

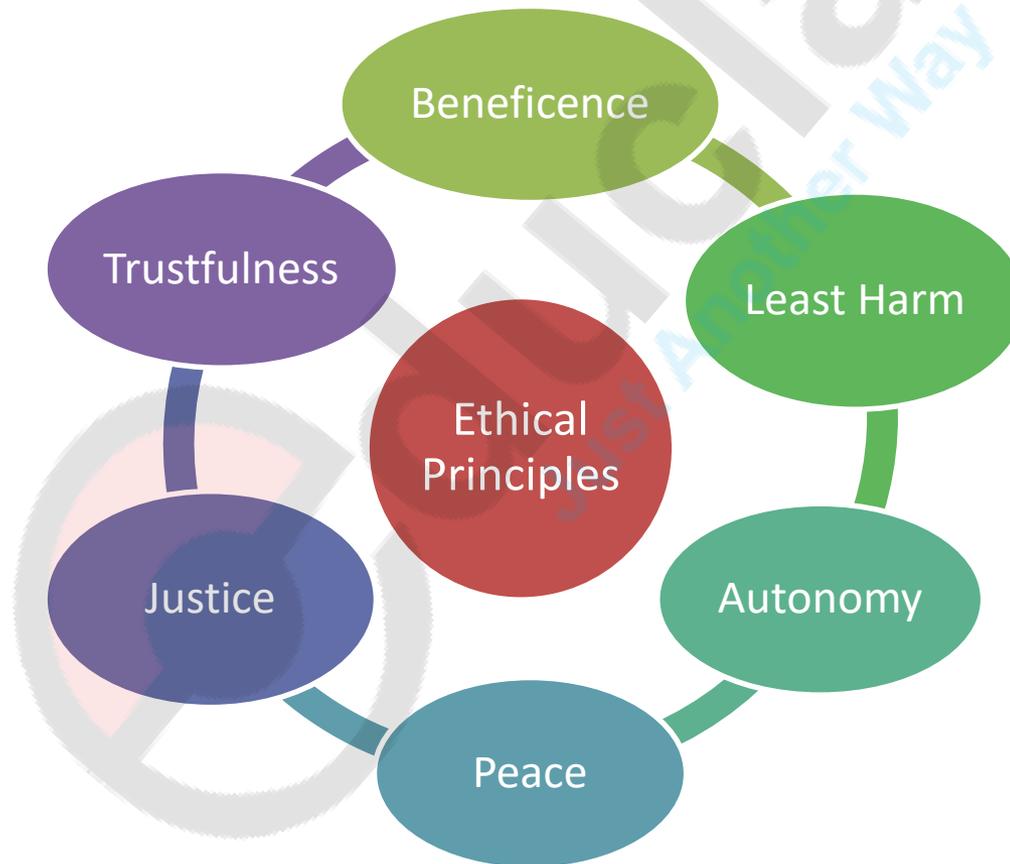
Ethical Principles and Theories



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Ethics, as defined in chapter 1, is a branch of philosophy dealing with concepts of right and wrong and good or bad actions or behavior etc. In this chapter we discuss moral development and ethical theories briefly ,both general and professional ethics.

Basic Ethical Principles :



- **Beneficence** : doing good to others
- **Least harm** :- our actions should not harm others.
- **Autonomy** : we need to respect autonomy of others. We should not impose our views on others. Every individual knows what is good and bad for himself/herself.
- **Non-violence/Peace**: this principle is relevant today . Violence has been pervaded in all sections of society today. The principle says shun violence and not to support those who resort it.
- **Justice**: our actions must be fair to everyone concerned.
- **Truthfulness**: quality of telling, adhering to ,or upholding truth .This is universally accepted principle. It leads to trustworthiness ,honesty and other values.

Moral Development Theories

Moral development theories are concerned with the development of moral principles in humans. Since, at very young age a child develops some moral perception of what is right and what is wrong.

- Why does it happen ?
- Do parents have a role to play in such behavior ?
- What role does education play in this?

Moral development theories try to answer such questions.

There is a body of knowledge that can be used to effectively implement some basic moral education in youth. Major work of some of the researches on this issued is discussed here.

