a matter of habit. This Ethics is about an entire life. Instead of asking what is the right act here and now, Ethics asks what kind of person should I be in order to get it right all the time. The science of Ethics eventually came to the conclusion that someone who is ethical consistently demonstrates integrity and respect for others. It also found that to

know the good is not necessarily to do the good. We must choose the good. There are three stages: (S) Choosing intellectually. (E) Choosing by practicing. (I) Integrating the choice into one's self-concept. Practice is now a habit.

HOW IS GOOD CHARACTER DEVELOPED?

In order to develop good *character* we need to keep in mind our moral principles, make *sound judgments*, and put them into action in proper sequence.

It turns out that a major element is *the capacity for making good judgments*. What does this involve? It helps if we ask ourselves: Do I set priorities? Do I put myself into my work? Do I pay attention to getting things done? Do I, in fact, get results? Do I seek excellence in everything I do? Persons of good judgment know the value of *cooperation* as well as to *trust* others until they prove untrustworthy. A healthy skepticism is appropriate.

Next we focus on accountability, also known as 'walking the talk', keeping promises. It amounts to being responsible, and accountable, as well as respecting principles, standards and codes derived from scientific Ethics.

Good character entails in addition a personal will to change and to grow. It means acting as a change agent and risk taker. It means being inventive, spontaneous and creative. It means having vision. This, in turn, means having optimism and expecting the best.

How do we develop *character*? There are three stages: Decide what we want in our moral development. Find out what we have. Thirdly, Take steps to close the gap.

WHEN ARE WE BEING MORAL?

We are being moral when we're true to ourselves. It turns out that morality is being true to your own *true* self. It means that our traits and observable behavior in fact actually match our self-chosen and continually-improving view of what an ideal self should be. In other words, "morality" (moral value) is to Ethics what "value" in general is to Value Science. I would explain it this way: just as a thing has value to you to the extent its properties match the image you have for things-of-that-sort - the map fitting-the-territory idea -- morality, as the science of Ethics uses that term, measures the degree a person lives up to his own standards of true personhood, or conforms to his own high, and evolving ideals for what a person is, and could become. Morality is intrinsically valuing yourself and every other person. It implies having self-respect and finding a way to respect others.

There are four steps to being true to yourself: Know yourself; accept yourself; create yourself; and give yourself. Let's speak of these as "The Four Keys." They unlock doors, or barriers, that keep us from living life to the fullest. Barriers -- such as lying to ourselves, making excuses, blaming, being a hypocrite -- keep us from getting the highest quality life we could have. We can go into the four keys more deeply later on. Keep in mind that morality is a matter of degree: some have more moral health than others, just as some people are physically healthier than others.

Investigators have found that to be moral is to have a good character, to have moral courage, to have good judgment. Having good judgment is the same as having a sense of values; it is to know ones SEIs; knowing that I-Value will get us more value in life according to that hierarchy of values.

Moral courage is the middle ground between fearfulness and foolhardiness. Those who are whistle-blowers have this courage. They are taking a risk but hopefully they are wise enough to leak the facts about corruption in their institution or business to a journalist who has faithfully promised not to expose their name. They are avoiding cowardice while at the same time avoiding foolhardiness - two extremes. They are embracing moral Courage, one of the marks of good character.

HOW ETHICS CAN COPE WITH DILEMMAS WHEN THEY ARISE

According to the Markkula Center for Applied Ethics in Santa Clara, California it is helpful to ask these questions before making a decision which involves an ethical dilemma, that is one in which some person might suffer harm or damage:

"What are the relevant facts of the case? What individuals and groups have an important stake in the outcome? What is at stake for each?"

Which option will produce the most good and do the least harm?

- Which option respects the rights and dignity of all stakeholders? Even if not everyone gets all they want, will everyone still be treated fairly?

- Which option would promote the common good and help all participate more fully in the goods we share as a society, as a community, as a company, as a family?

<http://www.scu.edu/ethics/practicing/decision/commongood.html>

- Which option would enable the deepening or development of those virtues or character traits that we value as individuals? As a profession? As a society? "

This is the traditional approach to ethics, also known as "moral philosophy." Scientific Ethics when applied will encourage the development of individuals who intuitively know the right way to choose in tough situations because of the habits they have formed from early childhood, due to the findings of this new science

being applied in the field of early education. These habits have been labeled by Dr. Daniel Goleman as Emotional and Social Intelligence.

