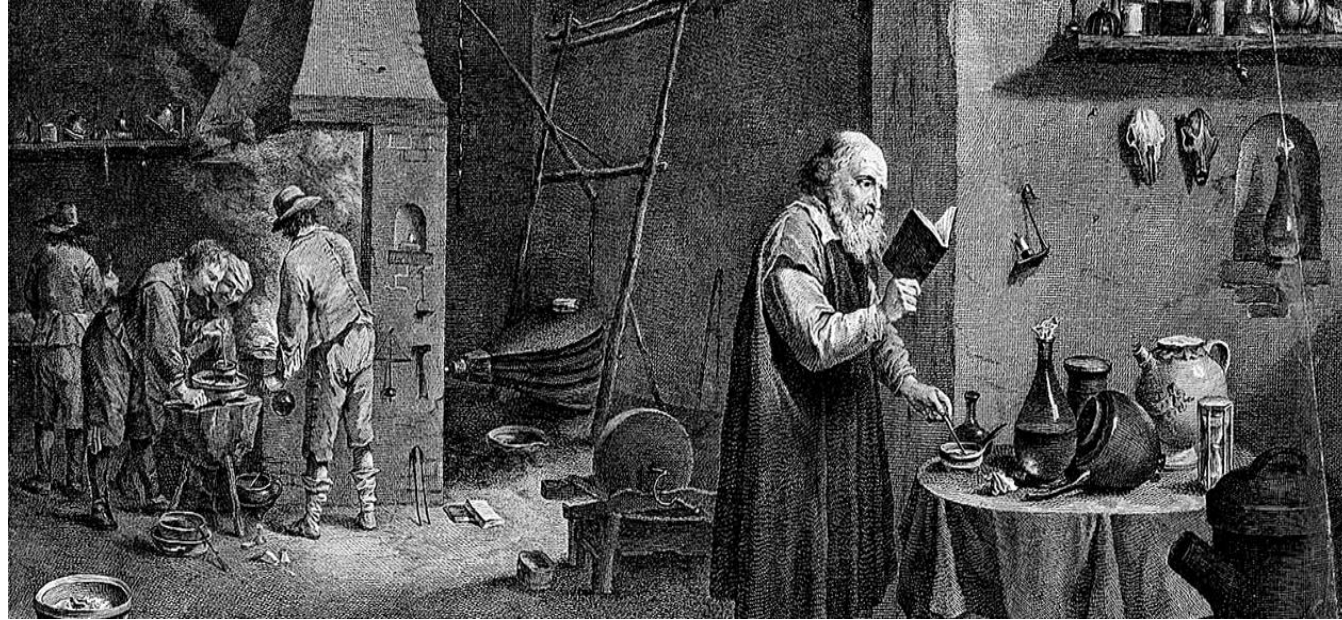


Dental Ethics 7-8



History and basic ethical theory



Ethics is the branch of philosophy that examines **right** and **wrong** moral behavior, moral concepts (such as justice, virtue, duty) and moral language.

Ethics or moral philosophy is a branch of **philosophy** that involves **systematizing, defending,** and **recommending concepts of right and wrong behavior.**

The field of ethics, along with aesthetics, concerns matters of value, and thus comprises the branch of philosophy called axiology.

Various ethical theories pose **various answers to the question** ,What is the greatest good?, and elaborate a complete set of proper behaviors for individuals and groups.

Ethical theories are closely related to forms of life in various social orders

History of medical ethics

The term medical ethics first **dates back to 1803**, when English author and physician [Thomas Percival](#) published a document describing the requirements and expectations of medical professionals within medical facilities. The Code of Ethics was then adapted in 1847, relying heavily on Percival's words.

Over the years in 1903, 1912, and 1947, revisions have been made to the original document.

The practice of Medical Ethics is **widely accepted and practiced throughout the world**.

Historically, [Western](#) medical ethics may be traced to guidelines on the [duty](#) of physicians in antiquity, such as the [Hippocratic Oath](#), and early [Christian](#) teachings.

