

Why should i be moral philosophy essay

[Experience](#), [Human Nature](#)



The question of morality proves to be a complex interrogatory. Should I be moral? If I should be, then why? Why is morality important to society? An assumption can be made that morals derive from a purely religious perspective or the Golden Rule approach. We are told that it is right to be moral. This is an ineffective answer, since it does not apply to someone outside the moral circle (Olsen, 79).

This in mind, there is really no way to prove this too a person who wants to know why he/she should be moral. According to Olen, the only answer to them would be “ because you are”. Happiness could also be included in the list of moral reasons. I personally feel that this is the best supported reason for being moral. Although there will be times when the moral decision will not be pleasurable, it will eventually lead to happiness. Morality is important for society as a whole, as it makes life livable. Now expanding on the happiness theory, I will discuss the ideas of Aristotle. Aristotle believed that happiness is the quality of whole human life. We all have misconceptions about happiness. Most of us believe that happiness is experiencing a lively feeling of joy or pleasant feelings. We can be happy at one moment, but not the next. Aristotle on the other hand said that true happiness includes pleasures, joys, and successes as well as many pains, griefs, and troubles in ones life. A happy life is not cause by the pleasures we’ve had, nor marred by the displeasures we’ve had.

Aristotle also contended that children could not be happy as the requirement for happiness was a complete life. For instance, an old man looking back on his life and being able to say that it was good, is happiness.

Aristotle defined the things that make happiness as health, wealth, friendship, and good moral character. Aristotle stated that happiness was also the highest good leaving nothing more to be desired. Life is made perfect by possession of all good things. We seek happiness for its own sake. All others are sought for happiness. Aristotle believed to become happy one must have good character and be willing to suffer to obtain the greater good later on. We should seek the good in the long run. Most men/women will not do this. We take the immediate pleasure. Most people think that happiness is unique to each person. Aristotle believed that there is only one true conception and that it holds the same for all humans. Power is not an attribute to happiness because it would preclude some people from being happy if they are ruled. Aristotle believed as our fathers that everyone has an ultimate right to the pursuit of happiness.

He believed that this pursuit must be cooperative, not competitive. All this said, it is clear that it fits into his belief that everything in nature has a goal towards which it naturally strives (i. e. happiness). A morally virtuous person is one who is moderate in his actions. He chooses the mean as opposed to the extremes. Aristotle was more concerned with the real world than with the theological world. His bottom line view point was that we have no answer to the question “ Why do you want to be happy?” other than “ to be happy.” He believed that we must be moral in order to obtain our life long goal of happiness.

I find myself in agreement with Aristotle to some degree. When I ask myself “ why do you want to be happy?” I am stuck. I just want to be happy. I can see

where society as a whole must practice morality as a whole to allow everyone the non-competitive pursuit of happiness. I can also relate to the fact that following the immediate pleasure doesn't unnecessarily attribute to the future good. I have not been able to live one city longer than a year at a time. As a result of this, I am unable to purchase my dream home because the

financial tolls.

I am however happier when I first move to a new state. I am not totally convinced that the pursuit of happiness alone is just cause for morality. I do believe that morality has much to do with a theological basis. I believe that there is an obligation instilled in each of us by the current religious belief of our society. I believe we make decision based on the consequences we could face in our afterlife. I believe we discern right and wrong on the basis of what is right or wrong to our doctrine.

True moral issues, but for the most part don't we judge thing based on what was instilled into us as children? We were socialized to fit a pattern and our society even today is still tinged with religious attitudes and beliefs.

According to Kohlberg's stages of moral development, children give the right answer to moral issues, but with different reasons as they progress.

STAGE

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

REASONS FOR DOING RIGHT

LEVEL I:

1

Preconventional Desire to Avoid punishment

Avoidance of punishment and the superior power of authority; obedience for its own sake.

2

Desire to obtain rewards

Serves one's own needs and recognizes that other people have their interests to; conforms to obtain rewards

LEVEL II:

3

Conventional “ Good Boy/Good Girl”

Values the approval of others and tries to maintain mutual relationships involving trust, loyalty, respect, and gratitude; believes in the Golden Rule.

4

Respect for Authority

Values society's laws and tries to uphold them; tires to keep the institution going.

LEVEL III

5

Post-Conventional

Respect for the social contract

Believes in upholding the social contract because it provides the “ greatest good for the greatest number’; recognizes that a social contract is an agreement between people that benefits the public welfare.

6

Universal ethical principles

Personally committed to a set of self-chosen ethical principles, mot of which may be compatible with the laws of society. When laws conflict with ethical principles, the person acts in accordance with his/her principles.

SOURCE: Based on L. Kohlberg “ Stage and Sequence: The Cognitive-Developmetal Approach to Socializtion” in Handbood of Sociliztion Thoery and Research, 1969, edited by D. A. Goslin, Rand Mcnally, Chicago; and L. Kohlberg, “ Moral Stages and Moralization’ in T. Lickons led.), Moral Development and Behavior. New Yord: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1976.

Now as I take this table into consideration I see that children are consistently react in to the consequences given to them by parents, schools, and so forth. These ideas are ingrained into us from birth, therefor they become a part of us. Not only do they become a part of us, but the real reason that they are

important gets lost and becomes a “ just because” reason. Maybe this is why it is so difficult to explain why a person should be moral. Having said all of this, I believe that Aristotle’s ideas were for the most part correct. His philosophy o morality being linked to the achievement of happiness does fit into my thoughts on societal molding. In our society, or any for that matter, there seems to be a blueprint from which we set our goals and structure our lives. Being healthy, wealthy, and respected are a big part of that blueprint we in our sect call the American Dream. Inherent to being respected is being known for doing the right thing and making the right decisions, and keeping promises. We do all want to be happy but I say society has created those items which we consider important our out happiness. Would wealth be important if there was no money with which to contend? I think not, therefor I don’t think morals would be an important ingredient to happiness if religion had not affected society. Through the ages the beliefs of the moral issues of the time. Therefor, I think the ideas we accrue throughout our life times concerning what is right our wrong are then past to our children just the same. Why should I be moral? I strongly believe it is because society says so.

Olen, Jeffrey., *Persons and Their World*. McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1983

Wallace, Patricia M., Goldstein, Heffrey H., Nathan, Peter E.,

Introduction to Psychology. Brown Publishers, 1990.