Part I

Laying an Ethical Foundation

1

Ethical Perspectives

CHAPTER PREVIEW

Ethical theories are critical to personal and collective ethical practice. We will employ them repeatedly throughout the remainder of this text. Ethical perspectives help us identify and define problems, force us to think systematically, encourage us to view issues from many different vantage points, and provide us with decision-making guidelines. In this chapter, I'll introduce six widely used ethical approaches. I'll briefly summarize each perspective and then offer an evaluation based on the theory's advantages and disadvantages.

Resist the temptation to choose your favorite approach and ignore the rest. Use a variety of theories when possible. Applying all six approaches to the same problem

(practicing ethical pluralism) is a good way to generate new insights about the issue. You can discover the value of ethical pluralism by using each theory to analyze Case Studies 1.2 and 1.3 at the end of the chapter (see Application Project 8). You may find that some perspectives are more suited to these problems than others. Combining insights from more than one theory might help you come up with a better solution. At the very least, drawing from several perspectives should give you more confidence in your choice and better prepare you to defend your conclusions.

Utilitarianism: Do the Greatest Good for the Greatest Number

Many people weigh the advantages and disadvantages of alternatives when making significant decisions. They create mental balance sheets listing the pluses and minuses of each course of action. When it's a particularly important choice, such as deciding which job offer to accept or where to earn a graduate degree, they may commit their lists to paper to make it easier to identify the relative merits of their options.

Utilitarianism is based on the premise that our ethical choices, like other types of decisions, should be based on their outcomes.[1] It is the best-known example of *consequentialism*, a branch of moral philosophy that argues that the rightness or wrongness of an action is dependent on its consequences. The goal is to maximize the good effects or outcomes of decisions. English philosophers and reformers Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832) and John Stuart Mill (1806–1873) believed that the best decisions (1) generate the most benefits relative to their disadvantages, and (2) benefit the largest number of people. In other words, utilitarianism is attempting to do the greatest good for the greatest number of people. *Utility* can be defined as what is best in a specific case (act utilitarianism) or as what is generally preferred in most contexts (rule utilitarianism). We can decide, for example, that telling a specific lie is justified in one situation (to protect a trade secret) but, as a general rule, believe that lying is wrong because it causes more harm than good.

Utilitarians consider both short- and long-term consequences when making ethical determinations. If the immediate benefits of a decision don't outweigh its possible future costs, this alternative is rejected. However, if the immediate good is sure, and the future good is uncertain, decision makers generally select the option that produces the short-term benefit. Utilitarians are also more concerned about the ratio of harm to benefit than the absolute amount of happiness or unhappiness produced by a choice. In other words, a decision that produces a great amount of good but an equal amount of harm would be rejected in favor of an alternative that produces a moderate amount of good at very little cost. Further, the utilitarian decision maker keeps her or his own interests in mind but gives them no more weight than anyone else's.

Making a choice according to utilitarian principles is a three-step process. First, identify all the possible courses of action. Second, estimate the direct as well as the indirect costs and benefits for each option. Finally, select the alternative that produces the greatest amount of good based on the cost-benefit ratios generated in step two.

Government officials frequently follow this process when deciding whether to impose or loosen regulations. Take decisions about regulating genetically modified foods (GMOs), for example. The benefits of GMOs include increasing the food supply (thus helping to reduce world hunger), improving quality and taste, making crops more disease resistant, and reducing the need for pesticides and herbicides. Costs include introducing allergens and toxins, increased human resistance to antibiotics, lower nutrient content, and creation of herbicide-resistant "super weeds." After balancing the costs and benefits, the United States has approved the use of genetically modified food without labeling (60–70% of processed foods in U.S. grocery stores have genetically modified ingredients). The European Union, on the other hand, largely bans their use, arguing that the risks to human health and the environment are too great.[2]

Evaluation

Few could argue with the ultimate goal of utilitarianism, which is to promote human welfare by maximizing benefits to as many people as possible. We're used to weighing the outcomes of all types of decisions, and the utilitarian decision-making rule covers every conceivable type of choice, which makes it a popular approach to moral reasoning. Utilitarian calculations typically drive public policy decisions, such as where to set speed limits. In fact, Bentham and Mills introduced utilitarianism to provide a rational basis for making political, administrative, and judicial choices, which they felt previously had been based on feelings and irrational prejudices. They campaigned for legal and political reforms, including the creation of a more humane penal system and more rights for women. Utilitarian reasoning is also applied in emergency situations, such as in the wake of earthquakes and tsunamis. In the midst of such widespread devastation, many medical personnel believe they ought to give top priority to those who are most likely to survive. They argue it does little good to spend time with a terminal patient while a person who would benefit from treatment dies.

Despite its popularity, utilitarianism suffers from serious deficiencies, starting with defining and measuring "the greatest good."[3] Economists define utility in monetary terms and use such measures as the gross national product to determine the greatest benefit. But the theory's originators, Bentham and Mills, define the greatest good as the total amount of happiness or pleasure, abstract concepts that are hard to quantify. Sometimes identifying possible consequences can be difficult or impossible as well. Many different groups may be affected, unforeseen consequences may develop, and so on. Even when consequences are clear, evaluating their relative merits can be challenging. Being objective is difficult because we humans tend to downplay long-term risks in favor of immediate rewards and to favor ourselves when making decisions. Due to the difficulty of identifying and evaluating potential costs and benefits, utilitarian decision makers may reach different conclusions when faced with the same dilemma, as Case Study 1.1 illustrates. Not all medical experts agree on how to prioritize patients for medical treatment in emergency situations because the sickest patients might survive. During Hurricane Katrina, for instance, medical personnel at

one New Orleans hospital were accused of mislabeling patients as "Do not resuscitate" or terminal. As the hospital was emptied, a doctor and two nurses then allegedly engaged in mercy killing by injecting these DNR patients an overdose of morphine.[4]

Ironically, one of the greatest strengths of utilitarian theory—its concern for collective human welfare—is also one of its greatest weaknesses. In focusing on what's best for the group as a whole, utilitarianism discounts the worth of the individual. The needs of the person are subjugated to the needs of the group or organization. This type of reasoning can justify all kinds of abuse. For example, a number of lawsuits accuse Wal-Mart of cheating individual employees out of their wages and overtime pay to cut labor costs for the greater good of the company.[5] Then, too, by focusing solely on consequences, utilitarianism seems to say that the ends justify the means. Most of us are convinced that there are certain principles—justice, freedom, integrity—that should never be violated.

CASE STUDY 1.1

Free Tilly?

Tilikum ("Tilly" for short) may be the most valuable animal in the world. For decades the 12,000-pound male orca has starred in water shows at SeaWorld Orlando. He's thrilled hundreds of thousands of spectators by splashing audiences during the big finale. He is also SeaWorld's oldest, largest, breeding male killer whale. Many of his offspring are the leading attractions at SeaWorld's other theme parks, helping to draw over 24 million visitors a year. Thirteen of SeaWorld's 19 captive-bred orcas are related to Tilly.

Unfortunately, Tilikum is really a "killer" whale. In 1991 he and two female whales drowned a trainer at a Canadian aquarium. In 1999 he ripped apart a homeless man who entered his pool at SeaWorld and carried the victim's body around on his back. In 2010, he pulled his trainer, Dawn Brancheau, into his pool following a show. There he treated her like a toy—battering her, shaking her, and pushing her around with his nose. Brancheau died of blunt force trauma injuries and her left arm was completely torn off.

The Orca Project, the Humane Society of the United States, and other animal activist groups blame Tilly's attacks on his captivity, noting that orcas never harm people in the wild. Researchers report that orcas (which are really dolphins, not whales) are highly intelligent, social animals that live their entire lives in tightly knit family groups called pods. Unlike males of other species that leave their families when reaching adolescence, bull orcas rarely stray far from their mothers. Pods can travel 75–100 miles a day.