The first code of medical ethics, [Formula Comitum Archiatrorum](#), was published **in the 5th century**, during the reign of the [Ostrogothic](#) Christian king [Theodoric the Great](#). In the medieval and early modern period, the field is indebted to [Islamic scholarship](#) such as [Ishaq ibn Ali al-Ruhawi](#) (who wrote the *Conduct of a Physician*, the first book dedicated to medical ethics), [Avicenna's Canon of Medicine](#) and [Muhammad ibn Zakariya ar-Razi](#) (known as Rhazes in the West), [Jewish thinkers](#) such as [Maimonides](#), [Roman Catholic scholastic](#) thinkers such as [Thomas Aquinas](#), and the case-oriented analysis ([casuistry](#)) of Catholic [moral theology](#).

These intellectual traditions continue in [Catholic](#), [Islamic](#) and [Jewish medical ethics](#).

By the 18th and 19th centuries, medical ethics emerged as a more self-conscious discourse. Since the 1970s, the growing influence of ethics in contemporary medicine can be seen in the increasing use of [Institutional Review Boards](#) to evaluate experiments on human subjects, the establishment of hospital ethics committees, the expansion of the role of clinician ethicists, and the integration of ethics into many medical school curricula.

Hammurabi's code of law :

The **Code of Hammurabi** is a [Babylonian](#) legal text composed c. 1755–1750 BC. It is the longest, best-organised, and best-preserved legal text from the [ancient Near East](#). It is written in the [Old Babylonian dialect of Akkadian](#), purportedly by [Hammurabi](#), sixth king of the [First Dynasty of Babylon](#).

The primary copy of the text is inscribed on a [basalt](#) or [diorite](#)^[note 1] [stele](#) 2.25 m (7 ft 4+½ in) tall.

The stele was rediscovered in **1901** at the site of [Susa](#) in present-day Iran, where it had been taken as plunder six hundred years after its creation. The text itself was copied and studied by Mesopotamian scribes for over a millennium. The stele now resides in the [Louvre Museum](#).

The top of the stele features an image in [relief](#) of Hammurabi with [Shamash](#), the Babylonian [sun god](#) and god of justice. Below the relief are about 4,130 lines of [cuneiform](#) text: one fifth contains a prologue and epilogue in poetic style, while the remaining four fifths contain what are generally called the laws. In the prologue, Hammurabi claims to have been granted his rule by the gods "to prevent the strong from oppressing the weak". The laws are [casuistic](#), expressed as "if ... then" [conditional sentences](#). Their scope is broad, including, for example, [criminal law](#), [family law](#), [property law](#), and [commercial law](#).

The Hammurabi code of laws, **a collection of 282 rules, established standards for commercial interactions and set fines and punishments to meet the requirements of justice.** Hammurabi's Code was carved onto a massive, finger-shaped black stone stele (pillar).



The Hippocratic Oath

The Hippocratic Oath (Ορκος) is perhaps the most widely known of Greek medical texts. It **requires a new physician to swear upon a number of healing gods that he will uphold a number of professional ethical standards**



Basic grounding of Ethics

Technology has always appeared as a way to expand human capacities. Today, emerging technologies such as AI are transforming the way that humans behave in society.

The reduction of decision-making to data analytics may lead to moral dilemmas in how we make decisions about people: who is included and who is excluded.

It proposes a care-based approach to shed light on how relationships, **interdependence, vulnerabilities, and emotions should not be ignored.**

The chapter introduces some **important facts of how works**, and presents ethics of care to mitigate the moral problems presented in and decision-making. It proposes some questions that may serve as guidelines when applying while considering the notion of care.

The issue of ethics in the organisations is a current and increasingly developed topic, involving all social actors responsible for their good functioning, however, the theoretical and empirical evaluation of the ethical decision are less exploited.

The role of ethical theories was the subject of different researches, aiming to apply certain ethical procedures in the practices of human , of implementing the policies of corporatist social responsibility, or checking the ethical evaluations undertaken by managers within the organisation .

The majority of the research conducted in the field of ethics have the main purpose of identifying those rules, principles, values, that the professionals adopt and translate into practice. Another important aspect in the field of ethics of the professions is drawing the frameworks of the ethical principles, on whose considerations and implications the process of ethical decision-making can be developed.

