

PERSPECTIVE TAKING & MORAL DECISION-MAKING

What kinds of rules do you have for social interactions?

Who set those rules? How did those rules develop?

Why are these rules important to you? Do you follow them? Why/why not?

Perspective taking affects beliefs about morality, or what one considers right vs. wrong.

LAWRENCE KOHLBERG'S STAGES OF MORAL DEVELOPMENT

LEVEL 1. PRECONVENTIONAL MORALITY

(thinking in terms of oneself and one's relationships with isolated individuals)

Stage 1. Obedience and Punishment Orientation

Obey authority and avoid punishment.

Pros:

- Behavior is compliant with authority.

Cons:

- Behavior is largely reflexive and impulsive, without conscious understanding of motivations or reasons for the behavior or evaluation of behavioral options.
- Unilateral decision-making that does not genuinely account for the validity or value of more than a singular perspective.

Stage 2. Individualism and Exchange

Get a good, fair deal for yourself (e.g., risk vs. reward, "you scratch my back I'll scratch yours").

Pros:

- One's own motivations and interests are considered.
- Outcomes have potential to meet one's own immediate needs.
- Relatedness with others is acknowledged and plays a role in decision-making.

Cons:

- Each person is primarily concerned with their own interests.
 - May lead to justifications for rule-breaking behavior based on the relative risk of negative personal consequences, or on relative harms/benefits for themselves and others (e.g., justifying shoplifting by arguing that they probably won't be caught, so it's not bad to do it, or justifying it by arguing that they really need the item, it is overpriced, and stealing it would be personally beneficial while not really harming the store much).
- Lack of consideration of perspectives or factors beyond the immediate relationship and immediate relational needs.
- Trade/exchange/reciprocation is not a viable solution in many scenarios.

LEVEL II. CONVENTIONAL MORALITY

(thinking in terms of oneself as a member of a conventional society with shared values, norms, and expectations)

Stage 3. Good Interpersonal Relationships

Have good motives toward others and be a good person who is helpful to others, according to conventional rules of what makes a person “good”.

Pros:

- Development of one’s own identity within a context of others who may provide helpful support and encouragement.
- Decisions based more on values and principles, integrated between one’s own perspective and the perspectives of others, rather than decisions remaining as firmly rooted in self-interest as in Stages 1 and 2.

Cons:

- Primarily concerned with being viewed as good, gaining approval of others, and/or doing what is generally considered good, and not necessarily doing what is genuinely right for others or deeply engaging with others’ perspectives for the purpose of understanding how to be responsive to those particular people’s needs and interests.
- Focused on close relationships, especially one-to-one relationships, and may not involve consideration of the wider context within which that relationship takes place.

Stage 4. Maintaining the Social Order

Obey rules and do your part to help maintain a stable, fair, smoothly functioning society.

Pros:

- Consideration from a third-person perspective that takes the wider social context into account.
- Compliance with laws and rules is based on consciously developed and understood reasons and values.
- Explicit acknowledgement of one’s responsibility to respect others’ needs and interests, and to play a part in positively affecting society as a whole.

Cons:

- Laws and rules may not be healthy, moral, or just. Societies can simultaneously function smoothly and be unjust. Unjust practices and rules should not be continued or accepted, and should not be condoned explicitly or implicitly.
- Focus on society as a whole is not always appropriate to the issue at hand.

LEVEL III. POSTCONVENTIONAL MORALITY

(thinking in terms of the principles and values that make for a good society)

Stage 5. Social Contract and Individual Rights

Consider the rights and values that a society should uphold, independent of existing structures and laws, and utilize democratic processes or other legal/generally condoned means to assure that societal rules and laws uphold morality and rights to life and liberty of all.

Pros:

- Focus on principles and ideals, without being constrained by current societal and cultural practices and laws.
- Focus on the rights of all, integrating overall societal and group perspectives with those of individuals.
- Focus on honoring diverse perspectives and allowing diverse values to be expressed and considered.
- Legally compliant behavior goes beyond submission to authority, as authority and power structures are viewed as adaptable and subject to influence from individuals who wish to affect them.
- Individuals and groups within a society are viewed as stakeholders who should have roles in the development of systems that affect them.

Cons:

- Focus on democratic processes values majority-rule, which may disenfranchise minority groups and result in adoption of laws and practices that adversely affect them.
- Explicit focus on formally organized societal structures and conceptions of society may obscure how the main qualities of this stage (approaching decisions and development of practices by focusing on ideals, independent of currently existing rules and structures) can be applied in a variety of settings, including ones beyond formal entities or legal structures.

Stage 6: Universal Principles

Treat the claims of all parties in an impartial manner, respecting the basic dignity of all people as individuals and assure that justice is achieved via consideration of all perspectives and equal respect for all, even if this requires means not inherently condoned by democratic or legal systems to address the injustice caused by the law or generate change to make the law just (such as civil disobedience utilized to address an unjust law democratically generated via majority vote that adversely affects a minority group).

Pros:

- Retains most of the positive qualities of Stage 5, while accounting for people whose perspectives would likely be discounted in a society solely operating with an orientation toward democratic processes and only utilizing established channels to effect legal and societal change.
- With “impartial consideration of the perspectives of all stakeholders and equal respect for the dignity of all people” as the main criteria for efforts to make moral decisions and effect movements toward more just laws, practices, and societal behaviors, the behaviors suggested by this stage can be applied in various settings to various circumstances, and established institutions and power structures do not seem to be required in order to operationalize efforts toward a society of people operating within the framework of this stage.

Cons:

- Requires significant skill and investment of energy, time, and other resources

References:

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Kohlberg, L. (1963). The development of children's orientations toward a moral order. *Human Development*, 6(1-2), 11-33.

Universal Needs – CHAMPPP

“Every criticism, judgment, diagnosis, and expression of anger is the tragic expression of an unmet need.”

— Dr. Marshall B. Rosenberg, founder of The Center for Nonviolent Communication

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CONNECTION

- | | | | |
|-----------------|------------------|------------------|---------------|
| a) Acceptance | e) Belonging | i) Closeness | m) Empathy |
| b) Love | f) Respect | j) Stability | n) Understood |
| c) Appreciation | g) Communication | k) Consideration | o) Inclusion |
| d) Nurturing | h) Safety | l) Support | p) Trust |

HONESTY

- | | | |
|-----------------|--------------|-------------|
| a) Authenticity | b) Integrity | c) Presence |
|-----------------|--------------|-------------|

AUTONOMY

- | | | | |
|------------|-----------------|----------|----------------|
| a) Choice | c) Independence | d) Space | e) Spontaneity |
| b) Freedom | | | |

MEANING

- | | | | |
|--------------|--------------------|------------------|-------------|
| a) Awareness | e) Clarity | h) To matter | k) Growth |
| b) Mourning | f) Self expression | i) Discovery | l) Hope |
| c) Challenge | g) Creativity | j) Understanding | m) Learning |
| d) Purpose | | | |

PEACE

- | | | | |
|--------------|-------------|----------------|----------|
| a) Beauty | c) Ease | e) Harmony | g) Order |
| b) Communion | d) Equality | f) Inspiration | |

PHYSICAL WELL-BEING

- | | | | |
|------------------------|------------|-------------|-------------------------|
| a) Air, food,
water | b) Shelter | d) Movement | f) Sexual
expression |
| | c) Safety | e) Rest | |

PLAY

- | | |
|--------|----------|
| a) Joy | b) Humor |
|--------|----------|