In captivity, young killer whales are frequently separated from their families and many orca mothers reject their babies. The whales spend their lives in small steel or concrete lined pools with very little stimulation, which contributes to such behaviors as banging against pool walls, biting on metal gates, and attacking other whales. Commenting on the sensory deprivation of captive orcas, one whale expert noted, "Humans who are

subjected to those same conditions become mentally disturbed."[1] The life spans of captives are dramatically shorter than their wild counterparts.

Tilly experienced a particularly traumatic childhood. He was captured off of the coast of Iceland and then was transported to a small theme park in Canada to live with two females (who are dominant in orca society). They routinely attacked him, raking his skin with their teeth and pushing him around. Their performance pool was open to a marina so the whales were exposed to motor noise as well as oil and sewage pumped from boats. The trio spent their nights in the dark in a pool barely large enough to contain them. When the aquarium closed, Tilikum and his colleagues were sold to SeaWorld for $2.7 million.

Animal activists are lobbying to free Tilly and to end captive orca programs. An Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OHSA) ruling following Brancheau's death gave their efforts a boost. OHSA declared that SeaWorld trainers cannot enter the water with the whales and must be separated from them by physical barriers. *Blackfish*, a documentary film, increased public pressure to end captivity by telling the story of Tilly and other captive orcas. Like the 1990s Free Willy campaign, which returned the killer whale Keiko to the wild, the "Free Tilly" movement hopes to retire the big male to a protected ocean cove.

Those who hope to free Tilly and his fellow orca performers face a formidable opponent in SeaWorld (which recently became publicly traded after being controlled by the Blackstone private equity group). The company's 11 theme parks generate $1.4 billion in revenue a year and many visitors come to see the whales. As evidence of its political clout, SeaWorld was granted an exemption to the Marine Mammal Protection Act that prohibits the capture of marine animals in U.S. waters. Company officials are quick to blame trainer error whenever whales become aggressive toward humans.

SeaWorld executives argue that the benefits of keeping whales in captivity far outweigh the costs. They claim that the whales receive excellent medical treatment and aren't exposed to the dangers of ocean pollution and disease. They point to important information that has been gleaned from the study of their orcas. For example, park zoologists learned that the gestation period for baby orcas is 17 months, not 12 months as previously believed. The company funds conservation and research grants and has an active animal rescue program. Officials claim that SeaWorld customers walk away with a greater appreciation for sea life and a greater commitment to preserving the oceans. According to a SeaWorld spokesperson, "All the animals at SeaWorld allow people a really rare privilege to come into contact with these extraordinary animals and learn something about them and maybe when they leave SeaWorld they carry that respect forward into their lives. Tilikum is a really important part of that."[2]

Eighteen months after Dawn's death, Tilikum rejoined the SeaWorld Orlando whale shows. In a prepared statement, company officials claimed that his participation was "an important component of his physical, social and mental enrichment."[3] SeaWorld continues to fight the OHSA ruling that forbids its trainers from entering the water with the orcas. In a court brief, a lawyer for the company argued that the park operator "brings

(Continued)

(Continued)

profound educational benefit."[4] However, as SeaWorld battled in the courts, it ran afoul of OHSA a second time. Trainers stayed out of the water as ordered but came into contact with whales on slide out areas. OHSA then fined the company for a "repeat violation," saying that it operated a workplace with "recognized hazards that were causing or likely to cause death or serious harm to employees."

Discussion Probes

1. Have you ever visited a SeaWorld park? What were your impressions of the facility and the animals on display?
2. Do you think that SeaWorld provides a "profound educational benefit"?
3. Do you think SeaWorld would be as profitable if it didn't have captive orcas?
4. Do you think Tilikum should be allowed to participate in shows? Is the risk to humans too great?
5. Should SeaWorld trainers be allowed back into the water with orcas?
6. Do the benefits of keeping whales and dolphins in captivity outweigh the costs to the animals and risks to humans?
7. Would you "free Tilly"? Why or why not?

Notes

1. Zimmerman (2010, July 30).
2. Kirby (2012), p. 406.
3. Batt (2013, August 1).
4. Kirby (2013, June 10). Additional sources for this section are Cave (2010, February 26), p. A12. Oteyza and Cowperthwaite (2013). Scott (2012, December 27). Zimmerman (2013, July 19).

Kant's Categorical Imperative: Do What's Right Despite the Consequences

Like the utilitarians, German philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) developed a simple set of rules that could be applied to every type of ethical decision. However, he reached a very different conclusion about what those principles should be. Kant argued that moral duties or imperatives are *categorical*—they should be obeyed without exception. Individuals should do what is morally right no matter what the consequences are.[6] His approach to moral reasoning falls under the category of deontological ethics.

Deontological ethicists argue that we ought to make choices based on our duty to follow universal truths, which we sense intuitively or identify through reason (*deon* is the Greek word for "duty"). Moral acts arise out of our will or intention to follow our duty, not in response to circumstances. Based on this criterion, an electric utility that is forced into reducing its rates is not acting morally; a utility that lowers its rates to help its customers is.

According to Kant, "what is right for one is right for all." We need to ask ourselves if the principle we are following is one that we could logically conclude should be made into a universal law. Based on this reasoning, certain behaviors, like honoring our commitments and being kind, are always right. Other acts, like cheating and murder, are always wrong. Kant cited borrowing money that we never intend to repay as one behavior that violates what he called the *categorical imperative.* If enough people made such false promises, the banking industry would break down because lenders would refuse to provide funds.[7] That's what happened during the recent collapse of the U.S. housing market. A number of borrowers never intended to pay their home loans back, which helped generate a wave of foreclosures. Home loans then became much harder to get. Deliberate idleness is another violation of Kant's principle, because no one would exercise his or her talents in a culture where everyone sought to rest and enjoy themselves.

Kant also argued for the importance of "treating humanity as an end," or respect for persons, which has become one of the foundational principles of Western moral philosophy. Others can help us reach our objectives, but they should never be considered solely as a means to an end. We should, instead, respect and encourage the capacity of others to choose for themselves. It is wrong, under this standard, for companies to expose manufacturing workers to hazardous chemicals without their consent or knowledge. Managers shouldn't coerce or threaten employees, because such tactics violate freedom of choice. Coworkers who refuse to help one another are behaving unethically because ignoring the needs of others limits their options.

Respect for persons underlies the notion of moral rights. Fundamental moral or human rights are granted to individuals based solely on their status as persons. Such rights protect the inherent dignity of every individual regardless of culture or social or economic background. Rights violations are unethical because they are disrespectful and deny human value and potential. The rights to life, free speech, and religious affiliation are universal (always available to everyone everywhere), equal (no one has a greater right to free speech than anyone else, for instance), and cannot be given up or taken away.[8] (I provide one list of universal human rights in Chapter 13.)

Evaluation

Kant's imperative is a simple yet powerful ethical tool. Not only is the principle easy to remember, but making sure that we conform to a universal standard should also prevent a number of ethical miscues. Emphasis on duty builds moral courage. Those driven by the conviction that certain behaviors are either right or wrong no matter

what the situation are more likely to blow the whistle on unethical behavior (see Chapter 8), to resist group pressure to compromise personal ethical standards, to follow through on their choices, and so on. Recognizing that people are intrinsically valuable is another significant ethical principle. This standard encourages us to protect the rights of employees, to act courteously, to demonstrate concern for others, and to share information. At the same time, it condemns deceptive and coercive tactics.

Critiques of Kant's system of reasoning often center on his assertion that there are universal principles that should be followed in every situation. In almost every case, we can think of exceptions. For instance, many of us agree that killing is wrong yet support capital punishment for serial murderers. We value our privacy but routinely provide confidential information to secure car loans and to order products online. Then, too, how do we account for those who honestly believe they are doing the right thing even when they are engaged in evil? "Consistent Nazis" were convinced that killing Jews was morally right. They wanted their fellow Germans to engage in this behavior; they did what they perceived to be their duty.

Conflicting duties also pose a challenge to deontological thinking. Complex ethical dilemmas often involve competing obligations. For example, we should be loyal both to our bosses and to our coworkers. Yet being loyal to a supervisor may mean breaking loyalty with peers, such as when a supervisor asks us to reveal the source of a complaint when we've promised to keep the identity of that coworker secret. How do we determine which duty has priority? Kant's imperative offers little guidance in such situations.