The models of making **ethical decisions are grounded on a series of central ethical theories**, further presenting a few basic characteristics of certain ethical theories, such as those of welfare/good – *the utilitarian ethics*, and ethical theories of justice: *deontological ethics*, *ethics of justice* (Rawlsian theory of justice as equity), as well as the *theory of ethics of virtue*.

Humanities (universal standards) :

Humanities

‘humanity’ means a quality of empathy, or kindness, and that doesn’t sound quite right for a field of scholarly study, at least at **first hearing** – particularly when you turn the word into a plural, thinking of the blank faces that meet us when we say that our academic work is in ‘the humanities’.

Universal humanity—the idea that human beings are, in some ways, all the same, possessing the same needs and rights—is the guiding principle of humanitarian action.

Within postcolonial studies, this universalist philosophy has come under intense scrutiny for its Western bias and neglect of cultural and historical difference.

Religious and non religious ethics:

Benevolence, kindness, and empathy are valued virtues **among many of the world's major religions**.

It is common that people in many cultures see religion as the source of these moral virtues and that one must believe in God to be moral.

Despite these **widespread assumptions about the associations of religion with morality**, some studies raise doubts about the causal connection between them.

The main goal of the present study was to test if religious participants differ from nonreligious ones in terms of how extreme their judgments about moral violations are, how empathic they are, and how disgusting they consider moral violations with disgusting content. It is also our purpose to describe moral judgement processes in an understudied cultural context that has a relevant indigenous characteristic associated with morality.

A 656 participants read six moral scenarios describing moral violations involving disgusting or non-disgusting contents.

They reported their moral reactions using a **moral judgment** and a moral disgust scale. **Measures of empathy, Nonreligiosity, religious affiliation, and sociodemographic questions were included in the study.**

Nonreligious and religious participants **had similar levels of empathy and showed similar patterns of moral reactions to different moral violations involving both disgusting and non-disgusting contents.**

Across six moral scenarios, both groups agreed on the most morally wrong and the most disgusting moral violations in similar magnitude. These results question the commonly assumed moral deficit in nonreligious people and supports the idea that they can be like religious people when it comes to empathy and judging moral violations.

Measures of **empathy, religiosity, religious affiliation, and sociodemographic questions were included in the study.**

Political & dogmatic strategies

Dogmatic individuals are reluctant to seek out new information to refine their views, often skewing political, scientific, and religious discourse in the process.

The cognitive drivers of this reluctance are poorly understood. Here, we isolate an influence of uncertainty on information search using a low-level perceptual decision-making task.

We show that people with **dogmatic views are both less likely to seek information before committing to a decision and to use fluctuations in uncertainty to guide their search.**

When knowledge is scarce, it is adaptive to seek further information to resolve uncertainty and obtain a more accurate worldview. Biases in such information-seeking behavior can contribute to the maintenance of inaccurate views. Here, we investigate whether predispositions for uncertainty-guided information seeking relate to individual differences in dogmatism, a phenomenon linked to entrenched beliefs in political, scientific, and religious discourse. We addressed this question in a perceptual decision-making task, allowing us to rule out motivational factors and isolate the role of uncertainty.

Theories of ethics:

There are three theories of ethics, these three theories of ethics. It is important, however, that public relations professionals also understand how to apply these concepts to the actual practice of the profession

Action theory

Action theory, subfield of philosophy of mind that is specially important for ethics; **it concerns the distinction between things that happen to a person and things one does or makes happen.** Action theorists consider **issues** such as **motive, desire, purpose, deliberation, decision, intention, trying, and free will.**

Consequentiality theory:

Consequentialism is an ethical theory that **judges whether or not something is right by what its consequences are.** For instance, most people would agree that lying is wrong. But if telling a lie would help save a person's life, consequentialism says it's the right thing to do

The third objection is that it is not always possible to predict the outcome of an action. Bowen points out that “consequences are too unpredictable to be an accurate measure of the ethics of a situations.”

In other words, consequences of actions can be highly volatile or impossible, even, to predict. Using outcomes as a measurement of ethics will not, therefore, provide an accurate way for professionals to measure whether decisions are ethical.

