

Business Ethics

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C O N N E X I O N S

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Chapter 1

Ethical Leadership

1.1 Theory Building Activities: Mountain Terrorist Exercise¹

1.1.1 Module Introduction

This module poses an ethical dilemma, that is, a forced choice between two bad alternatives. Your job is to read the scenario and choose between the two horns of the dilemma. You will make your choice and then justify it in the first activity. In the second activity, you will discuss your choice with others. Here, the objective is to reach consensus on a course of action or describe the point at which your group's progress toward consensus stopped. The Mountain Terrorist Exercise almost always generates lively discussion and helps us to reflect on our moral beliefs. Don't expect to reach agreement with your fellow classmates quickly or effortlessly. (If you do, then your instructor will find ways of throwing a monkey wrench into the whole process.) What is more important here is that we learn how to state our positions clearly, how to listen to others, how to justify our positions, and how to assess the justifications offered by others. In other words, we will all have a chance to practice the virtue of reasonableness. And we will learn reasonableness not when it's easy (as it is when we agree) but when it becomes difficult (as it is when we disagree).

The second half of this module requires that you reflect carefully on your moral reasoning and that of your classmates. The Mountain Terrorist Exercise triggers the different moral schemas that make up our psychological capacity for moral judgment. Choosing one horn of the dilemma means that you tend to favor one kind of schema while choosing the other horn generally indicates that you favor another. The dominant moral theories that we will study this semester provide detailed articulations and justifications of these moral schemas. Reflecting on your choice, the reasons for your choice, and how your choice differs from that of your classmates will help you get started on the path of studying and effectively utilizing moral theory.

The following scenario comes originally from the philosopher, Bernard Williams. It is also presented in introductory ethics textbooks (such as Geoffrey Thomas' *An Introduction to Ethics*). The first time this module's author became aware of its use in the classroom was in a workshop on Agriculture Ethics led by Paul Thompson, then of Texas A&M University, in 1992.

1.1.2 Moral Theories Highlighted

1. Utilitarianism: the moral value of an action lies in its consequences or results
2. Deontology: the moral value of an action lies, not in its consequences, but in the formal characteristics of the action itself.
3. Virtue Ethics: Actions sort themselves out into virtuous or vicious actions. Virtuous actions stem from a virtuous character while vicious actions stem from a vicious or morally flawed character. Who we are is revealed through what we do.

¹This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m13764/1.11/>>.

1.1.3 Mountain Terrorist Scenario

You are in a remote mountain village. A group of terrorists has lined up 20 people from the village; they plan on shooting them for collaborating with the enemy. Since you are not from the village, you will not be killed. Taking advantage of your position, you plead with the terrorists not to carry out their plan. Finally, you convince the leader that it is not necessary to kill all 20. He takes a gun, empties it of all its bullets except one, and then hands it to you. He has decided to kill only one villager to set an example to the rest. As an honored guest and outsider, you will decide who will be killed, and you will carry out the deed. The terrorists conclude with a warning; if you refuse to kill the villager, then they will revert back to the original plan of killing all 20. And if you try any “funny business,” they will kill the 20 villagers and then kill you. What should you do?

Your Options

1. Take the gun, select a villager, and kill him or her.
2. Refuse the terrorists’ offer and walk away from the situation.

Spanish Translation by Dr. Halley Sanchez

El Terrorista de la Montaña Tú eres un antropólogo que por un mes ha estado viviendo con y observando (o sea, estudiando) a los residents de una aldea en una area remota montañosa de un país en América Latina. El día que te dispone irte de la aldea, aparece un grupo de hombres armados que reúnen a los aldeanos y les anuncian que se han enterado de que ellos han estado cooperando con el gobierno represivo y que, como lección, han de ejecutar viente de ellos. El líder de los terroristas te mira y te dice que tú te puedes ir, ya que no estás involucrado en la lucha patriótica y que ellos no están en la costumbre de tomar rehénes extranjeros. Debido a que te da la impresión de que el líder de los supuestos patriotas (terroristas?) es un hombre educado, tú te atreves tratar de razonar con él. Le explica que llevas un mes en la aldea y que los aldeanos no han cooperado de forma voluntaria con el gobierno. Sí, por supuesto, las tropas del gobierno pasaron por la aldea y confiscaron algunas provisiones, pero los aldeanos no se las dieron libremente sino que estaban indefenso y no pudieron prevenir que le confiscaran las mismas. El líder piensa un tiempo y te dice que por tú ser forastero y obviamente un antropólogo estudioso, te va a dar el beneficio de la duda, y que por tanto no van a ejecutar viente aldeanos. Pero dado que la lucha patriótica está en un proceso crítico y que la aldea sí le proveyó provisiones al gobierno, por el bien de la lucha patriótica y el bien de la humanidad, es menester darle una lección a la aldea. Así que tan sólo han de ejecutar un aldeano. Más, como huesped, tú has de escoger quién ha de morir y tú has de matarlo tú mismo. Te da una pistola con una sola bala y te dice que proceda, mientras que a la vez te advierte que de tratar algo heroico, te ejecutarán inmediatamente y procederán a ejecutar a los viente aldeanos como dijeron al comienzo. Tú eres el antropólogo. ¿Qué harás?

