

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 312 518

CG 022 015

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 TITLE Ethical Decision Making: Developmental Theory and Practice.  
 PUB DATE Mar 89  
 NOTE 20p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (71st, Denver, CO, March 16-19, 1989).  
 PUB TYPE Reports - General (140) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)  
 EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.  
 DESCRIPTORS \*College Students; \*Decision Making; Decision Making Skills; Ethical Instruction; \*Ethics; Higher Education; Moral Values  
 IDENTIFIERS Gilligan (Carol); Kitchner (Karen); Kohlberg (Lawrence); Rest (James)

ABSTRACT

This document is a compilation of materials from a presentation on ethical decision making. These components are included: (1) four sample moral dilemmas; (2) graphs of Kohlberg's six stages of moral growth; (3) graphs of Gilligan's Theory of Moral Judgments; (4) graphs of Kitchner's Theory of Ethical Principles; (5) a discussion of the four components of Rest's Model of Ethical Decision Making--interpreting the situation, deciding what is morally right, choosing between moral values and other values, and implementing a plan of action; (6) a discussion of practical applications of Rest's model focused on college students and arranged within each of the four previously mentioned components of Rest's model; (7) a list of ethical decision making situations for college student leaders; (8) a list of ethical issues for college student leaders to discuss using Rest's four component model; (9) a list of 10 ethical myths with a short discussion of each; and (10) a list of 10 commandments of executive integrity with accompanying lists of cognitive and affective elements. References are listed. (ABL)

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ED312518

# "Ethical Decision Making: Developmental Theory and Practice"

National Association of  
Student Personnel Administrators

Denver, Colorado

March 1989

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# "Ethical Decision Making: Developmental Theory and Practice"

## Presentation Outline

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1. Introduction of Presentation
2. The Concept of the "Moral Dilemma"
3. James Rest's Ethical Decision Making Model
4. Lawrence Kohlberg's Stages of Moral Growth
5. Carol Gilligan's Theory of Moral Judgements
6. Karen Kitchner's Theory of Ethical Principles
7. Ethical Decision Making in Universities
8. Practical Application of Rest's Model
9. Ethical Situations for Implementing Rest's Model
10. Questions and Comments

# Moral Dilemmas

## Heinz and the Drug

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In Europe, a woman was near death from a special kind of cancer. There was one drug that the doctors thought might save her life. It was a form of radium that the druggist in the same town had recently discovered. The drug was expensive to make, and the druggist was charging ten times what the drug cost to make. He paid \$200 for the radium and charged \$2000 for a small dose of the drug. The sick woman's husband, Heinz, went to everyone he knew to borrow the money, but he could only get together about \$1000, which is half of what it cost. He told the druggist that his wife was dying, and asked him to sell it cheaper or let him pay later. But the druggist said, "No, I discovered the drug and I am going to make money from it." So Heinz became desperate and began to think about breaking into the man's store to steal the drug for his wife.

- Should Heinz steal the drug? Why?

## Escaped Prisoner

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A man had been sentenced to prison for 10 years. After one year, however, he escaped from prison, moved to a new area of the country, and took the name of Thompson. For eight years he worked hard, and gradually saved enough money to buy his own business. He was fair to his customers, gave his employees top wages, and gave most of his own profits to charity. Then one day, Mrs. Jones, an old neighbor, recognized him as the man who had escaped from prison eight years before, and for whom the police had been looking.

- Should Mrs. Jones report Mr. Thompson to the police and have him sent back to prison? Why?

## The Doctor's Dilemma

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A woman was dying of cancer, which could not be cured, and she only had about six months to live. She was in terrible pain, but she was so weak that a good dose of pain killer like morphine would make her die sooner. She was delirious and almost crazy with pain, and in her calm periods, she would ask the doctor to give her enough morphine to kill her. She said she could not stand the pain and that she was going to die in a few months anyway.

- What should the doctor do? Why?

## Webster

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Mr. Webster was the owner and manager of a gas station. He wanted to hire another mechanic to help him, but good mechanics were hard to find. The only person who seemed to be a good mechanic was Mr. Lee, but he was Chinese. While Mr. Webster did not have anything against Orientals, he was afraid to hire Mr. Lee because many of his customers did not like Orientals. His customers might take their business elsewhere if Mr. Lee was working at the gas station. When Mr. Lee asked Mr. Webster if he could have the job, Mr. Webster said that he had already hired somebody else. But Mr. Webster really had not hired anybody, because he could not find anybody else who was a good mechanic.

- What should Mr. Webster have done? Why?