Professionals must be able to **evaluate decisions** and **choices with concrete ethical guidelines** instead of hoping that certain outcomes will result in them having made an ethical choice.

Many scholars in public relations identify these issues, as well as others, as evidence that utilitarianism, sometimes called consequentialism due the concept relying on the consequence of a decision, is not as strong of a fit for public relations professional ethics.

Deontological Ethics

The second prominent concept, **deontological ethics**, is associated with the father of modern deontology, Immanuel Kant. He was known for the ‘Categorical Imperative’ that looks for transcendent principles that apply to all humans.

The idea is that “**human beings should be treated with dignity** and **respect because they have rights.**”

The core concept behind this is that there are **objective obligations**, or **duties, that are required of all people.**

When faced with an ethical situation, then, the process is simply one of identifying one’s duty and making the appropriate decision.

The challenges to this perspective, however, include

- 1) conflicts that arise when there is not an agreement about the principles involved in the decision;
- 2) the implications of making a “right” choice that has bad consequences; and
- 3) what decisions should be made when duties conflict.

These challenges are definitely ones that should be considered when relying on **this as an ethical system**.

However, despite these concerns, many have found that deontology provides the strongest model for applied public relations ethics. Bowen, for example, suggests that **deontology is based on the moral autonomy of the individual, similar to the autonomy and freedom from encroachment that public relations seeks to be considered excellent**.

Virtue Ethics

Finally, a third and growing area of philosophical reasoning with ethics is known as virtue ethics, one that has gained more attention in public relations scholarship in recent years. This philosophy stems from Aristotle and is based on the virtues of the person making a decision. **The consideration in virtue ethics is essentially what makes a good person, or, for the purpose of this discussion, what makes a good public relations professional?**

Virtue ethics require the decision-maker to understand what virtues are good for public relations and then decisions are made in light of those particular virtues.

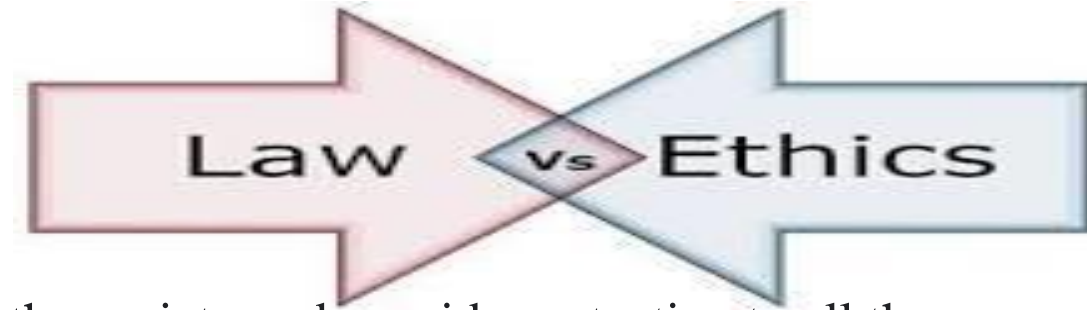
For example, if the **virtue of honesty is the of utmost importance to a good public relations professional, then all decisions should be made ethically to ensure honesty is preserved**.

While this theory is growing in popularity, there are several objections that can be made. First, in terms of the public relations profession, the focus on virtues of the professional themselves seems to miss the importance and role of obligations to clients and publics.

The industry is not simply about what public relations people do themselves, but ultimately the impact to society. Additionally, it also can face the same obstacle as deontological ethics when having conflicting virtues. If there is a virtue of loyalty to a client and honesty to the public, what happens when they conflict? To which one should a professional defer?

Value theory

In ethics and the social sciences, value theory **involves various approaches that examine how, why, and to what degree humans value things and whether the object or subject of valuing is a person, idea, object, or anything else.** Within philosophy, it is also known as ethics or axiology



Ethics and the law:

Law is created with an intent to maintain social order and peace in the society and provide protection to all the citizens.

Ethics are made to help people to decide what is right or wrong and how to act.

Law has a legal binding. Ethics do not have a binding nature

Law and ethics are different in a manner that what a person must do and what a person should do.