- Piaget's theory
- Kohlberg's theory
- Elliot Turiel's Theory
- Gilligan's theory

Piaget's theory

Jean Piaget (1896-1980)

- First psychologist to study moral development in children.
- his theory is less known than other psychologist.
- How ever his work inspired other researchers to contribute in the area.
- He developed some ideas about moral development from his interactions with children by discussing the rules of games played with marbles.
- Also, ideas like unethical acts such as telling lies, stealing etc
- He formed a hypothesis that people develop knowledge and ideas of morality from constantly interacting with the environment around them.
- In early stages, children blindly follow the rules set by elders or authority –heteronomous stage where children believe in the absolute and intrinsic nature of rule.
- As they advance in age, they develop the idea that rules can be changed and a fair rule is one that is accepted by all.

Heteronomy arises from egocentrism and social relationship with adults. Piaget's theory is essentially a two stage theory that applies to children of two age groups- 6 years old (morality of constraint) and 12 years old (morality of cooperation)

Morality of constraint:

It is characterized by following features:

Point of view: the child has single, absolute, moral perspective.

Rules: the child sees the rules as sacred and unchangeable or 'carved on stones'

Intention: the child is under the impression that the extent of guilt is determined by the amount of damage done by an act and not by the motivation behind the action.

Punishment: he/she expects severe punishment in case of wrong doing. He/she feels that punishment itself defines the wrongness of the act. An act is perceived to be bad if it leads to punishment.

Respect for authority: the child thinks that the peer aggression must be punished by an external authority. The external authority is normally a parent. The child has tendency to run to one of the parent for protection or justice.

Concept of Justice: the child thinks he should obey the laws because they are established by authority- mother,father,teacher.

Physical accident or misfortune that occurs after a mistake or misdeed is a punishment wiled by God or some supernatural power.



Morality of cooperation:

It is characterized by following features:

Point of view: the child is aware of the differing view points regarding rules. They put themselves in place of others.

Rules: they understand that rules are made by people and can be altered by people. Consider themselves just as capable of changing rules as anyone else.

Intention: the child judges actions by intentions and not by consequences. He/she knows that wrongdoers intention will be considered while evaluating guilt.

Punishment : he/she expects mild punishment in case of wrong doing. He/she feels that punishment must compensate the victim and help the culprit recognize why the act is wrong ,this leading to reform.

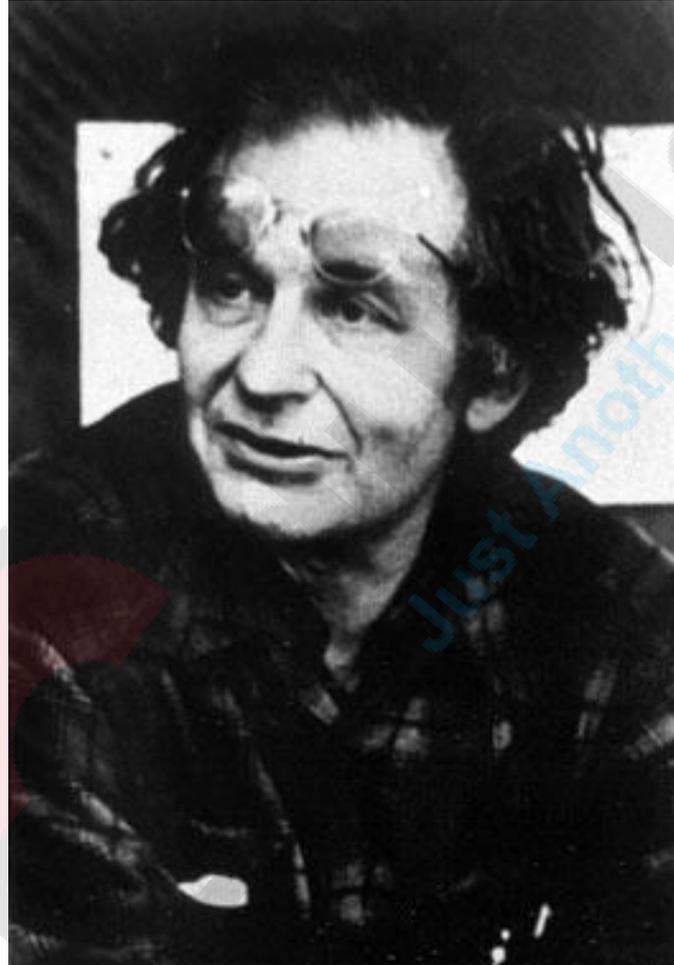
Respect for authority: children should obey rules because of mutual concern for the rights of others.