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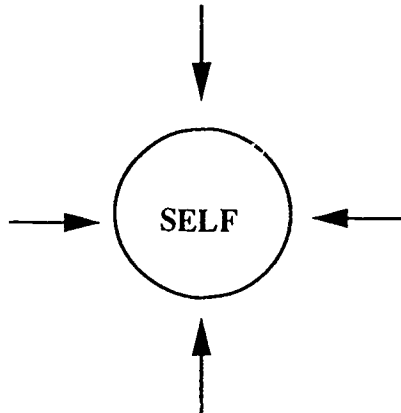
*"Ethical Decision Making: Developmental Theory and Practice" by Panzl and McMahon, March 1989.*

# Kohlberg's Stages of Moral Growth

Taken From:

Sprinthall, N.A. and McVay, J.G. (1983). "Value Development: A Curriculum to Promote Justice"

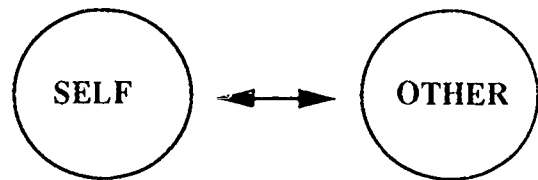
## STAGE I



### "Punishment and Obedience" Orientation

Concern about self. Obedience to a powerful authority. Fear of punishment dominates motives. One sees oneself as being dominated by other forces. Actions are judged in terms of their physical consequences.

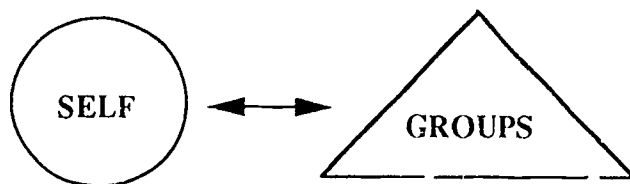
## STAGE II



### "Scratch My Back and I'll Scratch Yours"

One-way concern about another person (what he/she can do for me). The basic motive is to satisfy my own needs. I do not consider the needs of the other person, unless I think it will benefit me to do so.

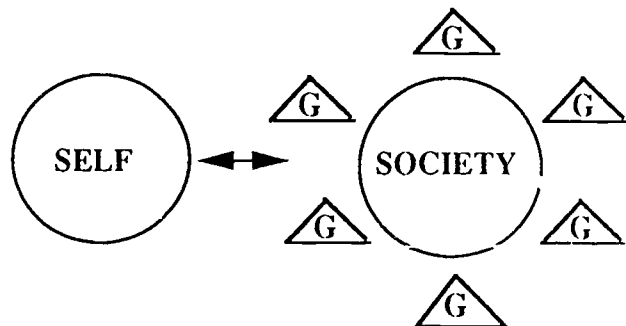
## STAGE III



### "Good Boy, Good Girl" Orientation

Concern about groups of people and conformity to group norms. Living up to what is expected by people close to you or what people generally expect of people in your role as son, brother, friend, etc. Motive is to be a "nice boy/girl," to be accepted. Affection and caring play a strong role.

## STAGE IV



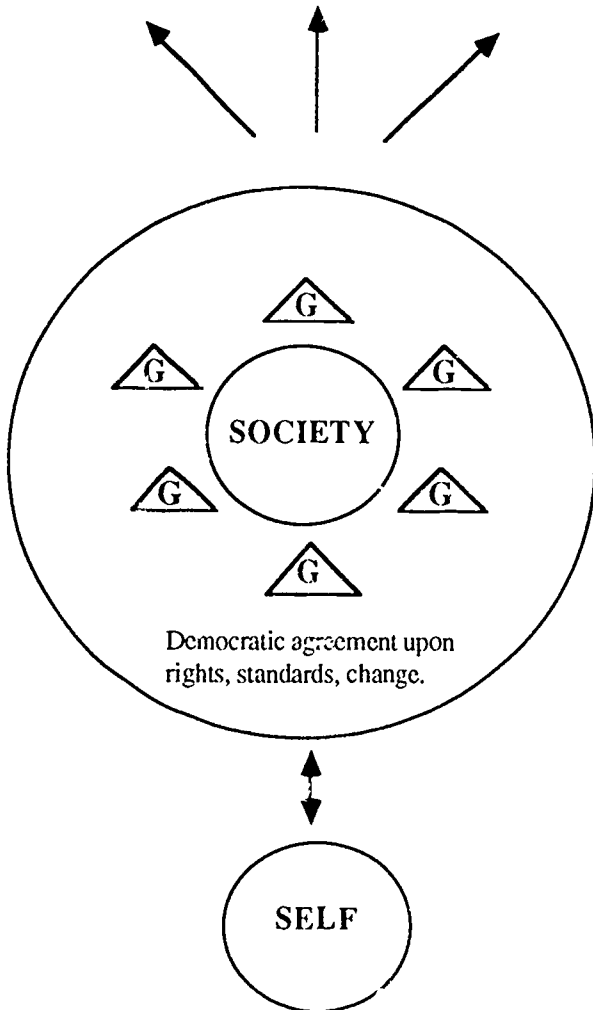
### "Law and Order" Orientation

Concern for order in society. Honor and duty come from keeping the rules of the society. The focus is on preserving the society, to keep it going as to avoid breakdown of the system (not just obeying, as in Stage I).