The former is **universally accepted** while the latter is ideal human conduct, agreed upon by most of the people.

Although, both the law and ethics are made in alignment so that they do not contradict each other.

Both go side by side, as they provide how to act in a particular manner. Every person is equal in the eyes of law and ethics, i.e. nobody is superior or inferior. Further, these two allow a person to think freely and choose

Comparison Chart

BASIS FOR COMPARISON	LAW	ETHICS
Meaning	The law refers to a systematic body of rules that governs the whole society and the actions of its individual members.	Ethics is a branch of moral philosophy that guides people about the basic human conduct.
What is it?	Set of rules and regulations	Set of guidelines
Governed By	Government	Individual, Legal and Professional norms
Expression	Expressed and published in writing.	They are abstract.
Violation	Violation of law is not permissible which may result in punishment like imprisonment or fine or both.	There is no punishment for violation of ethics.
Objective	Law is created with an intent to maintain social order and peace in the society and provide protection to all the citizens.	Ethics are made to help people to decide what is right or wrong and how to act.
Binding	Law has a legal binding.	Ethics do not have a binding nature.

Sources of Ethical Views and Convictions

Each individual's set of **ethics** provides the **fundamental principles** or **beliefs by which that person distinguishes, consciously after some thought or unconsciously and seemingly by instinct**, between **morally acceptable** and **morally unacceptable behavior in that person's eyes**.

If every person's ethics **sprang from the same principles** or rested on the same source documents—perhaps the **Bible** or the **Koran** for **ethical principles governing their personal lives**, and the **Uniform Commercial Code** or a global code of business ethics promulgated by the United Nations—then there would be much wider consensus on what is ethically good and ethically bad conduct in any given specific situation. In fact, however, each person draws portions, sometimes bits and pieces, of their personal and business ethics from an almost random variety of sources, such as their childhood upbringing, a dramatic or otherwise pivotal life experience, religious beliefs, discussions with family, colleagues, and friends, and the ethical teachings of whatever philosophers the person may **have read**.

To help each of us

- (1) better understand why we sometimes disagree with others' ethical choices, or they with ours, and
- (2) catalogue the sources on which each of us can draw if we want to enhance our own ethical skills in particular areas or give **others ethical guidance without appearing to scold or to lecture**.

Sources of Ethical Views and Convictions

Childhood Upbringing

Without really thinking or even being able to avoid it, each person learns ethics from his or her parents—what they teach in words and perhaps more importantly through their actions. These teachings shape our most fundamental attitudes about what is "right" and what is "wrong." As a very brief insurance-related example, the child of an insurance agent, upon reaching adulthood, is much more likely to be honest and truthful in settling claims under his or her insurance policies than is the grown child of another insurance agent if the other agent was terminated by the insurer under disputed circumstances. The child may not have understood the intricacies of those circumstances at the time, but as an adult, he or she is likely to believe in their heart that insurers are not to be trusted and do not deserve to be treated honestly.

Later Life Experiences

Similarly, a life-shaping event later in life may more directly and consciously shape a person's ethics. Thus, someone severely injured in an automobile accident may have a much higher opinion of the entire automobile-injury reparations system—including the police who investigated, the hospital that provided care, the lawyers and courts that resolved any legal issues, and the insurers that helped finance so much of the injured person's recovery—if that person is satisfied with the ultimate medical and financial result months and years after the accident. If, however, this victim feels the result was medically inferior or legally unfair, the victim may well treat everyone in the system unfairly—even years later in circumstances unrelated to the original accident—just to seek some measure of personal "justice."

Religious Beliefs

Virtually all the world's religions teach an essentially similar code of ethics that emphasizes honesty, respect for others and their rights, and selflessness. Therefore, in both business and personal situations, a highly religious person is likely to act in ways that most of us will regard as highly ethical. Their religion will give them highly explicit, generally internally consistent, guides to "good" personal conduct. These guidelines usually can be broadened to apply quite well to business activity.