Activity 1

In a short essay of 1 to 2 pages describe what you would do if you were in the position of the tourist. Then justify your choice.

Activity 2

Bring your essay to class. You will be divided into small groups. Present your choice and justification to the others in your group. Then listen to their choices and justifications. Try to reach a group consensus on choice and justification. (You will be given 10-15 minutes.) If you succeed present your results to the rest of the class. If you fail, present to the class the disagreement that blocked consensus and what you did (within the time limit) to overcome it.

1.1.4 Taxonomy of Ethical Approaches

There are many ethical approaches that can be used in decision making. The Mountain Terrorist Exercise is based on an artificial scenario designed to separate these theoretical approaches along the lines of the different "horns" of a dilemma. Utilitarians tend to choose to shoot a villager "in order to save 19." In other words they focus their analysis on the consequences of an action alternative and choose the one that produces the least harm. Deontologists generally elect to walk away from the situation. This is because they judge an action on the basis of its formal characteristics. A deontologist might argue that killing the villager violates

natural law or cannot be made into a law or rule that consistently applies to everybody. A deontologist might say something like, "What right do I have to take another person's life?" A virtue ethicist might try to imagine how a person with the virtue of courage or integrity would act in this situation. (Williams claims that choosing to kill the villager, a duty under utilitarianism, would undermine the integrity of a person who abhorred killing.)

Table Connecting Theory to Domain

1. Row 1: Utilitarianism concerns itself with the domain of consequences which tells us that the moral value of an action is "colored" by its results. The harm/beneficence test, which asks us to choose the least harmful alternative, encapsulates or summarizes this theoretical approach. The basic principle of utilitarianism is the principle of utility: choose that action that produces the greatest good for the greatest number. Cost/benefits analysis, the Pareto criterion, the Kalder/Hicks criterion, risk/benefits analysis all represent different frameworks for balancing positive and negative consequences under utilitarianism or consequentialism.
2. Row 2: Deontology helps us to identify and justify rights and their correlative duties. The reversibility test summarizes deontology by asking the question, "Does your action still work if you switch (=reverse) roles with those on the receiving end?" "Treat others always as ends, never merely as means," the Formula of End, represents deontology's basic principle. The rights that represent special cases of treating people as ends and not merely as means include (a) informed consent, (b) privacy, (c) due process, (d) property, (e) free speech, and (f) conscientious objection.
3. Row 3: Virtue ethics turns away from the action and focuses on the agent, the person performing the action. The word, "Virtue," refers to different sets of skills and habits cultivated by agents. These skills and habits, consistently and widely performed, support, sustain, and advance different occupational, social, and professional practices. (See MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, and Solomon, *Ethics and Excellence*, for more on the relation of virtues to practices.) The public identification test summarizes this approach: an action is morally acceptable if it is one with which I would willingly be publicly associated given my moral convictions. Individual virtues that we will use this semester include integrity, justice, responsibility, reasonableness, honesty, trustworthiness, and loyalty.

Covering All the Bases				
Ethical Dimension	Covering Ethical Approach	Encapsulating Ethical Test	Basic Principles	Application or Bridging Tools
Consequences	Utilitarianism	Harm/Beneficence (weigh harms against benefits)	Principle of Utility: greatest good for greatest number	Benefit & cost comparison Utility Maximization
Formal Characteristics of Act	Deontology (Duty-based, rights-based, natural law, social contract)	Reversibility (test by reversing roles between agent and object of action)	Categorical Imperative Formula of End Autonomy	Free & Informed Consent, Privacy, Property, Due Process, Free Speech, Conscientious objection
<i>continued on next page</i>				

Skills and habits cultivated by agent	Virtue Ethics	Public Identification (impute moral import of action to person of agent)	Virtues are means between extremes with regard to agent and action Virtues are cultivated dispositions that promote central community values	Integrity, justice, responsibility, reasonableness, honesty, trustworthiness, loyalty
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Table 1.1