Rawls's Justice as Fairness: Balancing Freedom and Equality

Limited organizational resources make conflicts inevitable. There are never enough jobs, raises, corner offices, travel funds, laptop computers, iPads, and other benefits to go around. As a result, disputes arise over how to distribute these goods. Departments battle over the relative size of their budgets, for example, and employees compete for performance bonuses, promotions, and job titles. Participants in these conflicts often complain that they have been the victims of discrimination or favoritism.

Over the last third of the 20th century, Harvard philosopher John Rawls developed a set of guidelines for justly resolving disputes like these that involve the distribution of resources.[9] His principles are designed to foster cooperation in democracies. In democratic societies, all citizens are free and equal before the law. However, at the same time, citizens are unequal because they vary in status, economic standing, talents, and abilities. Rawls's standards honor individual freedom—the foundation of democratic cultures—but also encourage more equitable distribution of societal benefits. Rawls offered a political theory focused on the underlying structure of society as a whole. Nevertheless, I hope to demonstrate that his principles also apply to organizations and institutions that function within this societal framework.

Rawls rejected the use of utilitarian principles to allocate resources. He believed that individuals have rights that should never be violated no matter what the outcome.

In addition, he asserted that seeking the greatest good for the greatest number can seriously disadvantage particular groups and individuals. This can be seen in decisions to outsource goods and services to independent contractors. Outsourcing reduces costs and helps firms stay competitive. Remaining employees enjoy greater job security, but some employees lose their jobs to outsiders.

As an alternative to basing decisions on cost-benefit ratios, Rawls argued that we should follow these two principles of justice:[10]

> ***Principle 1:*** Each person has an equal right to the same basic liberties that are compatible with similar liberties for all.
>
> ***Principle 2:*** Social and economic inequalities are to satisfy two conditions: (a) they are to be attached to offices and positions open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity, and (b) they are to be to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged members of society.

The first principle, the *principle of equal liberty,* has priority. It states that certain rights are protected and must be equally applied to all. These liberties include the right to vote, freedom of speech and thought, freedom to own personal property, and freedom from arbitrary arrest. Invading employee privacy and pressuring managers to contribute to particular political candidates would be unethical according to this standard. So would failing to honor contracts, since such behavior would reduce our freedom to enter into agreements for fear of being defrauded.

Principle 2a, the *equal opportunity principle,* asserts that everyone should have the same chance to qualify for offices and jobs. Job discrimination based on race, gender, or ethnic origin is forbidden. Further, all citizens ought to have access to the training and education needed to prepare for these positions. Principle 2b, the *difference principle,* recognizes that inequalities exist but that priority should be given to meeting the needs of the disadvantaged.

Rawls introduced the concept of the *veil of ignorance* to support his claim that these principles should guide decision making in democratic societies like Great Britain, the United States, and Canada. Imagine, he said, a group of people who are asked to come up with a set of guidelines that will govern their interactions. Group members are ignorant of their own characteristics or societal position—they may be privileged or poor, employed or unemployed, healthy or sick, and so on. Faced with such uncertainty, these individuals will likely base their choices on the *maximin rule.* This rule states that the best option is the one whose worst outcome is better than the worst outcomes of all the other options. Or, to put it another way, the best choice is the one that guarantees everyone a minimum level of benefits.

Rawls argued that individuals standing behind the veil of ignorance would adopt his moral guidelines because they would ensure the best outcomes even in the worst of circumstances. Citizens would select (1) equal liberty, because they would be guaranteed freedom even if they occupied the lowest rungs of society; (2) equal opportunity, because if they turned out to be the most talented societal members, they would

not be held back by low social standing or lack of opportunity; and (3) the difference principle, because they would want to be sure they were cared for if they ended up disadvantaged.

Evaluation

Rawls became one of the most influential philosophers of his time because he offered a way to reconcile the long-standing tension between individual freedom and social justice. His system for distributing resources and benefits encompasses personal liberty as well as the common good. Individual rights are protected. Moreover, talented, skilled, or fortunate people are free to pursue their goals, but the fruits of their labor must also benefit their less fortunate neighbors. Applying Rawls's principles would have a significant positive impact on the moral behavior of organizations. High achievers would continue to be rewarded for their efforts, but not, as is too often the case, at the expense of their coworkers. All of an organization's members (including those, for example, employed in low-income jobs in the fast food industry) would be guaranteed a minimum level of benefits, such as a living wage and health insurance. Everyone would have equal opportunity for training, promotion, and advancement. The growing gap in compensation between the top and bottom layers of the organization would shrink.

Rawls's theory addresses some of the weaknesses of utilitarianism outlined earlier. In his system, individuals have intrinsic value and are not to be treated as means to some greater end. Certain rights should always be protected. The interests of the organization as a whole do not justify extreme harm to particular groups and individuals.

Stepping behind a veil of ignorance does more than provide a justification for Rawls's model; it can also serve as a useful technique to use when making moral choices. Status and power differences are an integral part of organizational life. Nonetheless, if we can set these inequities aside temporarily, we are likely to make more just decisions. The least advantaged usually benefit when status differences are excluded from the decision-making process. We need to ask ourselves if we are treating everyone fairly or if we are being unduly influenced by someone's position or relationship to us. Classical orchestras provide one example of how factoring out differences can improve the lot of marginalized groups. Orchestras began to hire a much higher percentage of female musicians after they erected screens that prevented judges from seeing the gender of players during auditions.[11]

Rawls's influence has not spared his theory from intense criticism. Skeptics note that the theory's abstractness limits its usefulness. Rawls offered only broad guidelines, which can be interpreted in a number of different ways. Definitions of justice and fairness vary widely, a fact that undermines the usefulness of his principles. What seems fair to one group or individual often appears grossly unjust to others. Take, for example, programs that reserve a certain percentage of federal contracts for minority contractors. Giving preferential treatment to minorities can be defended based on the equal opportunity and difference principles. Members of these groups claim that they

should be favored in the bidding process to redress past discrimination and to achieve equal footing with Whites. On the other hand, such policies can be seen as impinging upon the equal liberty principle because they limit the freedom of Caucasians to pursue their goals. White contractors feel that these requirements unfairly restrict their options. They are denied the opportunity to compete for work based on the criteria of quality and cost.

By trying to reconcile the tension between liberty and equality, Rawls left himself open to attack from advocates of both values. Some complain that he would distribute too much to the have-nots; others believe that his concern for liberty means that he wouldn't give enough. Further, philosophers point out that there is no guarantee that parties who step behind the veil of ignorance would come up with the same set of principles as Rawls. They might not use the maximin rule to guide their decisions. Rather than emphasize fairness, these individuals might decide to emphasize certain rights. Libertarians, for instance, hold that freedom from coercion is the most important human right. Every individual should be able to produce and sell as he or she chooses, regardless of the impact of his or her business on the poor. Capitalist theorists believe that benefits should be distributed based on the contributions each person makes to the group. They argue that helping out the less advantaged rewards laziness while discouraging productive people from doing their best. Because decision makers may reach different conclusions behind the veil, critics contend that Rawls's guidelines lack moral force, that other approaches to distributing resources are just as valid as the notion of fairness.

Aristotelian Ethics: Live Well

Aristotle (384–322 BC) would appear on any list of the most influential thinkers in history. Here are just some of the topics he wrote about: logic, philosophy, ethics, zoology, biology, chemistry, astronomy, botany, language, rhetoric, psychology, the arts, and politics. One biographer summed up his achievements this way: "He bestrode antiquity like an intellectual colossus. No man before him had contributed so much to learning. No Man [woman] could hope to rival his achievements."[12] A student of Plato, Aristotle founded a school for young scholars (the Lyceum) in Athens and served as an adviser to Alexander the Great. His surviving works are not in polished book form but consist of collections of lectures and teaching notes.