Concept of Justice: the child does not confuse natural misfortune with punishment.

The conclusion of the theory was to help in moral education in schools lay emphasis on problem solving, ensure co-operative decision making and guide students in working out common rules based on fairness.

Piaget's view was that a teacher has to perform a difficult task of not imposing values on children but letting them acquire such values by their own experiences. The educator must provide students with opportunity for personal discovery through problem solving rather than indoctrinating students with norms.

KOHLBERG'S SIX STAGES OF MORAL DEVELOPMENT

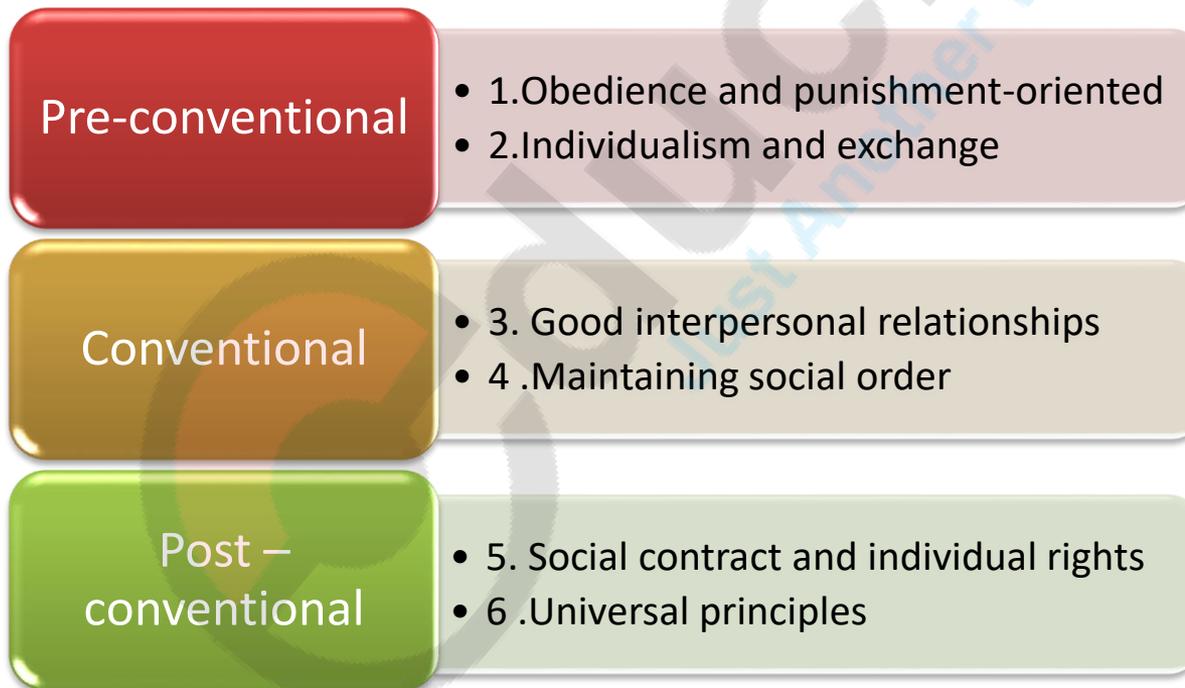


Kohlberg's theory

Lawrence Kohlberg (1969) did extensive research to modify and extend Piaget's work. He suggested that children, in general, form different ways of thinking through their experiences, which include comprehending moral concepts such as justice, rights, equality and human welfare.

He classifies moral reasoning

In 6 stages grouped under 3 major levels:



Level 1. Preconventional Morality

- **Stage 1. Obedience and Punishment Orientation.** Kohlberg's stage 1 is similar to Piaget's first stage of moral thought. The child assumes that powerful authorities hand down a fixed set of rules which he or she must unquestioningly obey.

Stage 1. Obedience and Punishment Orientation.

