

Ten (10) commandments

Post by “Kalosyni” of November 17, 2022 at 9:14 PM

This a very good project. Brings up Kohlberg's Stages of Moral Development, and I think I posted about this before (but don't remember for sure), Kohlberg's Theory of Moral Development.

Quote

Kohlberg identified three distinct levels of moral reasoning: [preconventional](#), [conventional](#), and [postconventional](#). Each level has two sub-stages.

People can only pass through these levels in the order listed. Each new stage replaces the reasoning typical of the earlier stage. Not everyone achieves all the stages. The 3 levels of moral reasoning include:

Level 1 - Preconventional morality

Preconventional morality is the first stage of moral development, and lasts until approximately age 9. At the preconventional level children don't have a personal code of morality, and instead moral decisions are shaped by the standards of adults and the consequences of following or breaking their rules.

For example, if an action leads to punishment is must be bad, and if it leads to a reward is must be good.

Authority is outside the individual and children often make moral decisions based on the physical consequences of actions.

- **Stage 1. Obedience and Punishment Orientation.** The child/individual is good in order to avoid being punished. If a person is punished, they must have done wrong.
- **Stage 2. Individualism and Exchange.** At this stage, children recognize that there is not just one right view that is handed down by the authorities. Different individuals have different viewpoints.

Level 2 - Conventional morality

Conventional morality is the second stage of moral development, and is characterized by an acceptance of social rules concerning right and wrong. At the conventional level (most adolescents and adults), we begin to internalize the moral standards of valued

adult role models.

Authority is internalized but not questioned, and reasoning is based on the norms of the group to which the person belongs.

A social system that stresses the responsibilities of relationships as well as social order is seen as desirable and must, therefore, influence our view of what is right and wrong.

- **Stage 3. Good Interpersonal Relationships.** The child/individual is good in order to be seen as being a good person by others. Therefore, answers relate to the approval of others.

- **Stage 4. Maintaining the Social Order.** The child/individual becomes aware of the wider rules of society, so judgments concern obeying the rules in order to uphold the law and to avoid guilt.

Level 3 - Postconventional morality

Postconventional morality is the third stage of moral development, and is characterized by an individuals' understanding of universal ethical principles. These are abstract and ill-defined, but might include: the preservation of life at all costs, and the importance of human dignity.

Individual judgment is based on self-chosen principles, and moral reasoning is based on individual rights and justice. According to Kohlberg this level of moral reasoning is as far as most people get.

Only 10-15% are capable of the kind of abstract thinking necessary for stage 5 or 6 (post-conventional morality). That is to say, most people take their moral views from those around them and only a minority think through ethical principles for themselves.

- **Stage 5. Social Contract and Individual Rights.** The child/individual becomes aware that while rules/laws might exist for the good of the greatest number, there are times when they will work against the interest of particular individuals.

The issues are not always clear-cut. For example, in Heinz's dilemma, the protection of life is more important than breaking the law against stealing.

- **Stage 6. Universal Principles.** People at this stage have developed their own set of moral guidelines which may or may not fit the law. The principles apply to everyone.

E.g., human rights, justice, and equality. The person will be prepared to act to defend these principles even if it means going against the rest of society in the process and having to pay the consequences of disapproval and or imprisonment. Kohlberg doubted few people reached this stage.

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Understanding the morals of the Christian Ten Commandments would depend on the age of an individual -- a child would view the 10 Commandments with Level 1, Stage 1 and an adult would view them within Level 2 thinking.

Now I look over this and seems that Epicurean ethics would be at Level 3, Stage 5 -- so this is able to look at exceptions depending on unique circumstances.