Bentham, Mills, Kant, Rawls, and most other moral philosophers argue that we make the right choices by following rules or principles. Not so Aristotle. He contends that we will make ethical decisions if we develop character traits or virtues.[13] These virtues are both intellectual (prudence and wisdom that give us insight) and moral (e.g. courage, generosity, justice, wisdom). To make ethical determinations, virtuous people find the mean or middle ground between the extremes of too little (deficit) or too much (excess) in a given context, which some refer to as the "Golden Mean." For instance, the entrepreneur who refuses to invest in any project, fearing loss, is cowardly. But the overoptimistic entrepreneur who ignores risks is foolish. The courageous entrepreneur

recognizes the risks but invests when appropriate. Aristotle admits that finding this balance is difficult:

> Hence also it is no easy task to be good. For in everything it is no easy task to find the middle . . . anyone can get angry—that is easy—or give or spend money; but to do this to the right person, to the right extent, at the right time, with the right aim, and in the right way, *that* is not for everyone, nor is it easy; that is why goodness is both rare and laudable and noble.[14]

According to Aristotle, we cannot separate character from action: "Men [and women] become builders by building, and lyre-players by playing the lyre, so too we become just by doing just acts, temperate by doing temperate acts, brave by doing brave acts."[15] Good habits are voluntary routines or practices designed to foster virtuous behavior. Every time we engage in a habit—telling the truth, giving credit to others, giving to the less fortunate—it leaves a trace. Over time, these residual effects become part of our personality, and the habit becomes "second nature." In other words, by doing better, we become better. We also become more skilled in demonstrating the virtue. Practicing self-restraint, for instance, improves the ability to demonstrate self-restraint under pressure. (We'll have more to say about character building habits in the next chapter.) Conversely, practicing bad habits encourages the development of vices that stunt character development. Lying once makes it easier to lie again, helping to undermine our integrity.

For Aristotle, the exercise of virtues is designed to serve a higher purpose. To describe this purpose he uses the term *eudemonia*, which has been variously translated as "happiness," "success," and "flourishing." Eudemonia is the ultimate goal in life for which we strive through our actions and choices. We are happiest when living well—effectively using our abilities to achieve our purpose. Aristotle rejects the notion that happiness comes from pleasure (food, wine, entertainment) and is critical of those who pursue wealth solely to purchase these items. In fact, fixating on pleasure puts us at the level of animals. It is our ability to reason and to apply reason to higher goals that sets us apart from other creatures. Aristotle urges us to focus more on goods of the soul that include the mind (knowledge, contemplation) as well as our relationships with others (love, friendship). Because people are social or political in nature, we flourish when working together in community. Good (high character) individuals create a good society.

Evaluation

Aristotle's enduring popularity can be traced, in large part, to the fact that he addresses some of humankind's most important concerns: What is my purpose in life? What is success? What does it mean to be human? What kind of person do I want to become, and how can I become that person? How can I live my life in the most satisfying manner possible? Modern scholars are still wrestling with these timeless questions. Happiness remains an important topic of investigation, for example, with researchers

and organizations dedicated to determining what makes people satisfied with their lives. (Complete Self-Assessment 1.1 to assess your happiness level.) Aristotle's emphasis on the goods of the soul is more relevant than ever in modern materialistic societies that equate wealth with success and are driven by consumer spending on clothing, automobiles, cars, cosmetics, fine dining, and other pleasures. Aristotle contends that flourishing or living well doesn't rest on external goods (though he agreed that we need some of these) but on developing high character and working with others to create a healthy society. He seems to take direct aim at businesspeople who excuse immoral behavior by saying "business is business" and care only about generating profits. Business ethicist Robert Solomon summarizes Aristotle's message to businesspeople this way:

> The bottom line of the Aristotelian approach to business ethics is that we have to get away from "bottom line" thinking and conceive of business as an essential part of the good life, living well, getting along with others, having a sense of self-respect, and being part of something one can be proud of.[16]

Virtue ethicists who follow Aristotle's lead recognize that ethical decisions are often made under time pressures in uncertain conditions.[17] Individuals in these situations don't have time to apply rules based approaches by weighing possible consequences or selecting an abstract guideline to apply. Instead they respond based on their character. Those with virtuous character will immediately react in ways that benefit themselves, others, and the greater good. They will quickly turn down bribes, reach out to help others, and so on. Character is shaped through repeated actions or habits. Patterns of behavior (good or bad) tend to continue over time and are hard to break.

Those looking for specific guidance from Aristotle will be disappointed. He only offers general thoughts about what it means to "live well," leaving us to define happiness for ourselves. Since Aristotle provides no rules to follow when making ethical choices, we must determine what is right based on our character. Further complicating matters is the fact that the exercise of virtue is determined by the specifics of the situation. Finding the middle ground or mean is difficult (as Aristotle himself points out) and varies between contexts. Individuals will likely disagree as to the correct course of action. What is courageous to one person may appear rash to another.

Aristotle privileges reason as humankind's highest achievement and treats emotion with suspicion. As we'll see in Chapter 3, modern researchers are discovering that feelings play an important role in making wise ethical choices. Finally, it should be noted that some people would never be able to live well according to Aristotle. Some individuals lack reasoning ability, for example. Others (like many around the world who live on a dollar a day) must put all their efforts into acquiring external goods like food, shelter, and water. They have little time and energy to engage their minds in the reflection and contemplation Aristotle considered so essential to eudemonia.

SELF-ASSESSMENT 1.1

Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS)

Instructions

For each of the following statements and/or questions, please circle the point on the scale that you feel is most appropriate in describing you.

1. In general, I consider myself:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not a very happy person						A very happy person

2. Compared to most of my peers, I consider myself:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Less happy						More happy

3. Some people are generally very happy. They enjoy life regardless of what is going on, getting the most out of everything. To what extent does this characterization describe you?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all						A great deal

4. Some people are generally not very happy. Although they are not depressed, they never seem as happy as they might be. To what extend does this characterization describe you?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all						A great deal

Scoring

Reverse your score on item 4 and add up the items. Total scores can range from 4 to 28. The higher the score, the greater your level of general happiness or subjective well-being.

SOURCE: Lyubomirsky, S., & Lepper, H. S. (1999). A measure of subjective happiness: Preliminary reliability and construct validation. *Social Indicators Research, 46*, 137–155. Used by permission.

Confucianism: Building Healthy Relationships

China's emergence as an economic superpower has focused the attention of Western scholars on Chinese culture and thought. Ethicists have been particularly interested in Confucianism. Confucius (551–479 B.C.E.), the son of a low-level official, was born into a turbulent period of Chinese history. Wars, palace coups, and power struggles were common as the ruling Zhou dynasty collapsed into competing states. Confucius wanted to restore order and good government. He believed that the ideal society is based on a series of harmonious, hierarchical relationships (starting in the family and extending all the way up to the pinnacle of government) marked by trust and mutual concern. Ideal citizens are individuals of high character who engage in lifelong learning and always strive to improve their ethical performance. Ideal leaders govern by setting a moral example.[18]

Confucius apparently served a brief period as a government minister but spent most of his life working outside the political system, offering his ideas to various rulers. After his death, a number of his disciples, most notably Mencius, spread his ideas; Confucianism gained a foothold in Korea, Japan, and Vietnam. The philosophy's most important guidebook, *The Analects,* is a collection of the founder's (Master's) sayings. Confucianism was adopted as the official state doctrine of the Han dynasty, but throughout Chinese history Confucian thought has undergone periodic attack, most recently during Mao's Cultural Revolution of the 1970s. However, since that time Confucius has regained his popularity. Some 300 Confucius institutes have been formed in 87 countries. Several highly successful businesses in mainland China, Taiwan, and Korea operate according to Confucian principles, including apparel maker Weizhan Group, Sinyi Real Estate, financial services conglomerate Pin An Insurance, and electronics giant LG.[19]

Several key components of Confucianism are particularly relevant for modern business and organizational ethics, starting with the philosophy's emphasis on relationships.[20] Confucius argued that humans don't exist in isolation but are social creatures connected to others through networks of relationships. Because organizations consist of webs of relationships, it is critical that these connections be based on trust and benefit all parties. Organizations must also establish relationships with other organizations, as in the case of a firm that moves into a new foreign market. This company must enter into agreements with shippers, suppliers, local distributors, banks, and other business partners in the new country. The firm's expansion plans will fail if its relational partners don't live up to their responsibilities.