On the internet there are toolkits for self-development for those who care to use them. If you want to know yourself better, these sites will help:

www.sixadvisors.com

At that web- page, click once on the graphics area that says "What's inside?"; or go to: www.axiometricsinternational.com

Kate Connor also provides this testing service at: <http://cfaam.org>

If you wish to create yourself, develop your talents and strengths, these companies can also be of service by means of their coaching facilities. If your aim is to improve yourself there are such websites as these, for example:

<http://www.selfgrowth.com>

or <http://www.bottomlinesecrets.com/index.cfm>

Dr. Paul Ricoeur, who did research with Dr. Edmund Husserl, points out that as human beings we have a *need* for harmonious and peaceful relations. That need, he notes, is not satisfied in today's world. Thus let us briefly turn to Social Ethics.

The Science of Ethics has everything you want in a science plus even more values too numerous to list.

ON SOCIAL ETHICS

It is unlikely that we will ever reach a "perfect" solution to anything so it is advisable that we work together to improve what we are doing, understanding that each improvement we make will require additional improvements. Can we agree that it is better to be constructive than destructive? If so, this implies an imperative: "Make things better!" If something isn't yet good, let's make it good. If something is good, let's make it even better. Let's have a constructive approach. Let's accept what we know about ourselves, with all our weaknesses and all our strengths, and use what we know to create a better world.

According to Dr. Thomas Hurka, of Canada, to truly actualize one's self is to work to insure that there is opportunity for all to better themselves. Those with a high degree of morality are aware that each of us will live a more fulfilling life when all of us live a more fulfilling life: Each does better if all do better.

Just as on the individual level we want to actualize -- bring out our talents and skills -- on the social level why not inventory the strengths of each culture, each tribe, each nation and use those advantages to reach certain common goals. Why not focus on what we can build together? Why not make each group feel more secure by entering into non-aggression treaties with everyone? Why shouldn't our own nation initiate the 'peace race'? Let's get with it!

If we can agree that violence is destructive, and that we want to be constructive, then we will do all in our power to avoid violence, hostility, abuse. We will take every opportunity to find alternatives to violence. We will no longer admire the mighty warrior. We will admire the heroes of peace....Tolstoy, Gandhi, Martin Luther King and most of the winners of the Nobel Prize for Peace. We will let their lives inspire us.

We will be very careful not to have a double standard, one for ourselves and one for others: we will no longer say to ourselves that while violence done to us is certainly destructive, when we commit violence or heap abuse on others it is not

so bad, for it is justified. To think like this is to violate The Principle of Moral Consistency. That Principle tells us to avoid a double standard, and to be consistent.

Start with your own family, then your block, then your township, then your state, and your nation. When we can achieve peace in our family we can achieve it in a wider circle. Whoever is most responsible provides leadership for the others. Express mutual aid, respect for each other, and non-abuse. Instead of pointing out what is wrong with someone else, build them up. Compliment them on their strengths and good features. Demonstrate that your family can be nonviolent and that any disagreements can be peacefully resolved without recriminations nor anyone feeling bossed or ordered around. Show loving kindness to each other. Let the peace radiate outward from there.

Afterword

Human nature hasn't changed in 3000 years. We still operate out of self-interest.

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

In a song, Alphonse is asked: "What's it all about?" Wise men say: To have health is in our self-interest. To have some wealth is also - at least enough to sustain us and to fulfill some of our basic needs. Happiness has been held up as a goal for which to aim. No one can deny that it is well to have money, health and happiness. But there is an even higher goal, one that gives us even greater fulfillment: it is *to have a meaningful life*. Our most basic need is the need for meaning. We want life to make sense. It turns out, the scientists of Ethics tell us, that value is itself based upon meaning. Thus the most valuable life is the most meaningful life. ...And that's what it's all about. We get the most value out of life if we aim to close the gap between the actual and the ideal, if we aim to make things better.

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

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

RECOMMENDED READING

Jeanne Segal, *Raising Your Emotional Intelligence: A Practical Guide* (NY: Holt, 1997).

Moral Sentiments and Material Interests: The Foundations of Cooperation in Economic Life by Herbert Gintis, Samuel Bowles, Robert T. Boyd, and Ernst Fehr (Editors). (The M.I.T. Press, 2005)

Roger Blair, "A cognitive developmental approach to morality: investigating the psychopath," *Cognition* 57 (1995): 1-29

<http://www.hartmaninstitute.org/html/AxiologyAsAScience.html>

<http://www.hartmaninstitute.org/html/IndividualInManagement.htm>

Footnotes:

1. From the book *Progressive Logic*, (Los Angeles, Empathic Science Institute, 2005) pp. 10-14. For more information see:

<http://www.empathicscience.org/proglog.html>

<http://www.valueinsights.com/axiology.html>

and <http://www.hartmaninstitute.org/html/WhatWorldNeedsNow.htm>