- The View is "It's against the law," or "It's bad to steal," as if this were all there were to it. When asked to elaborate, the child usually responds in terms of the consequences involved, explaining that stealing is bad "because you'll get punished."

Stage 2. Individualism and Exchange.

- This stage children recognize that there is not just one right view that is handed down by the authorities. Different individuals have different viewpoints.
- At stage 1 punishment is tied up in the child's mind with wrongness; punishment "proves" that disobedience is wrong. At stage 2, in contrast, punishment is simply a risk that one naturally wants to avoid.

Level II. Conventional Morality

- **Stage 3. Good Interpersonal Relationships.** At this stage children--who are by now usually entering their teens--see morality as more than simple deals. They believe that people should live up to the expectations of the family and community and behave in "good" ways. Good behavior means having good motives and interpersonal feelings such as love, empathy, trust, and concern for others.



Stage 4. Maintaining the Social Order.

- Stage 3 reasoning works best in two-person relationships with family members or close friends, where one can make a real effort to get to know the other's feelings and needs and try to help. At stage 4, in contrast, the respondent becomes more broadly concerned with *society as a whole*. Now the emphasis is on obeying laws, respecting authority, and performing one's duties so that the social order is maintained.

Maintaining the Social Order.



Level III. Postconventional Morality

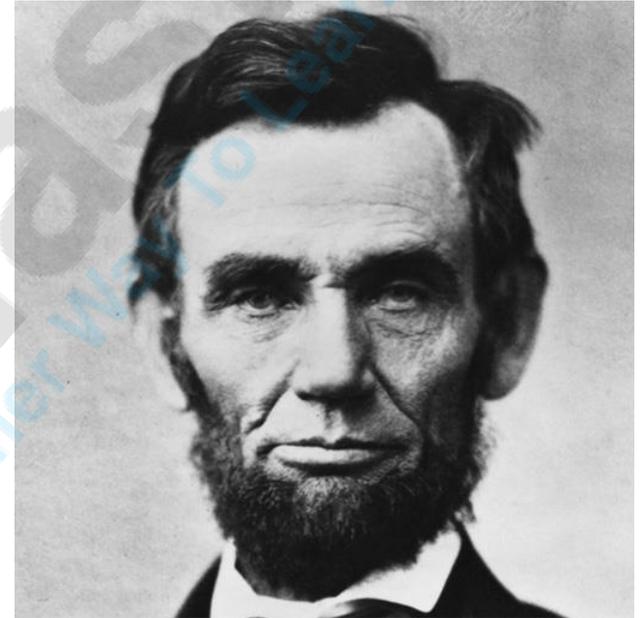
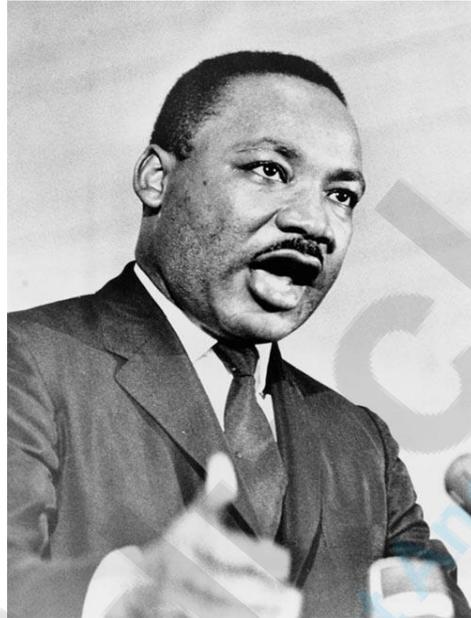
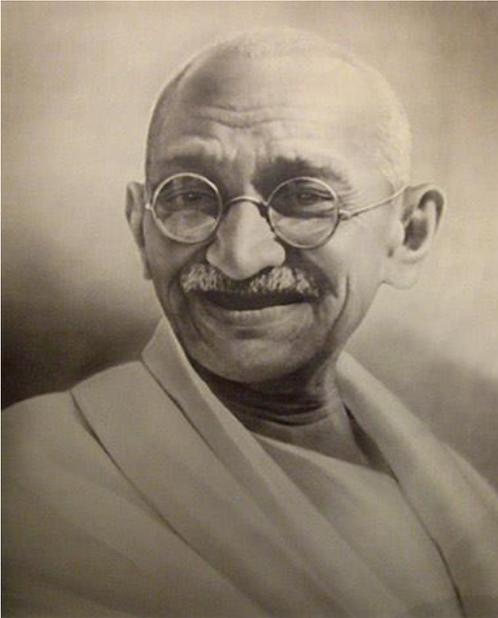
- **Stage 5. Social Contract and Individual Rights.** At stage 5, people begin to ask, "What makes for a good society?" They begin to think about society in a very theoretical way, stepping back from their own society and considering the rights and values that a society ought to uphold. They then evaluate existing societies in terms of these prior considerations. They are said to take a "prior-to-society" perspective.