Confucianism emphasizes that policies, norms, procedures, and rituals—referred to as etiquette, or *li*—maintain relationships within and between organizations. These practices also prevent ethical misbehavior. It is easier to trust others if we operate under the same guidelines, and we are less likely to cheat or steal if there are clearly stated rules against such activities. (We'll take a closer look at the formal and informal elements of ethical culture in Chapter 10.) However, Confucius was quick to point out that rules and codes are not enough, by themselves, to maintain good relationships and ethical behavior. Individuals have a moral duty to take their roles

and duties seriously. They should follow the Golden Rule ("Do not do to others what you do not want them to do to you") in all of their dealings.

Confucius, like Aristotle, puts a high priority on personal virtues or character.[21] That's because virtuous behavior is essential to maintaining healthy relationships and fulfilling organizational duties. The most important Confucian virtue is that of humaneness or benevolence. Benevolence goes beyond displaying compassion. It also means treating others with respect and promoting their development through education and other means. In addition to benevolence, the key virtues of Confucianism are honesty, trust, kindness, and tolerance. Virtuous people put the needs of others above their own. They seek the good of the organization as a whole and of the larger society. Consider profit taking, for instance. While they do not condemn profit, Confucian thinkers argue that profit should never take precedence over moral behavior or concern for others. The ideal person strives first for virtue, then for profits. In instructing the king, Mencius emphasized that commercial activities should serve the needs of society:

> Your majesty . . . What is the point of mentioning the word 'profit'? All that matters is that there should be benevolence and rightness . . . If the mulberry is planted in every homestead, then those who are fifty can wear silk; if chickens, pigs and dogs do not miss their breeding season, then those who are seventy can eat meat; if each field is not deprived of labor during the busy season then families with several mouths to feed will not go hungry . . . When those who are seventy wear silk and eat meat and the masses are neither cold nor hungry, it is impossible for the prince not to be a true king. (Mencius I, 3, I, A, 1, 1, A, 3)[22]

Finally, Confucians recognize the reality of status and power differences in society as well as in organizations. Individuals occupy various roles and levels in the organizational hierarchy, and humaneness demands that we treat every person, whatever his or her role or position, with love and concern. At the same time, Confucius recognized the important role played by those at the top of the hierarchy. Executive-level management plays a key role in establishing moral organizational climates by setting an ethical example and expecting ethical behavior from followers. For example,[23]

> The Master said, 'When a prince's personal conduct is correct, his government is effective without issuing orders. If his personal conduct is not correct, he may issue orders, but they will not be followed. (*Analects,* XIII, vi)

> The Master said, 'The superior man seeks to perfect the admirable qualities of men, and does not *seek to* perfect their bad qualities.' (*Analects,* XII, xvi)

Evaluation

Confucianism highlights the fundamental truth that organizations, economies, and societies are built on relationships. As the global economy grows, fostering ethical relationships will become even more important. People who never meet each other in

person now conduct much of the world's business. Confucius offers a blueprint for fostering trusting, healthy relationships that we can put into practice. We need to institute rules and procedures that create ethical organizational climates. As Ethics in Action 1.1 illustrates, etiquette still has an important role to play in a technological society. However, codes and policies are not enough. We have to develop personal character to equip us to take our duties seriously and follow the Golden Rule. Every person, no matter what that individual's status, is worthy of our respect and should be treated as we would want to be treated. Putting the interests of others ahead of our own concerns can keep us from taking advantage of them or pursuing profit above people. Confucian thought also recognizes that the leader shapes the ethical climate of the organization by setting a moral example.

The strengths of Confucianism can become weaknesses if taken too far.[24] Take the philosophy's emphasis on social connections, for example. Placing too much importance on relationships can undermine justice or fairness. Jobs and promotion in China often go to family members, friends, and associates instead of the most qualified individuals. In China, *guanxi,* which is the practice of favoring those with social connections, has led to corruption. Local and foreign firms try to establish *guanxi* through bribes to win public works contracts, commercial deals, and bank loans. Placing too much emphasis on hierarchy and submission to the collective good can foster authoritarian leadership where leaders impose their will and employees have little freedom but blindly submit to authority. Critics also point out that pursuing harmony at any cost can suppress individual rights and silence dissent. Many Confucian thinkers have been reluctant to endorse the existence of universal human rights like those described earlier.[25]

ETHICS IN ACTION 1.1 FACEBOOK ETIQUETTE

Blogger Brett McKay notes that etiquette has not kept pace with technology. He hopes to help encourage manners on Facebook by offering these friendly reminders:

Use discretion when wall posting. Don't use the Facebook wall for lengthy conversations but for brief notes. Don't post anything personal on other's walls as these are public spaces.

Take it easy on the application invites. Most of your friends don't want to be invited to participate in games.

Use appropriate language when writing on someone else's wall. Don't use off-color comments and check for spelling and grammatical errors. Consider the kind of impression you want to make.

Keep photos of yourself to a minimum. Avoid pictures of yourself by yourself. Posting lots of these is a mark of vanity.

Do not break up with a person through Facebook. Only a jerk would use the relationship status feature to break up with someone. Be mature—meet them face-to-face to tell them your relationship has ended.

(Continued)

(Continued)

Remove compromising photos of yourself. Try to avoid these kinds of pictures in the first place. But if one shows up, ask the poster to take it down (or the tag of you at a minimum).

Join Facebook fan pages with discretion. Be careful which pages you join (this reveals a lot about you). Also, don't join lots of pages.

Avoid "oversharing" in your status update. Beware of information overload. Post updates that others might care about, not personal grooming habits or pet peeves. Be careful not to post items that could get you in trouble with friends, employers, family members (like your mom), or other people.

Don't "friend" someone you don't know or hardly know. Be sure to only include those who really are friends, not just contacts. Ignore strangers who try to befriend you.

Respond to people's Facebook wall posts and messages. Reply if you can within twenty-four hours. When overwhelmed with Facebook messages, let others know to contact you some other way, like e-mail.

Default rule: Apply the same courtesy, respect, and decorum you would in real life. The same guidelines you would use in face-to-face encounters (treating them with courtesy and respect) apply in on-line communities as well.

SOURCE: McKay, B. (2014). Facebook etiquette: 11 dos and don'ts. Retrieved from http://information-of-technology.blogspot.com/2011/06/facebook-etiquette-11-dos-and-don.html.

Altruism: Concern for Others

Altruism is based on the principle that we should help others regardless of whether or not we profit from doing so.[26] Assisting those in need may be rewarding (we may feel good about ourselves or receive public recognition, for example). Nevertheless, altruistic behavior seeks to benefit the other person, not the self. The most notable cases of altruism are those that involve significant self-sacrifice, as when a soldier jumps on a grenade to save the rest of his platoon or when an employee donates a kidney to another worker in need of a transplant. The word *altruism* comes from the Latin root *alter,* which means "other." Advocates of altruism argue that love of one's neighbor is the ultimate ethical standard.

Some philosophers argue that altruism doesn't deserve to be treated as a separate ethical perspective, because altruistic behavior is promoted in other moral theories. Utilitarians seek the good of others, Kant urges us to treat others with respect, and Confucius identified compassion as a key element in maintaining proper social relations. However, I believe that altruism deserves to be considered on its own merits and demerits. To begin with, altruism often calls for self-sacrificial behavior, which utilitarianism and the categorical imperative do not. Kant warns us never to treat people as a means to an end. Altruism goes a step further and urges us to treat people as if they *are* the ends. Then, too, there is significant debate over the existence of prosocial behavior. One group of evolutionary biologists believes that humans are conduits of "selfish genes."[27] For instance, they believe that anything we do on behalf of family members is

motivated by the desire to transmit our genetic code. Some skeptical philosophers argue that people are egoists. Every act, no matter how altruistic on the surface, always serves our needs, such as helping others because we expect to get paid back at some later time.