# Kohlberg's Stages of Moral Growth

## STAGE V

Free Agreement and Contract

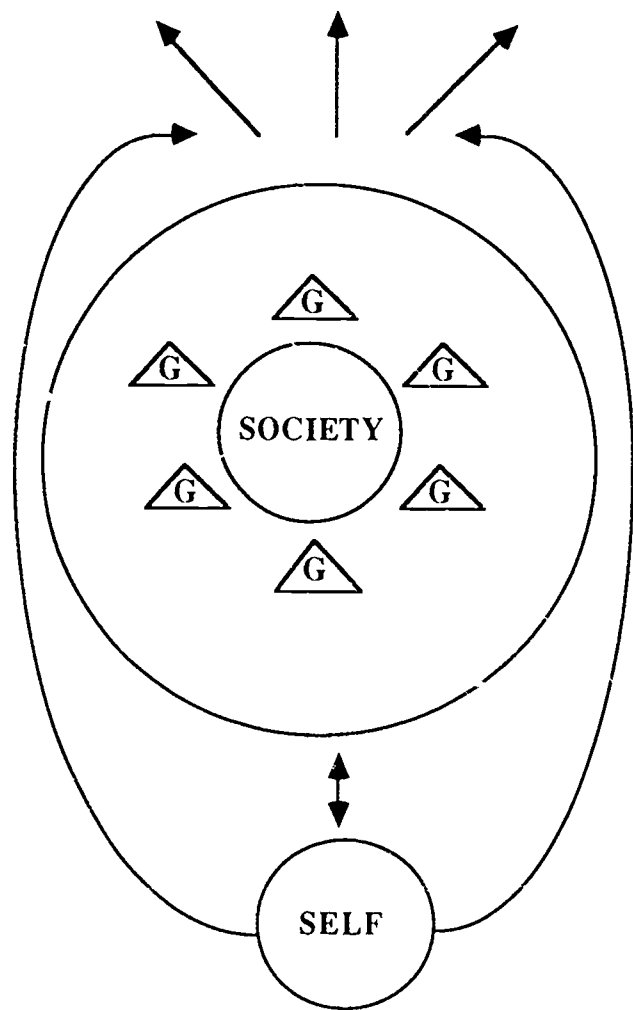


### "Doing what is Right, Regardless of Rules"

A sense of obligation to law because of one's social contract to make and abide by laws for the welfare of all and for the protection of all people's rights. A feeling of contractual commitment freely entered upon, to work, friends, and family obligations. Laws are usually made for reasons of greatest good for greatest number of people. Some nonrelative values and rights like liberty and life, however, must be upheld in any society and regardless of majority opinion. The US Constitution is written in Stage V Terms.