Stage 6: Universal Principles.

- Kohlberg believes that there must be a higher stage--stage 6--which defines the principles by which we achieve justice. Kohlberg's conception of justice follows that of the philosophers Kant and Rawls, as well as great moral leaders such as Gandhi and Martin Luther King. According to these people, the principles of justice require us to treat the claims of all parties in an impartial manner, respecting the basic dignity, of all people as individuals. The principles of justice are therefore universal; they apply to all. Thus, for example, we would not vote for a law that aids some people but hurts others. The principles of justice guide us toward decisions based on an equal respect for all.

Universal Principles.



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Kohlberg: Summary

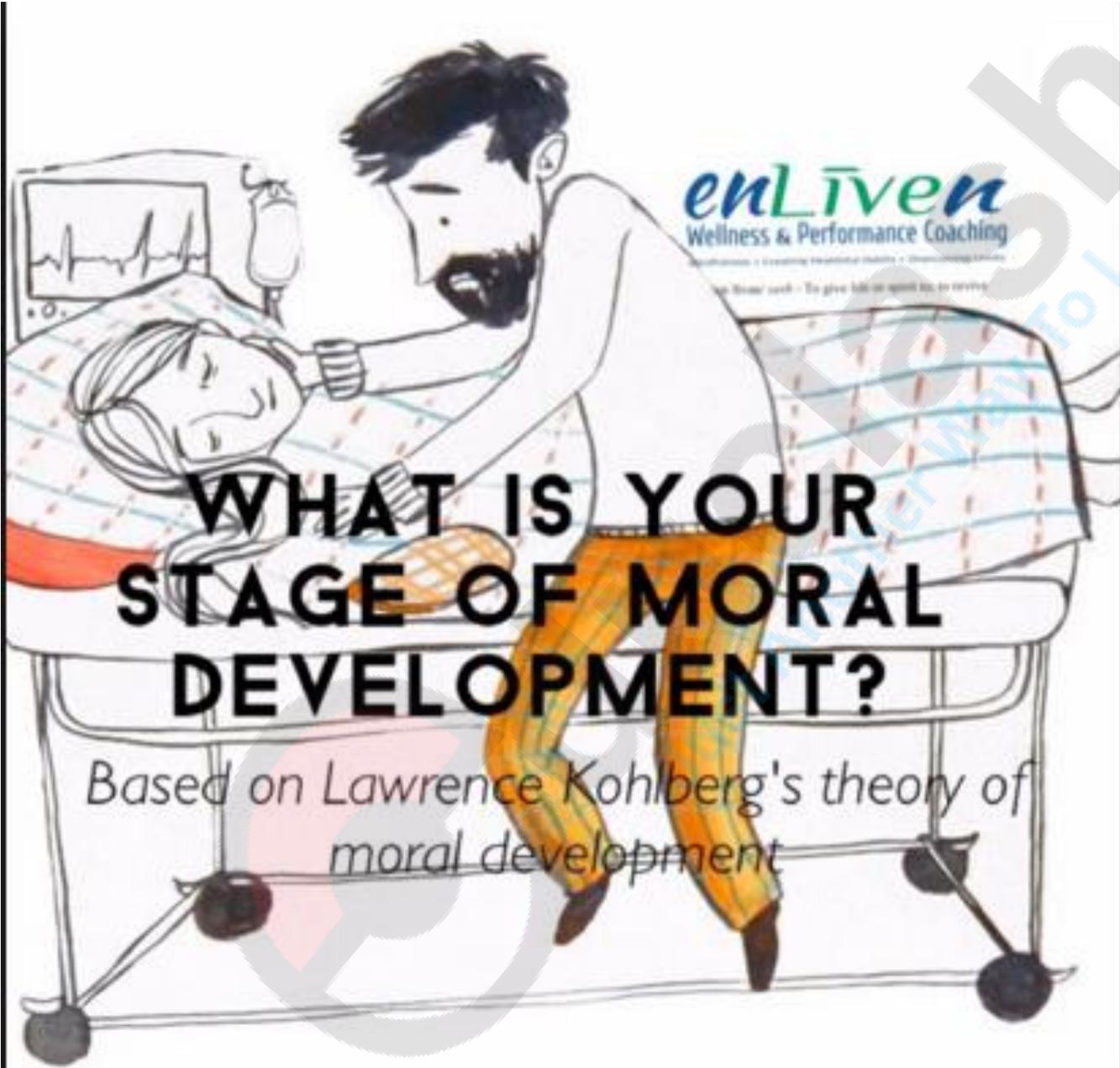
- At stage 1 children think of what is right as that which authority says is right. Doing the right thing is obeying authority and avoiding punishment. At stage 2, children are no longer so impressed by any single authority; they see that there are different sides to any issue. Since everything is relative, one is free to pursue one's own interests, although it is often useful to make deals and exchange favors with others.