In response to the skeptics, a growing of body of research in sociology, political science, economics, social psychology—and other fields—establishes that true altruism does exist and is an integral part of the human experience.[28] In fact, altruistic behavior is common in everyday life:

> We humans spend much of our time and energy helping others. We stay up all night to comfort a friend who has suffered a broken relationship. We send money to rescue famine victims halfway round the world, or to save whales, or to support public television. We spend millions of hours per week helping as volunteers in hospitals, nursing homes, AIDS hospices, fire departments, rescue squads, shelters, halfway houses, peer-counseling programs and the like. We stop on a busy highway to help a stranded motorist change a flat tire, or spend an hour in the cold to push a friend's—even a stranger's—car out of a snowdrift.[29]

Care for others appears to be a universal value, one promoted by religions the world over. Representatives from a variety of religious groups agree that every person deserves humane treatment, no matter what his or her ethnic background, language, skin color, political beliefs, or social standing.[30] Western thought has been greatly influenced by the altruistic emphasis of Judaism and Christianity. The command to love God and to love others as we love ourselves is the most important obligation in Judeo-Christian ethics. Since humans are made in the image of God, and God is love, we have an obligation to love others no matter who they are and no matter what their relationship to us. Jesus drove home this point in the parable of the Good Samaritan. In this tale, a generous businessman stops (at great risk to himself and his reputation) to befriend a wounded Jewish traveler—a person he could have considered his enemy.

Concern for others promotes healthy relationships like those described by Confucius. Society functions more effectively when individuals help one another in their daily interactions. This is particularly apparent in organizations. Many productive management practices, like empowerment, mentoring, and teambuilding, have an altruistic component. Researchers use the term *organizational citizenship behavior* to describe routine altruistic acts that increase productivity and build trusting relationships.[31] Examples of organizational citizenship behavior include an experienced machine operator helping a newcomer master the equipment, a professor teaching a class for a colleague on jury duty, and an administrative assistant working over break to help a coworker meet a deadline. Such acts play an important if underrecognized role in organizational success. Much less work would get done if members refused to help out. Take the case of the new machine operator. Without guidance, he or she may flounder for weeks, producing a number of defective parts and slowing the production process. Caring behaviors also break down barriers of antagonism between individuals and departments. Communication and coordination increase, leading to better overall results. You can determine your likelihood to engage in organizational citizenship behavior by completing the test in Self-Assessment 1.2.

SELF-ASSESSMENT 1.2

Organizational Citizenship Behavior Scale

Instructions

Take the following test to determine your willingness to engage in altruistic behavior in the work setting. First respond to each item on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*never engage in this behavior*) to 5 (*nearly always engage in this behavior*). Reverse the scale where indicated, so that it ranges from 5 (*never engage in this behavior*) to 1 (*nearly always engage in this behavior*). Generate a total by adding up your scores. Maximum possible score: 80.

1. Help other employees with their work when they have been absent.
2. Exhibit punctuality in arriving at work on time in the morning and after lunch and breaks.
3. Volunteer to do things not formally required by the job.
4. Take undeserved work breaks. (Reverse)
5. Take the initiative to orient new employees to the department even though it is not part of the job description.
6. Exhibit attendance at work beyond the norm; for example, take fewer days off than most individuals or fewer than allowed.
7. Help others when their work load increases (assist others until they get over the hurdles).
8. Coast toward the end of the day. (Reverse)
9. Give advance notice if unable to come to work.
10. Spend a great deal of time in personal telephone conversations. (Reverse)
11. Do not take unnecessary time off work.
12. Assist others with their duties.
13. Make innovative suggestions to improve the overall quality of the department.
14. Do not take extra breaks.
15. Willingly attend functions not required by the organization but that help its overall image.
16. Do not spend a great deal of time in idle conversation.

The Ethic of Care

Altruism provides the foundation for the *ethic of care,* which developed as an alternative to what feminists deem the traditional, male-oriented approach to ethics.[32] The categorical imperative and justice-as-fairness theories, for example, emphasize the importance of acting on abstract moral principles, being impartial, and treating others fairly. Carol Gilligan, Nel Noddings, and others initially argued that women take a different approach (a "different voice") to moral decision-making that is based on caring for others. Instead of expressing concern for people in abstract terms, women care for others through their relationships and tailor their responses to the particular needs of the other individual. Subsequent research has revealed that the ethic of care serves as a moral standard for many men as well as for many (but not all) women.[33]

The ethic of care incorporates both attitude and action.[34] Caring individuals are alert to the needs of others. They value those who demonstrate care and concern as well as groups and societies that tend to the needs of their members. Care is also an activity.[35] To practice care, we must first recognize or be attentive to the needs of others. We then have to take responsibility for meeting those needs. Providing good care depends on having the right skills, such as listening, counseling abilities, and medical training. As caregivers, we should recognize that receivers of care are in a vulnerable position, and we must not take advantage of that fact.

Philosopher Virginia Held identifies five key components of the care ethic that separate it from other moral philosophies.[36]

1. *Focuses on the importance of noting and meeting the needs of those we are responsible for.* Most people are dependent for much of their existence, including during childhood, during illness, and near the end of life. Morality built on rights and autonomy overlooks this fact. The ethic of care makes concern for others central to human experience and puts the needs of specific individuals—a child, a coworker—first.

2. *Values emotions.* Sympathy, sensitivity, empathy, and responsiveness are moral emotions that need to be cultivated. This stands in sharp contrast to ethical approaches that urge decision makers to set aside their feelings in order to make rational determinations. However, emotions need to be carefully monitored and evaluated to make sure they are appropriate. For instance, caregivers caught up in empathy can deny their own needs or end up dominating the recipients of their care.

3. *Gives priority to specific needs and relationships over universal principles.* The ethic of care rejects the notion of impartiality and believes that particular relationships are more important than universal moral principles like rights and freedom. For instance, the needs of our immediate coworkers should take precedence over the needs of distant employees or society as a whole (though we should be concerned for members of those groups as well). Most moral theories see ethical problems as conflicts between two extremes: the selfish individual and universal moral principles. The care ethic falls somewhere in between. Persons in caring relationships aren't out to promote

their personal interests or the interests of humanity; instead, they want to foster ethical relationships with specific individuals. These relationships benefit both parties. Family and friendships have great moral value in the ethic of care, and care giving is a critical moral responsibility.

4. *Breaks down the barriers between the public and private spheres.* In the past, men were dominant in the public sphere while relegating women to the "private" sphere. Men largely made decisions about the exercise of political and economic power while women were marginalized. As a result, women were often economically dependent and suffered domestic violence, cut off from outside help. Previous moral theories focused on public life and ignored families and friendships, but the ethic of care addresses the moral issues that arise in the private domain. It recognizes that problems faced in the private sphere, such as inequality and dependency, also arise in the public sphere.

5. *Views persons as both relational and interdependent.* Each of us starts life depending on others, and we depend on our webs of interpersonal relationships throughout our time on Earth. These relationships help create our identity. Unlike liberal political theory, which views persons as rational, self-interested individuals, in the ethic of care individuals are seen as "embedded" in particular families, cultures, and historical periods. Embeddedness means that we need to take responsibility for others, not merely leave them alone to exercise their individual rights.

Adopting the ethic of care would significantly change organizational priorities. Employers would use caring as a selection criterion, hiring those who demonstrate relational understanding and skills.[37] Managers would be evaluated based on how well they demonstrated care and concern for employees. Organizations would help members strike a better balance between work and home responsibilities, provide more generous family leave policies, expand employee assistance programs, and so on. Those directly involved in care giving—assisted-living attendants, nursery school teachers, hospice workers, home health caregivers—would receive more money, recognition, and status. Corporations would devote additional attention to addressing societal problems.