## STAGE VI

Universal Principles of Justice for All



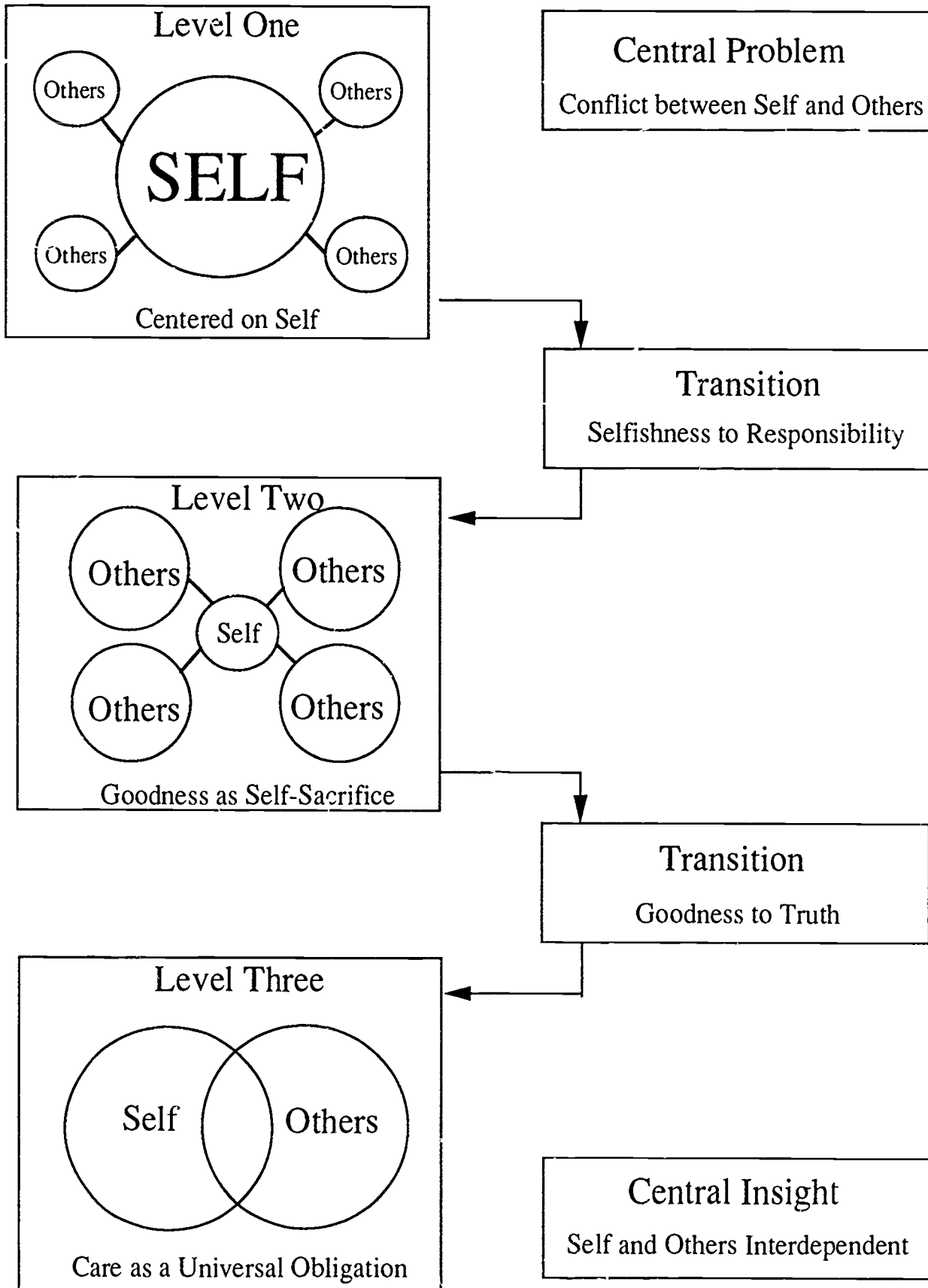
### Universal Ethical Principles

The belief as a rational person in the validity of universal moral principles, and a sense of personal commitment to them. Particular laws or social agreements are usually valid because they rest on such principles. When laws violate these principles, one acts in accordance with the principle. Principles are universal principles of justice, equality and respect for the dignity of people as individuals.

# Gilligan's Theory of Moral Judgements

Created From:

