

Justifications and emotions

Business



Is an action morally justifiable if it feels right? Sometimes it is. It all depends on the type of person acting, what that person has been taught by others, and many other factors. What if there's no one around to see him/her and a person has to decide whether or not to steal? The person acting may be a good person, brought up knowing right from wrong. This kind of person will quickly decide not to rob the establishment or person. But what if, instead of the previously stated traits, the person was brought up surrounded by bad, not learning the rights and wrongs of society? That person would have an opposite action than that of the first person. Instead of walking away, he/she will seize this opportune moment and plunder to his heart's content.

What if the person is an Elliot? In David Goleman's Emotional Intelligence, there is a section in Chapter 4: Know Thyself called "In Praise of Gut Feeling". In this section, a man, Elliot, has a tumor in his brain surgically removed. After the surgery, Elliot is completely different. Every decision and aspect of his life is of the same importance as all the others. He has no sense of priority.

He has no knowledge of his feelings. What if that was the type of person that was faced with the choice of whether to steal or not? Would he rob the person/place? Would he walk away? Or would he simply stand there, wallowing in his indecisiveness? This brings us to another question. Elliot loses his sense of right and wrong. He no longer gets the small twinges of guilt or pride that regular people do to help them make decisions. Does he simply choose at random? What is the difference between the matters that dictate his actions and the actions of people with consciences? What parts (if

any) do and/or should emotions play in the form of moral judgments? For most people, emotions are a large part of moral judgment.

If the person or place being robbed was connected to someone that was disliked (or even hated) by the “ actor”, he/she will be more inclined to steal from the person/place. If the person/place is attached to something happy, the “ actor” will feel bad about taking anything that isn’t given to him/her. The person could also be stealing to help someone that he/she loves. In another matter, such as last week’s episode of “ No Ordinary Family”, a boy - Trent- is forced to keep a secret that would help the police because of the fact that the criminal gave him an ultimatum. Keep the secret or his parents die. Basically, this shows that emotions are a large part in the moral choices a person makes.

These previous examples also prove that most people do things because of their emotions. If the good person didn’t need to help his/her love, he wouldn’t steal. If the bad person didn’t feel greed or didn’t feel desperate, he wouldn’t feel the need to steal. If Trent’s parents weren’t being threatened, he would’ve told the police about the criminal. Another example that could be drawn from “ No Ordinary Family” is during the criminals’ first attack on Trent’s home. After attacking his parents, one of them goes up to Trent’s room and is about to shoot, but doesn’t when he sees that Trent is “ just a kid”.

He doesn’t feel remorse when he beats Trent’s parents, but he knows that he will if he kills Trent. This emotional knowledge causes him to spare the teen,

even though he's now able to identify the criminal. This shows that even bad people can be morally affected by emotions in a good way.