

MORAL DILEMMA

The Crying Baby

It's wartime, and you're hiding in a basement with your baby and a group of other people. Enemy soldiers are outside and will be drawn to any sound. If you're found, you will all be killed immediately. Your baby starts to cry loudly and cannot be stopped. Smothering him to death is the only way to silence him and save the lives of everyone in the room. Could you do so? Assume the baby is not yours, the parents are unknown and there will be no penalty for killing him. Could you be the one who smothers this baby if no one else would?

YOUR BABY

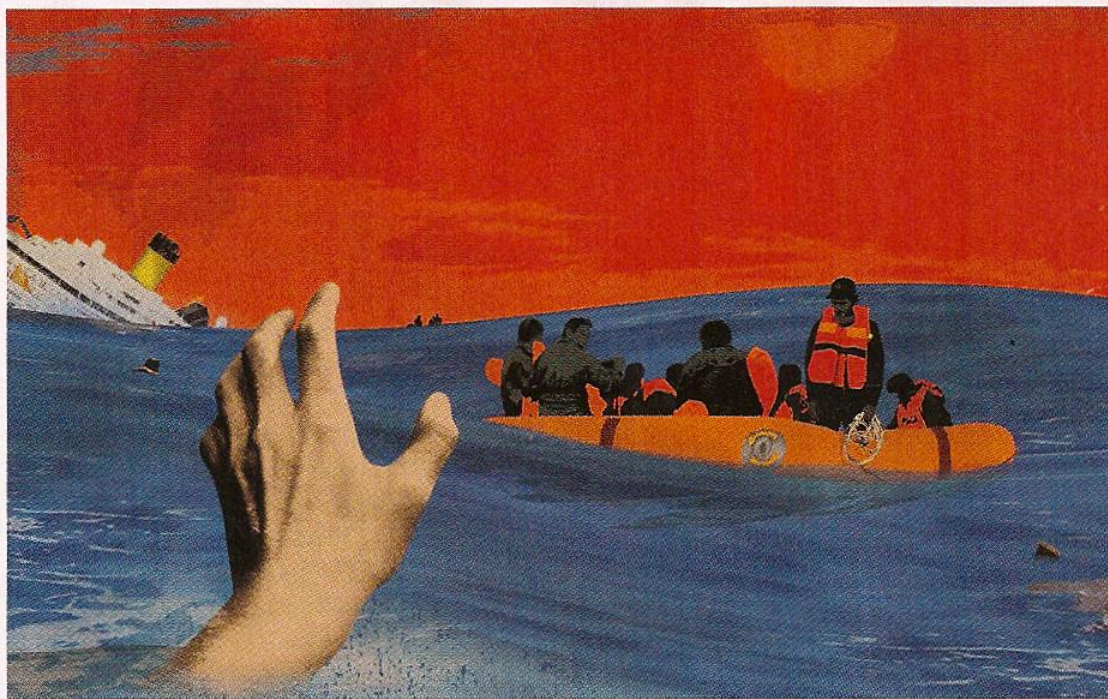
☐ **YES**

☐ **NO**

SOMEONE ELSE'S BABY

☐ **YES**

☐ **NO**



MORAL DILEMMA

The Sinking Lifeboat

You are adrift in a life raft after your cruise ship has sunk. There are too many survivors for the life rafts, and yours is dangerously overloaded. The raft is certain to sink, and even with life vests on, all the passengers are sure to die because of the frigid temperature of the water. One person on the boat is awake and alert but gravely ill and will not survive the journey no matter what. Throwing that person overboard would prevent the raft from sinking. Could you be the one who tosses the person out?

I COULD THROW A SURVIVOR OVERBOARD

☐ YES

☐ NO



MORAL DILEMMA

The Runaway Trolley

A runaway trolley is heading down the tracks toward five workmen who can't be warned in time. You are standing near a switch that would divert the trolley onto a siding, but there is a single unsuspecting workman there. Would you throw the switch, killing one to save five? Suppose the workman was on a bridge with you and you could save the men only by pushing him onto the tracks? (He's large enough to stop the train; you're not.) Suppose you could throw a switch dropping him through a trapdoor—thus not physically pushing him?