Gilligan, C. (1982). *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

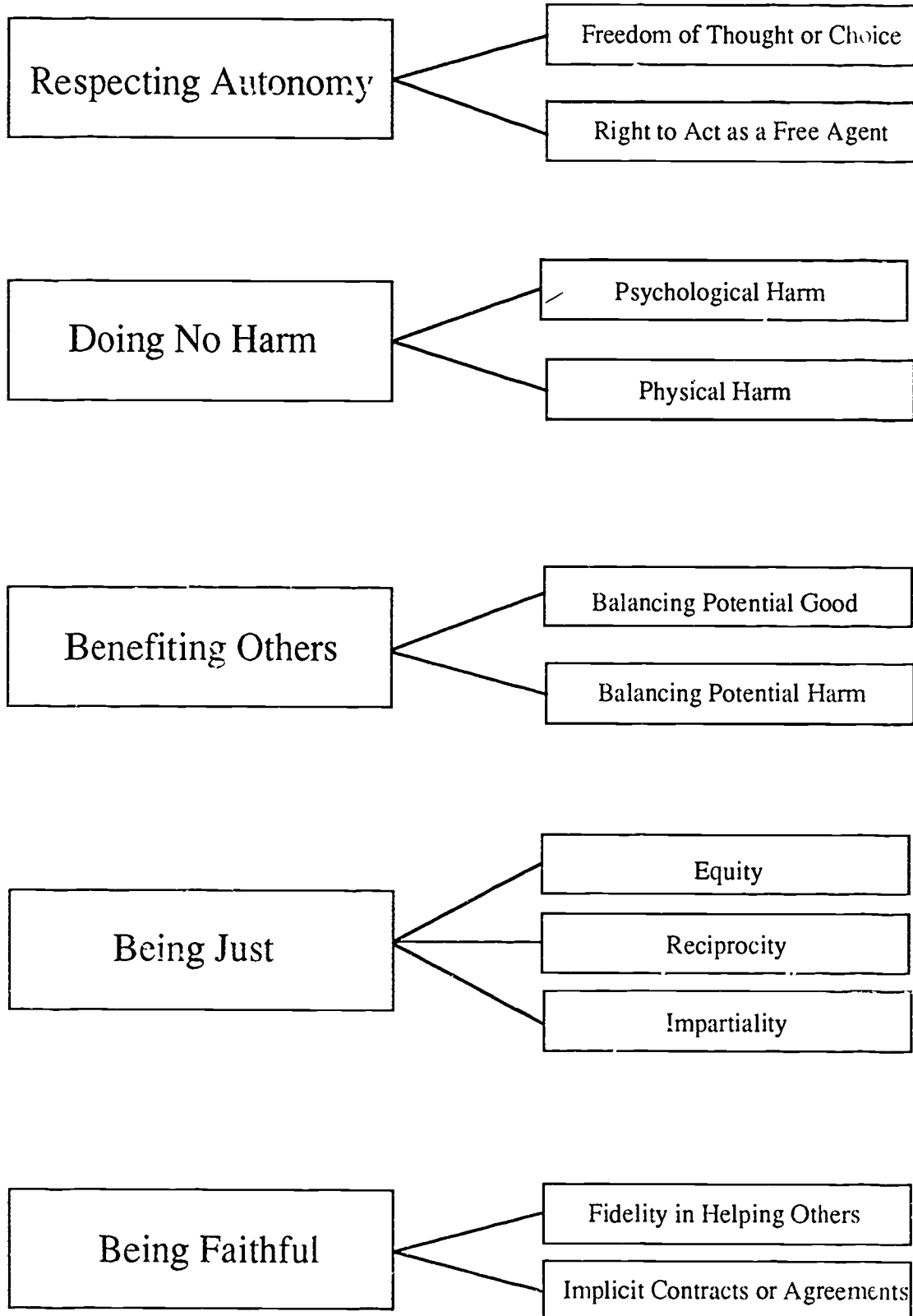


Barbara A. Panzl, Washington State University, 1988.

# Kitchner's Theory of Ethical Principles

Created From:

Kitchner, K. (1985). Ethical Principles and Ethical Decisions in Student Affairs. In H. Cannon and R. Brown (Eds.), Applied Ethics in Student Services. San Fransico: Jossey-Bass.





# Rest's Model of Ethical Decision Making

Component 1

**Interpreting the Situation**

Component 2

**Deciding What is Morally Right**

Component 3

**Choosing between Moral Values  
and Other Values**

Component 4

**Implementing a Plan of Action**

Taken From:

Rest, J. (1983). Moral Development: Advances in Research and Theory. New York: Praeger.

## Key Concepts

- Moral development or moral behavior is composed of four distinct functions. It is not the result of a single unitary process. Although one process might interact or influence others, the four processes have distinct functions.
- The basic components of the model are not stated in terms of cognition, affect and behavior. Rest believes that when moral psychology is described, cognition and affect are always interconnected and that both are involved in producing moral behavior.
- The model describes the processes involved in the production of a moral act, not general traits of people. The four components are not presented as four virtues that make the ideal moral person, but rather major units of analysis in tracing how a particular course of action was produced in the context of a particular situation.
- The model is not a linear, time-bound sequence. There may be complicated interactions between the various components. For example, a person's way of defining what is morally right (Component 2) may affect the person's interpretation of the situation (Component 1). The model should be thought of as depicting a logical order for the development of a moral behavior to occur.

## Component 1

# Interpreting the Situation

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In interpreting moral situations, individuals should answer the following 3 questions:

- What courses of action are possible?
- Who (including yourself) would be affected by each course of action?
- How would the involved parties regard such effects on their welfare and interests?

### Keep In Mind

1. Many people have difficulty interpreting even relatively simple situations. We must not underestimate the difficulty of interpreting social situations nor must we assume all misinterpretation is defensive in nature, even though people may not "see" things because they are defensively blocking them from their conscious recognition.
2. There are striking differences between people in their sensitivity to the needs and welfare of others. Before it occurs to some people that a moral issue may be involved, they have to see blood flowing. Other people are so super sensitive that every act, work or grimace takes on momentous moral implications.
3. A given social situation may arouse very strong emotions before any cognitive activity can even occur. This is not to say that feelings are independent of cognition, but rather that more primitive cognitions and their accompanying feelings can proceed without waiting for a considered, reflective judgement and careful weighing of the facts.

