



By Vernon Rupert Grant

THE ETHICAL TIGHTROPE

Morality, Ethics, & Professional Decisions

AS

professionals, we often grapple with moral and ethical dilemmas, sometimes confusing the two and forming misguided judgments about ourselves and others. It is crucial for professionals to seek clarity regarding the expectations of the organizations they serve, as a cloud of selfishness can corrupt our thinking, leading us to prioritize personal benefit over ethical considerations. This tendency can skew the decisions we make.

While morality serves as the foundation for ethical decision-making, it does not exist in isolation. Several factors contribute to an individual's moral compass, such as their belief system, the distinction between malevolent and virtuous actions, and the ability to discern right from wrong.

In contrast, ethics delves into the core of our reasoning process. It enables us to make decisions that align with our morals, while also taking into account legal boundaries. Additionally, ethics relies on a shared understanding of societal codes, which further facilitate the maintenance of social order.

During our formative years, our environment plays a significant role in shaping us. It is from these external influences that our belief systems emerge, drawing from factors such as education, religious faith, social responsibility, parental and guardian guidance, as well as the impact of role models. Over time, this belief system develops from a set of personal values, including but not limited to honesty, independence, merit, loyalty, wealth, creativity, fame, freedom, privacy, public service, friendships, personal growth, and religious beliefs. Each person's belief system and values are unique, influenced by diverse cultures and the ideals we adopt as we mature

into adulthood. Notably, even individuals raised in the same household may develop contrasting sets of values. These values shape our attitudes, which, in turn, guide our decision-making. The outcomes of these decisions can be either positive or negative.

Morality plays a crucial role in maintaining a balance between malevolence and virtue within our minds. The consequences of choosing one path over the other can have lasting effects, either negative or

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positive, respectively. If one succumbs to emotional adversity or anger, it may lead them down a path of malevolence, which would impact their family, employers, coworkers, friends, and the general public. In such cases, tragic circumstances may result from a deviation from the moral evolution that could have otherwise occurred. This could lead to moral turpitude becoming the individual's standard of behavior.

Determining right from wrong can be challenging within the realm of morality, especially when clear-cut measurements are unavailable. Peer pressure can sway our moral judgment, leading to concessions that can be either good or bad.

In our decision-making, we often employ an ethical framework influenced by our beliefs and values, whether compromised or not. Legal considerations can also come into play, serving as a rationale for taking an absolute ethical or unethical stance. Some individuals may believe that they can violate the law or ethical codes without being detected, but such

actions often lead to a slippery slope, eventually resulting in the discovery of their misconduct. In certain cases, one might rationalize their behavior based on the utilitarian theory, which aims to achieve the greatest benefit for the largest number of people. However, if this utilitarian approach violates the law or ethical codes and causes harm to a few for the benefit of many in the future, such behavior becomes unacceptable, and the reasoning behind it is flawed.

Unfortunately, many individuals fail to consider the potential harm caused by their unethical decisions, both on a social and professional level. Selfishness drives these decisions, and some individuals continue to compromise their integrity, making unethical choices the norm. It is crucial for us to consistently reflect on our uncompromising social responsibilities to society, particularly those within our sphere of influence. By doing so, we contribute to maintaining social order, upholding moral reasoning, and fostering professional appropriateness. These values bind society's fabric together in a positive manner.

About the Author: Vernon Rupert Grant is a Crisisologist specializing in crisis mitigation management. He teaches property management ethics and human relations, among other courses. He is the founder and Chief Managing Executive of Crisisology Group International LLC Crisisology.com. Mr. Grant is also a New York University-trained realty management executive and may be reached at verupe@aol.com.