DIVERT TRAIN

☐ YES

☐ NO

PUSH MAN

☐ YES

☐ NO

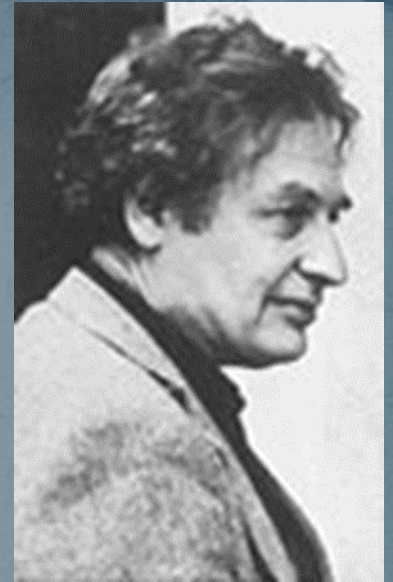
USE TRAPDOOR

☐ YES

☐ NO

Lawrence Kohlberg's Theory of Moral Development

- ▶ Born October 25, 1927 in Bronxville, NY
- ▶ Wealthy, upper class family
- ▶ Educated at the finest prep schools



Postulates:

- ▶ Moral reasoning is the basis for ethical behavior
- ▶ Expanded upon Piaget's theories and stages of development.
- ▶ 6 developmental stages
- ▶ Assumes that people:
 - are capable of reason
 - want to understand others
 - want to understand the world around them
- ▶ States that justice is the goal of moral reasoning

Kohlberg's dilemmas

- Kohlberg tested children by presenting the children with a moral dilemma, and asking them questions to ascertain their understanding of morality.
- The 'yes' / 'no' responses were not the main criteria for placement in a particular stage of moral development.



The **explanation** of why the child holds a certain opinion that reveals how advanced their moral judgments are.

Moral Development

- Kohlberg's Moral Ladder
- Post conventional
- Conventional
- Pre-conventional
- *Ideally people should progress through the 3 stages as part of normal development*



Stage 1:

Obedience and Punishment Orientation

- The child understands rules to be set and given by a higher authority.
- Their main concern is with the consequences, whether the person will be punished or not.

Typically this stages is seen between the ages of 4 and 10.



For example, a stealing is wrong “because you can go to jail for a very long time. Plus you can get in serious trouble” -4th grade girl (age 9)

Stage 2: Individualism and Exchange

- Punishment is no longer ‘evidence’ that something is wrong. Instead, it is “a risk that one naturally wants to avoid” (Crain 160).
- The idea of right and wrong is slightly more flexible, and the first priority is doing what is most beneficial for themselves. “If you won’t tell, I won’t tell.”

For example, “stealing is worse [than cheating] because you are more likely to get in trouble for stealing than cheating”. -6th grade girl (11)



Preconventional

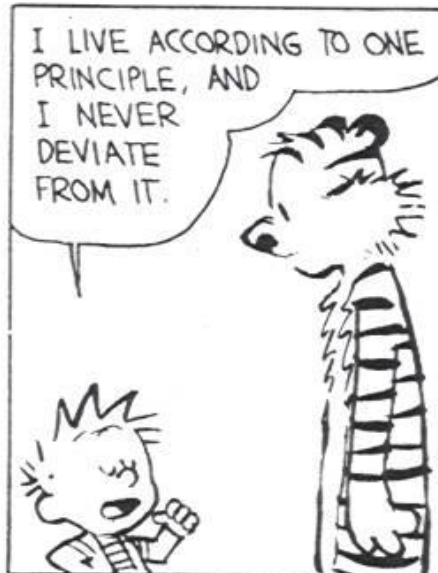
Calvin and Hobbes

by Bill Watterson

A LOT OF PEOPLE DON'T HAVE PRINCIPLES, BUT I DO! I'M A HIGHLY PRINCIPLED PERSON!



I LIVE ACCORDING TO ONE PRINCIPLE, AND I NEVER DEVIATE FROM IT.



WHAT'S YOUR PRINCIPLE?

"LOOK OUT FOR NUMBER ONE."



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Stage 3:

Good Interpersonal Relationships

- Strong desire to win approval from peers and adults.
- Emphasis on avoiding disapproval.
- Kids tend to cite a person's intentions, or motives as proof of right & wrong.



For example, cheating is wrong “because you’re always supposed to do the right thing”. -4th grade girl (age 9)

Stage 4:

Maintaining the Social Order

- Child becomes more concerned with society as a whole, and how the rules are made for a purpose.
- ‘people want to keep society functioning’ (Crain 162)
- Can focus on the effect an action has on society.

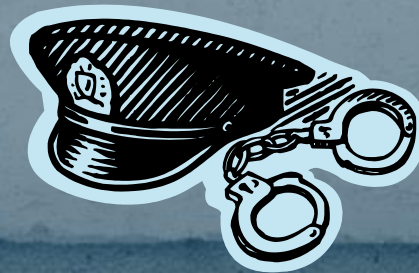
For example, keeping promises is important because “when you promise something, you follow through with it, and hold your end of the bargain”. 6th grade girl (age 12)



Stage 5: Social Contract

- The person is generally entering adolescence at this stage, and they are able to consider 'the big picture' or society as a whole.
- They have respect for the laws not because they are told to, but because it is detrimental to society if they disobey.