## Component 2

# Deciding What Course of Action is Morally Right

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In component 1, individuals become aware of a number of possible courses of action and what the consequences are for people's welfare. The purpose of component 2 is deciding which one of these courses of action is morally right. The question to pose at this point is how do people define what is right and wrong. The work of Kohlberg, Gilligan and Kitchner can assist us in answering this question.

### Keep In Mind

1. Making moral judgements seem to come naturally to people. It almost seems that humans are either genetically built to make moral judgements or are quickly conditioned by social experience to make them.
2. Equally striking is the fact the people's intuitions are drastically different regarding what is right and wrong and individuals have great certainty about their moral convictions

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*"Ethical Decision Making: Developmental Theory and Practice" by Panzl and McMahon, March 1989.*

## Component 3

# Choosing Between Moral Values and Other Values

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Moral values are not the only values that people have. People value advancement in a career, money, power-many things beside fairness and morality. These other values can conflict with moral values. It is not unusual for nonmoral values to be so strong and attractive that a person will choose a course of action that preempts or compromises the moral ideal. The difference between what individuals think *ought* to be done and what they *actually* do can be significant.

Given that a person is aware of various possible courses of action in a situation, each leading to a different kind of outcome or goal, why would one ever choose the moral alternative, especially if it involves sacrificing some personal value or suffering some hardship? Briefly listed below are some major theories and their proponents for explaining why individuals select moral values over other values.

### Theories about Moral Motivation

1. People behave morally because evolution has bred altruism into our genetic inheritance (Wilson 1975).
2. "Conscience makes cowards of us all." That is, shame, guilt, and fear motivates morality (Aronfeed 1968; Eysenck 1976).
3. There really isn't any special motivation to be moral. People just respond to reinforcement and/or modeling opportunities and "learn" social behavior that nonscientists may wish to call "morality" (Bandura 1977; Goldiamond 1968).
4. Social understanding of how cooperation functions and how one's own sake in building a desirable social world motivates morality (Dewey 1959; Piaget 1965). The tradition of liberal enlightenment subscribes to the view that education is a broadening experience that can overcome prejudice and pettiness and foster social responsibility.
5. Moral motivation is derived from a sense of awe and self-subjugation to something greater than the self. One can identify with a crusade, one's country, the sacred (Durkheim 1961; Erikson 1958).
6. Empathy is the basis for altruistic motivation (Hoffman 1976).
7. The experience of living in just and caring relationships and communities leads to moral commitments (Rawls 1971; Kohlberg 1985).
8. Concern for self-integrity and one's identity as a moral agent is what motivates moral action (Blasi 1984; Damon 1984).

## Component 4

# Executing and Implementing a Plan of Action

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Component 4 involves determining a sequence of concrete actions, working around obstacles and unexpected difficulties, overcoming fatigue and frustration, resisting distractions and allurements, and keeping sight of the eventual goal. Assertiveness, perseverance, resoluteness, competence, courage, and character are attributes that lead to success in this component. It has also been found that having a positive affective state and focusing on the expectation of success can determine the amount of effort that will be expended and how long it will be sustained in the face of adversity.

### Interaction Among the Components

(The interaction among the four components can have a decided impact on moral behavior.)

1. If an overlap exists between two potentially moral situations, being concerned about one moral situation can cause insensitivity to another one which begins before the first is completed. Sometimes the attention and effort needed to carry out one task are so great that the subject can attend to little else.
2. As the cost of moral action comes to be recognized, a person may distort the feelings of obligation, denying personal responsibility or reappraising the situation so as to make alternative actions more appropriate. As people realize the implications of Component 2 and Component 3 processes, they may defensively reappraise their interpretation of the situation so they can still feel honorable but at less cost to themselves.

For further information on this model, please consult:

Rest, J. (1983). Moral Development: Advances in Research and Theory. New York: Praeger.

"The function of morality is to provide basic guidelines for determining how conflicts in human interest are to be settled and for optimizing mutual benefits of people living together in groups." James Rest

# Practical Applications of Rest's Model

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Rest's four component model of moral behavior can be used by students and advisors to assist our student leaders in developing their own moral behavior, thus leading to more ethical decisions. Each component of this model offers suggestions for activities which may heighten awareness about the various aspects of ethical decision making.