Evaluation

Altruism has much to offer. First, concern for others is a powerful force for good. It drives people to volunteer to care for the dying, to teach prisoners, to act as Big Brothers and Sisters, to provide medical relief, and to answer crisis calls. Every year CNN television honors "ordinary heroes"—those devoted to helping others and the environment.[38] Recent honorees include a disabled veteran who remodels homes for other disabled service people, a doctor who developed a solar energy suitcase to provide reliable power to medical clinics in developing countries, a woman who meets the wishes of foster kids, and an environmentalist devoted to cleaning up U.S. rivers. Second, following the principle of caring helps prevent ethical abuses. We're much less

likely to take advantage of others through accounting fraud, stealing, cheating, and other means if we put their needs first. (We'll return to this theme in our discussion of servant leadership in Chapter 7.) Third, altruistic behavior, as we've seen, promotes healthy relationships and organizations. There are practical benefits to acting in a caring manner.

Fourth, altruism lays the foundation for high moral character. Many personal virtues, like compassion, hospitality, generosity, and empathy, reflect concern for other people. Fifth, adopting an ethic of care would make our workplaces more humane and provide caregivers with the rewards they so richly deserve. Finally, altruism is inspiring. When we hear of the selfless acts of Gandhi, Desmond Tutu, and the Rwandans who risked their lives to save their neighbors from genocide, we are moved to follow their example.

While compelling, altruism suffers from serious deficiencies. All too often, our concern for others extends only to our immediate families, neighbors, or communities.[39] Sadly, well-intentioned attempts to help others can backfire. They fail to meet the need, have unintended negative consequences, or make the problem worse. A large proportion of the money donated to some charities pays for fund-raising expenses rather than for client services. Government agencies can create dependence by providing welfare assistance.

Altruism is not an easy principle to put into practice. For every time we stop to help a stranded motorist, we probably pass by several others who need assistance. Our urge to help out a coworker is often suppressed by our need to get our own work done or to meet a pressing deadline. Common excuses for ignoring needs include the following: (1) Somebody else will do it, so I don't need to help. (2) I didn't know there was a problem (deliberately ignoring a coworker's emotional upset or someone's unfair treatment). (3) I don't have the time or energy. (4) I don't know enough to help. (5) People deserve what they get (disdain for those who need help). (6) It won't matter anyway, because one person can't make much of a difference; and (7) What's in it for me? (looking for personal benefit in every act).[40] There's also disagreement about what constitutes loving behavior. For example, firing someone can be seen as cruel or as caring. This act may appear punitive to outsiders. However, terminating an employee may be in that person's best interests. For someone who is not a good fit for an organization, being fired can open the door to a more productive career.

The ethic of care often conflicts with the ethic of justice. Take the allocation of jobs and resources, for instance. The ethic of care suggests that job openings and organizational funds should go to those closest us to us—family, friends, acquaintances, coworkers. The ethic of justice holds that such determinations should be impartial, based on qualifications, not relationships (see our earlier discussion of Confucianism). Care and justice often clash in the legal system as well. Some advocate that jails should focus on rehabilitation; others (likely the majority) argue that the prison system should focus on punishment, seeing that criminals get the treatment they deserve. Case Study 1.2, "Is This Any Way to Run a Prison?" describes one nation that takes a caring approach to incarceration. You may find this approach unjust to victims and society.

Chapter Takeaways

- Mastering widely used ethical theories greatly enhances your chances of success as an ethical change agent.
- Each ethical perspective has its weaknesses, but each makes a valuable contribution to moral problem solving.
- Whenever possible, apply a variety of ethical approaches when faced with a moral dilemma. Doing so will help you generate new insights into the issue.
- Utilitarian decisions are based on their consequences. The goal is to select the alternative that achieves the greatest good for the greatest number of people. To apply utilitarian principles, identify all the possible courses of action, estimate the direct and indirect costs and benefits of each option, and select the alternative that produces the greatest amount of good based on the cost-benefit analysis. Utilitarian reasoning is common when making ethical choices, but identifying and weighing consequences can be difficult and this approach can disregard the interests of individuals and minority groups.
- Kant's categorical imperative is based on the premise that decision makers should do what's morally right no matter what the consequences. Moral choices flow out of a sense of duty and are those that we would want everyone to make. Always respect the worth of others when making ethical decisions. However, you may determine that there are exceptions to universal standards and that some moral duties may conflict with one another.
- Justice as fairness theory provides a set of guidelines for resolving disputes over the distribution of resources. Ensure that everyone in your organization has certain rights like freedom of speech and thought, has the same chance at positions and promotions, and receives adequate training to qualify for these roles. Everyone should be provided with a minimum level of benefits, and excess benefits should go to the least advantaged organizational members. Try to make decisions without being swayed by personal or status considerations. Recognize, though, that organizational members will have different ideas about what is fair.
- Aristotelian ethics rejects rules-based approaches and urges us to develop virtues that lead to wise moral choices. You'll need to find the middle ground between extremes (not deficiency or excess), and focus your choices and actions on your ultimate purpose, which is happiness or flourishing. Live well by pursuing goods of the soul (development of the mind and relationships with others), not wealth or pleasure. It will be up to you to determine what it means to flourish and how to exercise virtue in a given situation.
- Confucianism focuses on the importance of creating healthy, trusting relationships. You can help build such connections by establishing ethical organizational practices, taking your responsibilities seriously, following the Golden Rule, demonstrating humanity toward others, and seeking the good of others over your own interests. As a leader, set a moral example and expect ethical

behavior from followers. Nevertheless, if taken too far, Confucian principles can lead to nepotism, authoritarianism, silencing dissent, and denying human rights.

- Altruism seeks to benefit the other person, not the self. By making caring for others the ethical standard, you can encourage practices (empowering, mentoring, teambuilding, organizational citizenship behavior) that build trust and increase productivity. Altruism is difficult to practice, however, and it is not always clear what constitutes altruistic behavior.
- The ethic of care specifically rejects abstract, universal moral principles in favor of focusing on meeting the needs of specific individuals. You can encourage your organization to be more caring by hiring and evaluating employees based on their relational attitudes and skills and by promoting caring policies like generous family leave and employee assistance programs. At times you will need to determine what should be given priority: care or justice.

Application Projects

1. Reflect on one of your ethical decisions. Which approach(es) did you use when making your determination? Evaluate the effectiveness of the approach(es) as well as the quality of your choice. What did you learn from this experience?
2. Form a group and develop a list of behaviors that are always right and behaviors that are always wrong. Keep a record of those behaviors that were nominated but rejected by the team and why. Report your final list, as well as your rejected items, to the rest of the class. What do you conclude from this exercise?
3. Join with classmates and imagine that you are behind a veil of ignorance. What principles would you use to govern society and organizations?
4. What does happiness mean to you? How is your education helping you (or not helping you) to flourish and live well?
5. How would your organization operate differently if it were governed by the ethic of care?
6. During a week, make note of all the altruistic behavior you witness in your organization. How would you classify these behaviors? What impact do they have on your organization? How would your organization be different if people didn't engage in organizational citizenship behavior? Write up your findings.
7. Write a case study based on an individual or group you admire for its altruistic motivation. Provide background and outline the lessons we can learn from this person or persons. As an alternative, create a case study on an organization based on Confucian principles.

8. Apply all six ethical perspectives presented in the chapter to one or both of the chapter's case studies. Keep a record of your deliberations and conclusions using each one. Did you reach different solutions based on the theory you used? Were some of the perspectives more useful in this situation? Are you more confident after looking at the problem from a variety of perspectives? Write up your findings.

CASE STUDY 1.2

Is This Any Way to Run a Prison?

Halden prison in Norway has all the amenities you would expect at an expensive resort and then some. Prisoners can take advantage of a sound studio, a climbing wall, jogging trails, a "kitchen laboratory" for cooking classes, and two-bedroom homes for hosting their visiting families. They live in dormitory-style rooms complete with flat-screen televisions and mini-refrigerators. (There are no bars on the cells.) Furnished with stylish furniture and artwork, Halden placed second in an interior design competition, losing only to a spa hotel. At Balstøy, another Norwegian prison, murderers, rapists, and other felons enjoy the beach, horseback riding, and tennis. They also grow organic vegetables and raise their own livestock for food.