For example, stealing is worse than cheating because “you are doing something bad, the cops will chase you could hurt someone in the process” –8th grade boy (age 14)



Stage 6: Universal Principles

- The person considers how the characters in the dilemma can best achieve a just result.
- The person also examines the parameters of the situation to see if they are most likely to promote a good outcome.



For example, when someone is given the Heinz dilemma, they might say that there should be laws forbidding price gauging in pharmacies.

Psychologist Lawrence Kohlberg theorized that a person's moral reasoning (which drives ethical behavior) has six identifiable stages spread across three levels. Each successive stage is superior to the previous stage with regard to responding to moral dilemmas. We illustrate each stage below.

Level 1 (Preconventional Level). Here moral reasoning is closely tied to personal concerns.

Postconventional level

I don't care if it is the law
it's not right and it's not fair!



Stage 1. Obedience and punishment orientation ("How can I avoid punishment?")



Stage 2. Self-interest orientation ("What's in it for me?")



Right or wrong is a function of rewards in this stage, where a "you scratch my back and I'll scratch yours" mentality dominates.

An individual's motivation to behave ethically is driven by the fear of getting caught and punishment.

Level 2 (Conventional Level). Here moral reasoning arises from comparing one's actions with society's expectations.

Conventional level



If you drive too fast,
you will break the law.

Stage 3. Interpersonal accord and harmony



Stage 4. Authority and social order—maintaining orientation



Individuals act with the goal of fulfilling social roles, such as student, parent, and worker.

The desire to maintain a functional society by obeying laws drives behaviors.

Level 3 (Postconventional Level). Here morality is more than simply following social rules or norms.

Preconventional level



I better share
this toy or Mommy
will be mad.

Stage 5. Social contract orientation



Stage 6. Universal ethical principles

Free Tibet



Laws are viewed as social contracts that promote the greatest good for the greatest number of people. Unjust laws and policies must therefore be resisted.

Moral reasoning is based on universal ethical principles such as the "golden rule" that you should treat others as you would want them to treat you.

Why is his theory important?



- ▶ Attempts to explain why we do what we do
- ▶ Gives credit to children as “moral philosophers”
- ▶ Maintains that people can grow and mature morally

THE HEINZ DILEMMA

In Europe a woman was near death from a special kind of cancer. There was one drug that doctors thought might save her. It was a form of radium that a druggist in the same town had recently discovered. The drug was expensive to make, but the druggist was charging ten times what the drug cost to make. He paid \$200 for the radium and charged \$2,000 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 \$1,000, 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'm going to make money on it." So Heinz got desperate and began to think about breaking into the man's store to steal the drug for his wife. Should Heinz steal the drug?

Lawerence Kohlberg's Theory of Moral Development

► Criticisms

- Great deal of overlap
- Cognitive abilities influence moral development
 - See other people's point of view
- Reaching the post-conventional stage is more appropriate for individualistic societies
- Understanding vs. action
- Carol Gilligan - Gender bias (girls are taught empathy, while boys are taught justice)

Carol Gilligan

- Argued Kohlberg's theory was biased toward men.
- It was based upon interviews with white males.
- Men show a morality of justice
- Women reason based on a "morality of care"
 - Stage 1 - care for one's own survival
 - Stage 2 - care for others
 - Stage 3 - care for integrity (self and others)
- Gilligan believed the difference was based upon cultural conditioning. Men's focus was traditionally on the workplace, women's on the family. *Will this change?*

The Porcupine and the Moles

- Seeking refuge from the cold, a porcupine asked to share a cave for the winter with a family of moles. The moles agreed. But because the cave was small, they soon found they were being scratched each time the porcupine moved about. Finally, they asked the porcupine to leave. But the porcupine refused, saying, "If you moles are not satisfied with the situation, I suggest that you leave."
- How would you resolve this dilemma?

- Dilemma:

Two young men, brothers, had got into serious trouble. They are secretly leaving town in a hurry and needed money. Karl, the older one, broke into a store and stole a thousand dollars. Bob, the younger one, went to a retired old man who was known to help people in town. He told the man that he was very sick and that he needed a thousand dollars to pay for an operation. Bob asked the old man to lend him the money and promised that he would pay him back when he recovered. Really Bob wasn't sick at all, and he had no intention of paying the man back. Although the old man didn't know Bob very well, he lent him the money. So Bob and Karl skipped town, each with a thousand dollars.