## Component 1: Interpreting the Situation

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Component 1 programs and activities are designed to increase the awareness of the impact that decisions have on others. Activities may include:

- Role playing
- Fishbowl questions and discussions
- National, local and campus newspaper articles

## Component 2: Deciding What Course of Action is Morally Right

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Component 2 programs and activities are designed to help students increase their level of moral development. (Note that change occurs slowly and over long periods of time)

1. Caring activities designed to put students in someone else's situation are especially effective
  - volunteer activities
  - peer advising
  - tutoring
  - student staff positions.
2. Activities that assist students to appreciate the points of view of other persons
  - debates where students argue the opposite point of view
  - role plays
3. Exposing students to moral dilemmas and thinking that is one stage above their own.
  - Kohlberg's moral dilemmas
  - Defining Issues Test
  - Greek dilemmas
4. Participation in community activities, where students identify with the values of the community
  - community service projects
  - involvement with local businesses
  - parks and recreation programs
  - humane society
5. Develop ways to enable peer culture to contribute to the (values) education objectives of the institution
  - orientation counselors
  - orientation program presenters
  - campus tour guides

6. Identify and provide interaction with a *moral example* whose values, doubts, and personal commitments are visible to students.
  - discussion groups that focus on the ethics of different majors, (business, law, medicine, psychology) facilitated by various faculty members
  - discussion groups with administrators and students on a variety of ethical student issues.
7. Sponsor debates to help students examine, clarify, and defend their own value system and learn how to disagree with someone else's values and beliefs without rejecting them as persons.
  - campus alcohol policy
  - student government elections
  - national and local ethical/political issues
8. Provide students with an opportunity to decide between conflicting alternatives which forces an examination and testing of values and beliefs.
  - how to allocate limited resources
  - how to select a member for a prestigious honor
  - how to choose a fraternity/sorority for homecoming

This material was taken from:

Dalton, J. (1985). *Promoting Values Development in College Students*. (ed). by J. Dalton). NASPA Monograph Series, Volume 4. pp. 63-72.

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### **Component 3: Choosing Between Moral Values and Other Values**

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Component 3 programs and activities are designed to help students clarify their own values. Activities may include:

- Values clarification exercises
- Role plays
- Discussion groups
- Role modeling

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### **Component 4: Executing and Implementing a Plan of Action**

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Component 4 programs and activities are designed to help students make and implement decisions. Activities may include:

- Self confidence programs
- Self esteem programs
- Assertiveness training programs

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*"Ethical Decision Making: Developmental Theory and Practice" by Panzl and McMahon, March 1989.*

## Ethical Decision Making Situations for Student Leaders

1. An executive board officer routinely uses the group's supplies and equipment for class assignments.
2. One of the executive board officers is having personal problems and the other officers cover her responsibilities.
3. A Union Board member is student government senator, chair of the homecoming committee and co-chair of the special events committee for Union Board. Because he has more responsibilities, he leaves most of the special events work to the other co-chair.
4. An executive officer uses the group's long distance service to contact a friend at another school concerning a business item and spends 75% of the time on the phone discussing personal matters.
5. A video tape of "Dirty Dancing" is rented by the residence hall to be shown at their weekly movie night. The person in charge of renting the video copies the tape for her own use.
6. A student government programming chair has information that might convince his committee to plan a particular program. He is sure that the program is a poor choice so he does not share the information with the committee.
7. The treasurer borrows money from the group's account to buy her books, leaving an IOU. She does not pay the money back.
8. Another treasurer borrows money from petty cash to go out on Friday evening and pays it back on Monday.
9. A Greek chapter has just implemented a new alcohol policy that forbids minors to consume alcohol. That weekend, the chapter president sees his best friend drinking at an exchange. He knows his friend is a minor but does nothing.
10. A Greek chapter that has been accused of dirty rushing is found responsible. One of the rush counselors knows that they have dirty rushed a number of times but in this particular instance they are not responsible. She has information that would clear them but she say nothing.

## Ethical Issues for Student Leaders to Discuss Using Rest's 4 Component Model

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- Academic Failure/Deficiency
- Alcohol Policy
- Big Brother Programs
- Constitution/Bylaw Reviews
- Date/Acquaintance/Gang Rape
- Eating Disorders
- Finances-How to Spend Group \$
- Hazing
- Initiation Activities
- Little Sister Programs
- Pledge Period/Sneaks
- Raids
- Rush
- Social Functions
- Substance Abuse
- Theft in the Chapters/Residence Halls
- "Traditions" within the Greek/Hall system



## Ethical Myths

Cannon, H., & Brown, R. (1985). Applied Ethics in Student Services. New Direction for Student Services, no 30. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