The Halden and Balstøy prisons reflect the guiding principles of the Norwegian penal system. National leaders believe that repressive prisons do not work. They operate under the premise that treating inmates with respect and giving them responsibilities reduces the chances that they will end up back in jail. According to the Halden prison governor, "In the Norwegian prison system, there's a focus on human rights and respect. When they [inmates] arrive, many are in bad shape. We want to build them up, give them confidence through education and work and have them leave as better people."[1]

Caring relationships between staff and inmates are essential to carrying out the prison system's mission. At Halden, prison guards (half of them female) don't carry guns, and they routinely eat meals and participate in sports with their charges. They strive to create a sense of family for inmates, who often come from poor home situations. Many staff members choose to work at the prison in order to transform lives. Said one, "Our goal is to give all prisoners—we call them our pupils—a meaningful life inside these walls."[2]

There is evidence that the Norwegian approach is effective. Prison violence is rare and within two years of release, only 20% of Norway's prisoners end up back in prison, compared to 50–60% in the United Kingdom and the United States. Observers point out, however, that the imprisonment rate in Norway, a small, equalitarian, and prosperous country, is much lower than in the United States (69 per 100,000 compared to 753 per 100,000). Norway's total prison population is between 3,000 and 4,000, which makes it much easier to focus on rehabilitation. And the system is expensive. It costs twice as much to house an inmate at Halden than in Great Britain prisons.

Norway's commitment to rehabilitation rather than punishment was sorely tested after Anders Behring Breivik killed 77 of its citizens in 2011. Breivik first set off a series of bombs near government offices in downtown Oslo, killing eight. Then, dressed as a policeman, he went to an island where he systematically hunted down and shot children and adults at a camp. Breivik never repented for his actions and declared that he would kill again if freed. For his crimes he was sentenced to 21 years (an average of four months per victim), but is unlikely to ever be released because judges can add additional five-year extensions to his sentence. He may end up spending some of his days in Halden with access to exercise facilities, computers, classes, and other perks.

While many around the world were offended by what they saw as a lenient sentence, most Norwegians appear comfortable with the court's decision in Breivik's case. They see it as a reflection of their values. "We don't talk much about revenge," said Halden's deputy governor.[3] A survivor of the shooting stated, "If he is deemed not to be dangerous any more after 21 years, then he should be released. That's how it should work. That's staying true to our principles, and the best evidence that he hasn't changed our society."[4]

Norway's prisoners expressed their solidarity with the victims of Breivik's murderous rampage. Inmates at two facilities collected money and sent flowers to Norway's Royal Ministry of Justice and the Police, which had been attacked. According to the Justice minister, "They seemed to feel that it was their ministry that had been bombed." When asked how ministry personnel responded to the prisoners' gifts, he replied, "We cried."[5]

Discussion Probes

1. Is it fair to crime victims (and to society) to treat prisoners so well?
2. Do Norwegian prisons reward criminals for their bad behavior?
3. Should prisons focus on punishment or on rehabilitation?
4. Do you think that the Norwegian prison model is ethical?
5. Was Breivik's sentence too lenient? Should he be released if he is rehabilitated after serving his sentence?
6. Could the Norwegian prison model work in the United States or other countries? Why or why not?

Notes

1. Adams, W. L. (2010, May 10), p. 14.
2. Adams (2010).
3. Nixey (2012, April 16), pp. T4, T5.
4. Lewis and Lyall (2013, August 24).
5. Nixey (2012). Additional sources: Crooks (2011); Fouche (2009, October 19); Gentlemen (2012, June 1), p. 25; Lowe (2012, April 15); Soares (2007, September 4).

CASE STUDY 1.3

The (Accused) Terrorist as Rock Star

Rolling Stone magazine sparked outrage when editors decided to feature accused Boston bombing suspect Dzhokhar Tsarnaev on its August 1, 2013, cover, just a few months after the attack. Critics took issue, not with the cover blurb, which described Tsarnaev as a "monster" and a "bomber," but with his photo. The image—a self-portrait taken from the suspect's Facebook page—is that of a handsome young man who resembles the boy next door, not a cold-blooded killer. Some on social media noted a resemblance between Tsarnaev and rock stars featured on previous *Rolling Stone* covers. One observer described the cover picture "as a photo of Tsarnaev as a doe-eyed, tousle-haired youth, looking softly at the camera with a look of gentle innocence."[1] The feature article profiles Tsarnaev (known as "Jahar" to his friends) in order to explain why a popular, bright student became a Muslim extremist.

Critics accused *Rolling Stone* editors of "glamorizing terrorism" and "romanticizing evil." They worried that the cover picture would prompt wannabe terrorists to follow Jahar's example and further encourage members of the accused bomber's largely female fan club who think he is "cute" and "gorgeous." The cover particularly offended Bostonians. Still traumatized by the explosions, they were particularly concerned about the feelings of victims recovering from their injuries. (One victim refused to talk about the piece, saying she was focused on healing and "will not be giving more to the bombers than they had already taken."[2]) Boston's mayor said that the cover choice was designed to sell magazines and Massachusetts governor Deval Patrick described it as being in poor taste.

Walgreens, CVS Pharmacy, Rite Aid, and Tedeschi Food Shops, a regional New England chain, refused to sell the magazine out of respect for victims and their families Angered by the *Rolling Stone* cover, Massachusetts state trooper Sean Murphy released photographs from the manhunt for Tsarnaev. In one of the photos the bloodied, disheveled fugitive is seen emerging from the parked boat where he was hiding. There is a sniper's red laser dot in the middle of his forehead. According to Sgt. Sean Murphy, "This is the real Boston Bomber. Not someone fluffed and buffed for the cover of *Rolling Stone* magazine."[3] Trooper Murphy was relieved of duty and faced a disciplinary hearing for releasing the pictures without authorization.

For their part, the magazine's editors defended their cover and the article. They noted that, although *Rolling Stone* is known for covering music and entertainment, it routinely carries in-depth journalistic pieces on political and social issues. In a statement, executives pointed out that coverage of the bomber was particularly appropriate for the magazine's young demographic: "The fact that Dzhokhar Tsarnaev is young and in the same age group as many of our readers, makes it all the more important for us to examine the complexities of this issue and gain a more complete understanding of how a tragedy like this happens."[4]

Supporters argue that the magazine did a civic service by challenging preconceived notions of what a killer looks like and by helping readers understand the motives of the

alleged bomber. They point out that the same photograph of Tsarnaev appeared in *The New York Times* and other media outlets but didn't stir up similar controversy. One editorial writer went so far as to suggest that, by refusing to sell the magazine, Walgreens and the other corporations helped the bombers reach one of their goals, which is restricting free speech.[5]

Discussion Probes

1. Do you think the *Rolling Stone* cover photo "glamorized terrorism"? Why or why not?
2. Do you think the editors of *Rolling Stone* were motivated more by the desire to sell magazines than by journalistic considerations?
3. Why did members of the public accept the photo when it appeared in the *New York Times* but take offense when it appeared on the *Rolling Stone* cover?
4. Was it ethical to publish the cover photo? The article? Would it have been morally acceptable to publish the article with a different picture?
5. Did Walgreens, CVS Pharmacy, Rite Aid, and Tedeschi Food shops restrict free speech by refusing to sell the issue?
6. Was the Massachusetts state trooper justified in releasing photos of Tsarnaev's capture? Why or why not? Should he be punished for his actions?

Notes

1. Crelinsten (2013, July 25), p. A23.
2. Henneberger (2013, July 19), p. A02.
3. Farhi (2013, July 19), p. C01.
4. Farhi (2013).
5. Additional sources: Alexander and Sherwell (2013, July 18), p. 15; Bartlett (2013, July 19); Carr (2013, July 20); Goodale (2013, July 17); Reitman (2013, August 1), pp. 46–57; Renzetti (2013, July 20), p. A2; Stern (2013, July 19), p. A011.