Kohlberg: Summary

- At stages 3 and 4, young people think as members of the conventional society with its values, norms, and expectations. At stage 3, they emphasize being a good person, which basically means having helpful motives toward people close to one. At stage 4, the concern shifts toward obeying laws to maintain society as a whole.

Kohlberg: Summary

- At stages 5 and 6 people are less concerned with maintaining society for its own sake, and more concerned with the principles and values that make for a good society. At stage 5 they emphasize basic rights and the democratic processes that give everyone a say, and at stage 6 they define the principles by which agreement will be most just.

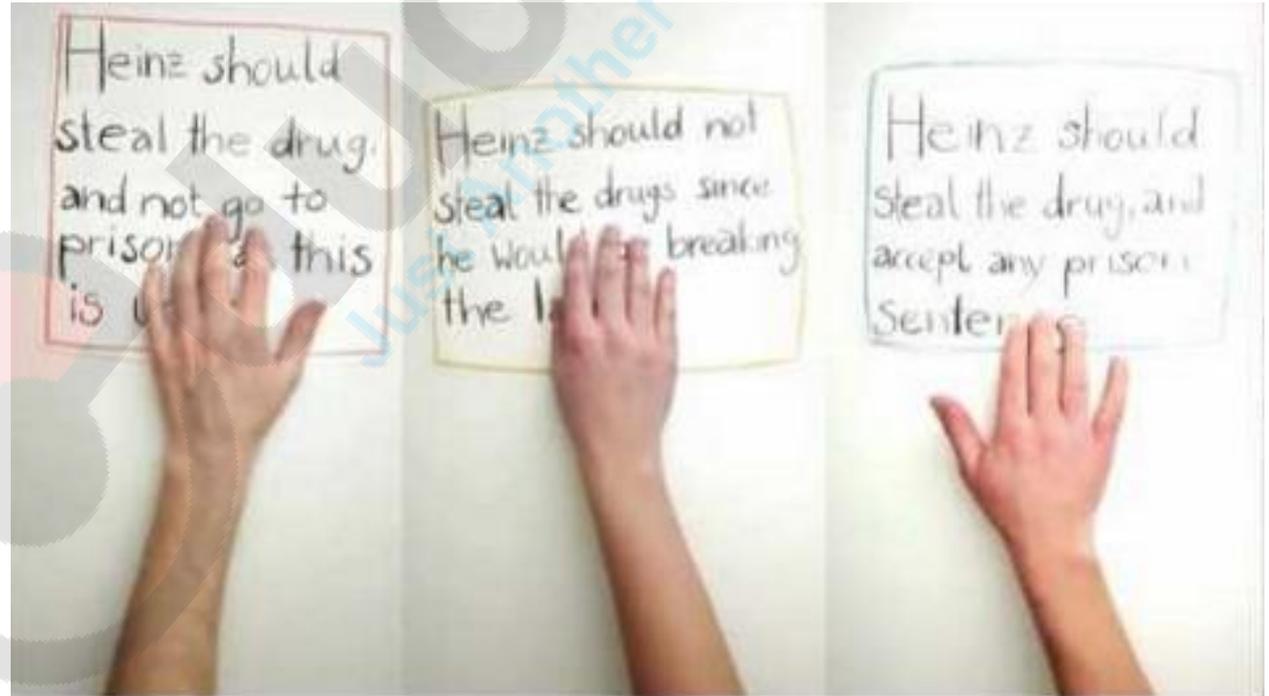
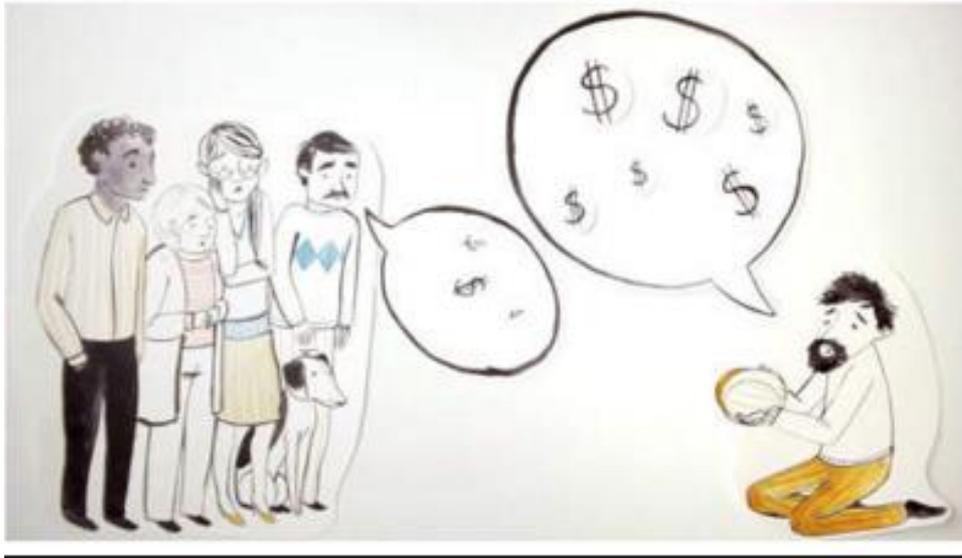


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WHAT IS YOUR STAGE OF MORAL DEVELOPMENT?

*Based on Lawrence Kohlberg's theory of
moral development*





Elliot Turiel's Domain Theory

- Elliot Turiel was born in 1938
- PhD in Psychology from Yale
- American psychologist and Chancellor's Professor at the Graduate School of Education at the University of California, Berkeley



Elliot Turiel

- There are three types of reasoners: preconventional, conventional, and postconventional.
- Preconventional reasoners
 - reason according to the self perspective. They ignore and do not use them in their reasoning process.
- Conventional reasoners
 - Use social rules and norms to guide their moral reasoning.
- Postconventional reasoners
 - Understand the social rules, but do not carefully follow them when making moral decisions. They instead use the basic principles behind the social norm to lead their behavior.

Elliot Turiel used this theory to construct his Domain theory

Domain theory

- There is a key difference between a child's developing concepts of morality, and other parts of social knowledge, like social convention.
- The three domains of knowledge:
 - the moral
 - principles of how individuals ought to treat one another
 - the societal
 - regulations designed to promote the smooth functioning of social groups and institutions
 - the psychological
 - the understanding of self, others, and beliefs about individuality



What's The difference?

- Morality is about fairness and the minimization of harm to others. This concept is easy for children to understand
- Social Convention is made up of concepts like politeness and respect. Because these are abstract they are more difficult for children to understand.
- A good example of this difference is an elevator. It is socially acceptable and polite to be quiet in an elevator. A child sees an elevator and understands because there is no immediate harm or unfairness regarding breaking this social rule, it is okay to yell.
 - This is an issue of social convention rather than morality.