1. **Personal ethical perfection (or near perfection) is a prerequisite to any serious ethical inquiry.** "Pursuit of professional ethical concerns does not reflect self-righteous posturing but rather serves to acknowledge personal fallibility and a desire to achieve a higher level of ethical functioning."
2. **Ethics are just value judgements and one person's values are just as good as another's.** "The institutions that we serve and our professional commitments require adherence to these and other transcendent ethical values (discovery of truth, maintaining an open forum, worth and dignity of the individual, etc.) Some values are better than others."
3. **It is my first amendment right!** "There is a valid and critical difference between sloganeering and legitimate assertion of a constitutional right."
4. **Value clarification workshops are the answer if we want to improve professional ethical practices.** "This claim is probably not true. We surely need to be clear on what our values are, but if they fall short of necessary professional standards, we still have a problem."
5. **The answers to ethical dilemmas lie in our ethical code.** "Codes are helpful but they cannot address or anticipate every conceivable real-life dilemma."
6. **Dealing with ethical violations is the job of our ethic committee.** "One begins with the assumption-usually inaccurate-that the offending party does not intend to offend. The necessary conclusion is that we should call the cop (or our ethic committee) only after our own attempt to address the matter has proved ineffective."
7. **People are either ethical or they are not. It is as simple as that.** "This claim is not very likely to be true. Even the best tend to be self-serving if left wholly to their own devices...(To) the extent that we are surrounded by caring friends who share our concern for high ethical standards, we increase the chances that our attention will be directed to those instances when we fall short."
8. **A thoughtful and conscientious professional knows when he or she commits an ethical violation.** "Ethical decision making is so complex that no one of us acting alone is likely to envision all the ethical implications of a particular aspect of our behavior. We need a little help from our friends."
9. **Ethics are all very fine but one also has to be practical.** ""Being ethical is itself a very practical pursuit. Individuals, enterprises and institutions that place a high premium on respecting autonomy, avoiding the doing of harm, benefiting others, being just, and being faithful establish a degree of credibility with others that tends to earn loyalty, trust and respect in return."
10. **If people would just follow the ethical codes of their professions, life would be a lot less complicated.** "This statement is both true and false. First, all the student services ethical codes put together still add up to a lower operational standard than most professionals are willing to accept. Second, it is unlikely that there would be consistent agreement on what a given provision of a given code means in daily practice."

# Ten Commandments of Executive Integrity

Kerr, S. (1988). Integrity in Effective Leadership. In S. Srivastva and Associates (Eds.). Executive Integrity: The Search for High Human Values in Organizational Life. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass:

## 1. Tell the truth.

"Communicate fully, honestly and openly. Give reasons and justifications for decisions reached and actions taken. Absent full and honest communications, people cannot exercise their fundamental right of free consent."

## 2. Obey the Law.

## 3. Reduce ambiguity.

"Clarify organizational values and priorities and individual rights and obligations."

## 4. Show concern for others.

"Obey the golden rule, which means treating people as you would have them treat you. Be faithful to the concept of universality, which suggests that artificial rank and status differentials should be minimized. Be faithful to both the principle of utilitarianism, requiring those actions that bring the greatest good for the greatest number, and to the principle that all people have certain fundamental rights that cannot be denied."

## 5. Accept responsibility for the growth and nurturing of subordinates.

"Respect people's unique characteristics. Allow organization members to function as distinct, whole entities. Adhere to the most basic canon of medical ethics: *Primum non nocere* (above all, do no harm)."

## 6. Practice participation not paternalism.

"This suggest not only giving reasons and justification for decisions but also communicating these decisions to subordinates before they become binding and irreversible."

## 7. Provide freedom from corrupting influences.

"It is necessary to protect organization members not only from overt demands that they unethically, but also from culture and reward systems that subtly discourage integrity. Respect people's right to freedom of conscience."

## 8. Always act.

"When you have the resources to act integriously, or when someone requires your help, integrity requires that you take action."

## 9. Provide consistency across cases.

"If one person's problem is handled in a certain manner, all people with that problem should be treated in the same way."

## 10. Provide consistency between values and actions, between theories espoused and theories-in-use. "To act otherwise is to be a hypocrite."

Note: It is important to note that "Those elements pertaining to the more cognitive elements of ethics and integrity often seem attainable only at the cost of jeopardizing the more affective elements:

### Cognitive Elements

Obey the law  
Tell the truth  
Provide consistency across cases  
Reduce ambiguity  
Act when you have authority

### Affective Elements

Match values to actions  
Nurture subordinates, do no harm  
Show concern for people  
Respect people's freedom of conscience  
Practice participation

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