

KOHLBERG

Morality is the differentiation of intentions, decisions and actions between those that are distinguished as proper and those that are improper. Morality can be a body of standards or principles derived from a code of conduct from a particular philosophy, religion or culture, or it can be derive from a standard that a person's beliefs should be universal. Morality may also be specifically synonymous with "goodness" or "rightness".

In a modern moral psychology, morality is considered to change through personal development.

Lawrence Kohlberg used Piaget's storytelling technique to tell people stories involving moral dilemmas. In each case, he presented a choice to be considered, for example, between the rights of some authority and the needs of some deserving individual who is being unfairly treated.

HEINZ DILEMMA

In Europe, a woman was near death from a special kind of cancer. There was one drug that the doctors thought might save her. It was a form of radium that a druggist in the same town had recently discovered. the drug was expensive to make, but the druggist was charging ten times what the drug cost him to make. He paid \$400 for the radium and charged \$4,000 for a small dose of the drug. The sick woman's husband, Heinz, went to everyone he knew to borrow the money and tried every legal means, but he could only get together about \$2,000, which is half of what it cost. He told the druggist that his wife was dying, and asked him to sell it cheaper or let him pay later. But the druggist said, "No, I discovered the drug and I'm going to make money from it." So, having tried every legal means, Heinz gets desperate and considers breaking into the man's store to steal the drug for his wife.

1. Should Heinz steal the drug?
2. Is it actually right or wrong for him to steal the drug?
3. Does Heinz have a duty or obligation to steal the drug?
4. If Heinz doesn't love his wife, should he steal the drug for her? Does it make a difference in what Heinz should do whether or not he loves his wife?
5. Suppose the person dying is not his wife, but a stranger. Should Heinz steal the drug for the stranger?
6. Suppose it's a pet animal he loves. Should Heinz steal to save the pet animal?

7. Is it important for people to do everything they can to save another's life?
8. It is against the law for Heinz to steal. Does that make it morally wrong?
 - 8a. Why or why not?
9. In general, should people try to do everything they can to obey the law?
10. In thinking back over the dilemma, what would you say is the most responsible thing for Heinz to do?

Kohlberg identified three distinct levels of moral reasoning: pre-conventional, conventional, and post-conventional. Each level has two sub-stages. People can only pass through these levels in the listed order. Each new stage replaces the reasoning typical of the earlier stage. Not everyone achieves all the stages. Most people do not go beyond Stage 4. Only 10-15% are capable of the kind of abstract thinking necessary for stage 5 or 6 (post-conventional morality).

| LEVEL | STAGE |
|--|--|
| Post-Conventional shared standards, rights, duties and principles | Stage 6: Guided by moral principle of justice |
| | Stage 5: Social contract rules and laws of social good |
| Conventional Assessing personal consequences | Stage 4: Judgements based on the relative rules and laws of society |
| | Stage 3: Decisions based on the approval of others |
| Pre-Conventional Values based on external events | Stage 2: Acting to further one's own interest |
| | Stage 1: Acting to avoid punishment |

Stage one (*punishment & obedience*):

Heinz should not steal the drug. He will be put in prison. Which means he's a mean bad person.

or:

Heinz should steal the drug, it is only worth \$200. Heinz had even offered to pay & wouldn't steal anything else.

Stage two (*reward & self-interest*):

Heinz should not steal the drug. Prison is awful a jail cell is worse than his wife's death.

or:

Heinz should steal the drug, he will be much happier if he saves his wife.

Stage three (*conformity – good-boy/nice girl*):

Heinz should not steal the drug. Stealing is bad & he's not a criminal. He tried without breaking the law, you can't blame him.

or:

Heinz should steal the drug. His wife expects it; He wants to be a good husband

Stage four (*law-and-order*):

Heinz should not steal the drug the law prohibits stealing it's illegal.

or:

Heinz should steal the drug. He should take the punishment for the crime & pay the druggist. Actions have their consequences.

Stage five (*human rights*):

Heinz should not steal the drug. The scientist has a right to fair compensation. His wife's illness, it does not make his actions right.

or:

Heinz should steal the drug. Everyone has a right to choose life, regardless of the law.

Stage six (*universal human ethics*):

Heinz should not steal the drug. Others may need the drug just as badly & their lives are equally significant.

or:

Heinz should steal the drug. Saving a human life is a more fundamental value than the property rights of another person.

We usually say that it is good when the child is obedient. Kohlberg's theory of moral development shows that children must be obedient in order to learn the bases of morality. Only after that they may, or may not, start to create their own rules by which ethnicity will be above obedience. According to Kolberg, even the largest part of humanity is on the lower levels of morality, and only a very small percentage (so much that Kolberg himself later withdrew from the highest level of development his theory as an idealistic) reaches the last two levels, levels of morality in which it is not linked to the authority of law, superior's or parent's.