The Domain theory stated that children construct moral, societal, and psychological concepts at the same time rather than one after another

Children build morality based on experience

Children can learn moral and conventional values start at age three!

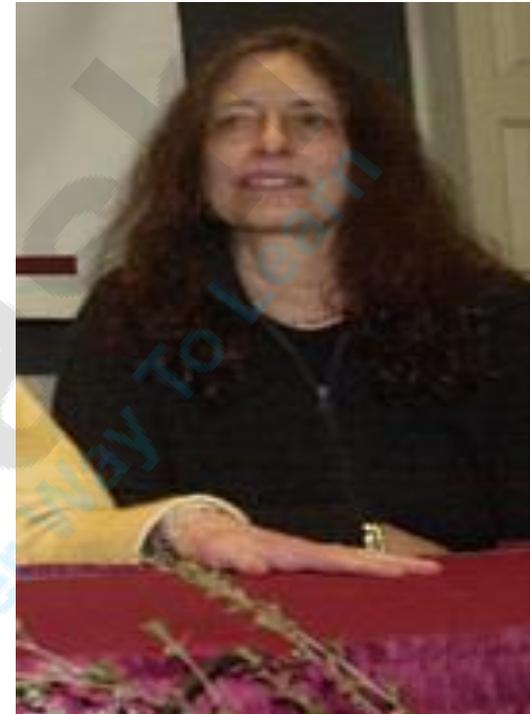


Carol Gilligan

Born: 1937- New York

Current: Professor of Gender Studies,
Harvard University

Education Ph.D., Harvard University



Achievements: Challenged Lawrence Kohlberg's theories of moral development on the basis of gender bias; Pioneer in the research on moral development of women; One of Time Magazine's 25 most influential people of 1996.

Moral Development in Girls

Carol Gilligan's theory of moral development

- Carol Gilligan suggests that the way boys and girls are raised in our own society leads to differences in moral reasoning.
- Kohlberg's theory is inadequate and places girls' moral reasoning at a lower level than boys'.
- Boys view morality primarily in terms of justice and fairness.
- Girls see morality in terms of responsibility and compassion toward individuals and a willingness to sacrifice for relationships.

- Gilligan sees morality in girls developing in 3 stages.
- *Orientation toward individual survival* - where females concentrate on what is practical and best for them.
 - *Goodness as self-sacrifice* - where females think they must sacrifice their own wishes to what others want.
 - *Morality of nonviolence* - women come to see hurting anyone as immoral, including themselves.

~The highest levels of morality are represented by compassionate concern for the welfare of others

Comparison of Moral Development Theories

Moral development theories are based on the pioneering work done by Piaget, Kohlberg's work a landmark in the area of moral development. His stage theory was commendable attempt to put things in some perspective. The domain theory extended Kohlberg's approach by adding domain of Social convention to the paradigm. Kohlberg's work was expanded in Gilligan's theory by adding the concept of care in moral development which helped to eliminate gender bias.

Classification of Ethical Theories

Each moral theory holds a specific approach in how to handle life's decisions. Throughout history, a few moral theories have surfaced and have been analyzed for their strengths and weaknesses. A moral theory often shapes a person's attitude toward others, belief system and life choices.

- **Consequentialism / Utilitarianism:** an action is right if it promotes the best consequences.
- **Deontology:** an action is right if it is in accordance with a moral rule or principle.
- **Virtue:** an action is right if it is what a virtuous agent would do in the circumstances

Some Basic Theories

- **Deontology** : duty of beneficence ,duty of justice, self improvement, reparation ,gratitude, promise keeping.
- **Utilitarianism** :maximum good to maximum people.
- **Virtue theory** : wisdom, common sense, good judgment ,courage ,generosity etc.
- **Rights theory** : people have certain rights form a basis of this theory. Right to live ,human rights ,express, follow religion of choice.
- **Casuist theory** :compare with similar problems from past and their outcomes.

- **Moral absolutism:** held by people who firmly believe that there is only one right perspective and that is held by them . Seen in religious code of conduct.
- **Moral relativism :** philosophical positions concerned with the differences in moral judgments across different people and cultures.
- **Moral Pluralism:** the idea that there can be conflicting **moral** views that are each worthy of respect
- **Ethical egoism :**theory that deals with self interest