Codes of Ethics

Perhaps the most direct and explicit sources of our daily ethical guidance are codes of ethics for business conduct. Whether issued by professional societies (such as the Risk and Insurance Management Society, the Society of Chartered Property and Casualty Underwriters, or the American Society of Safety Engineers), by a business or fraternal society (such as an insurance agents' association or the Lions or Elks), or by civic groups (such as local or national chambers or commerce), these ethical codes generally have two goals. The first is to set forth objectives like quality output, honesty, and public service in the customer or community dealings by the people who are governed by, or choose to subscribe to, a particular code. The second typical goal is to protect those to whom the code applies from harmful conduct by others governed by that particular code—conduct such as unfair competition or actions that cast the entire group in a bad light. This second goal often is expressed through rather specific rules about what those governed by the code definitely must, or must not, do in their dealings with customers, one another, and the public at large. These self-protective rules can sometimes appear to conflict with religious, philosophical, or other sources of ethical guidance

Discussions with Others

Almost daily, quite casually, and sometimes without thinking, virtually all of us talk about others' and our own actions—offering frequent opinions about whether what they or we have been doing is good, right, and sensible (or perhaps very much the opposite). Buried in this "small talk," "chit chat," gossip, and mealtime conversations are implicit—sometimes very explicit—ethical judgments about the behavior being discussed. People and their words and actions are labeled "wonderful," "mean," "greedy," "generous," or hundreds of other qualities. Over time, these discussions lead each of us to a sense of what the people around us consider to be good and bad, ethical and unethical, conduct. Unless we have strong personal reasons or other commitments to believe otherwise, most of us tend to "go along" with the opinions of those around us, rather than "bucking the tide" by independently evaluating the ethical aspects of others' actions. Thus, often almost automatically, the social consensus can become the approved, although unexamined, ethical standard.

Ethical Philosophers

In sharp contrast to these ethics of casual social consensus, the philosophers who have developed systems of ethics—such people as Plato, Aristotle, Kant, Bentham, and more recent ethical thinkers throughout the world—have developed basic principles from which they have derived systems of ethics. These principles fall into two general groups: those that are rules-based and those that are results-based.

Examples of rule-based ethics appear in the Bible's Ten Commandments, in many professions' codes of ethics, and in the Golden Rule: Do unto others as you would have others do unto you. Results-based systems of ethics emphasize principles such as physicians never knowingly doing or allowing medical harm; doing the greatest good for the greatest number of people (Bentham and other utilitarians), and Kant's principle of universality—taking an action only if everyone could take the same action without bringing about more harm than good and without creating logical impossibilities (like the logical impossibility of every person being more generous to every other person than anyone is to the first person).

Ethical Dilemmas

A final source of ethical insight (more a way of developing one's ethical awareness and sensibilities than a separate source of ethical guidance) is pondering ethical dilemmas. These dilemmas are real or imagined situations that pit two or more ethical principles, rules, or objectives against one another. To resolve the dilemma, one has to decide which of these ethically desirable ends is the more/most important or, alternatively, if there is a way to achieve both/all of these ends without committing some other ethical wrong.

For example, if you are an adult and your father, convicted as a murderer, has escaped a federal prison in California to hide in your Missouri house, how do you respond when an FBI agent standing in your yard asks "Is your father in your house now?" Assuming he is, "Yes" breaks the commandment to honor one's parents, but "No" breaks the commandment to tell the truth in all morally significant situations. (When your spouse asks if she/he is especially beautiful/handsome as you are leaving your house to go to a friend's birthday party, your response probably is not ethically significant for the community, but it may be very significant within your marriage.)

Ethical dilemmas can provide good settings for exploring ethical questions. For example in the case of your escaped father hiding in your house, is your response to the FBI agent influenced by the fact that:

1. You know from your direct personal knowledge that your father did not commit the murder of which he was wrongly convicted?
2. Your father seriously abused you, your brother, and your sister physically when you were young children?

This sample ethical dilemma does not involve the ethics of being a good risk management professional—I readily acknowledge that. But our objective here has been to explore the general sources of ethics and of ethical enlightenment. In future Commentaries—as in at least one past Commentary—we will consider some dilemmas that come straight out of risk management and insurance and that illustrate clashes of ethics that arise from a variety of the basic sources of ethics that we have just surveyed

THANK YOU