1.1.5 Comments on the Relation Between Ethical Approaches

The Mountain Terrorist Exercise has, in the past, given students the erroneous idea that ethical approaches are necessarily opposed to one another. As one student put it, "If deontology tells us to walk away from the village, then utilitarianism must tell us to stay and kill a villager because deontology and utilitarianism, as different and opposed theories, always reach different and opposed conclusions on the actions they recommend." The Mountain Terrorist dilemma was specially constructed by Bernard Williams to produce a situation that offered only a limited number of alternatives. He then tied these alternatives to different ethical approaches to separate them precisely because in most real world situations they are not so readily distinguishable. Later this semester, we will turn from these philosophical puzzles to real world cases where ethical approaches function in a very different and mostly complimentary way. As we will see, ethical approaches, for the most part, converge on the same solutions. For this reason, this module concludes with 3 meta-tests. When approaches converge on a solution, this strengthens the solution's moral validity. When approaches diverge on a solution, this weakens their moral validity. A third meta-test tells us to avoid framing all ethical problems as dilemmas (=forced choices between undesirable alternatives) or what Carolyn Whitbeck calls "multiple-choice" problems. You will soon learn that effective moral problem solving requires moral imagination and moral creativity. We do not "find" solutions "out there" ready made but design them to harmonize and realize ethical and practical values.

Meta-Tests

- **Divergence Test:** When two ethical approaches differ on a given solution, then that difference counts against the strength of the solution. Solutions on which ethical theories diverge must be revised towards convergence.
- **Convergence Test:** Convergence represents a meta-test that attests to solution strength. Solutions on which different theoretical approaches converge are, by this fact, strengthened. Convergence demonstrates that a solution is strong, not just over one domain, but over multiple domains.
- **Avoid Framing a Problem as a Dilemma.** A dilemma is a no-win situation that offers only two alternatives of action both of which are equally bad. (A trilemma offers three bad alternatives, etc.) Dilemmas are better dissolved than solved. Reframe the dilemma into something that admits of more than two no-win alternatives. Dilemma framing (framing a situation as an ethical dilemma) discourages us from designing creative solutions that integrate the conflicting values that the dilemma poses as incompatible.

1.1.6 Module Wrap-Up

1. **Reasonableness and the Mountain Terrorist Exercise.** It may seem that this scenario is the last place where the virtue of reasonableness should prevail, but look back on how you responded to those of your classmates who chose differently in this exercise and who offered arguments that you had not initially thought of. Did you "listen and respond thoughtfully" to them? Were you "open to new ideas"

even if these challenged your own? Did you "give reasons for" your views, modifying and shaping them to respond to your classmates' arguments? Did you "acknowledge mistakes and misunderstandings" such as responding critically and personally to a classmate who put forth a different view? Finally, when you turned to working with your group, were you able to "compromise (without compromising personal integrity)"? If you did any or all of these things, then you practiced the virtue of reasonableness as characterized by Michael Pritchard in his book, *Reasonable Children: Moral Education and Moral Learning* (1996, University of Kansas Press, p. 11). Congratulate yourself on exercising reasonableness in an exercise designed to challenge this virtue. You passed the test.

2. **Recognizing that we are already making ethical arguments.** In the past, students have made the following arguments on this exercise: (a) I would take the gun and kill a villager in order to save nineteen; (b) I would walk away because I don't have the right to take another's life; (c) While walking away might appear cowardly it is the responsible thing to do because staying and killing a villager would make me complicit in the terrorists' project. As we discussed in class, these and other arguments make use of modes of thought captured by ethical theories or approaches. The first employs the consequentialist approach of utilitarianism while the second makes use of the principle of respect that forms the basis of our rights and duties. The third works through a conflict between two virtues, courage and responsibility. This relies on the virtue approach. One accomplishment of this exercise is to make you aware of the fact that you are already using ethical arguments, i.e., arguments that appeal to ethical theory. Learning about the theories behind these arguments will help you to make these arguments more effectively.
3. **Results from Muddy Point Exercises** The Muddy Point Exercises you contributed kept coming back to two points. (a) Many of you pointed out that you needed more information to make a decision in this situation. For example, who were these terrorists, what causes were they fighting for, and were they correct in accusing the village of collaborating with the enemy? Your request for more information was quite appropriate. But many of the cases we will be studying this semester require decisions in the face of uncertainty and ignorance. These are unavoidable in some situations because of factors such as the cost and time of gathering more information. Moral imagination skillfully exercised can do a lot to compensate when all of the facts are not in. (b) Second, many of you felt overly constrained by the dilemma framing of the scenario. Those of you who entered the realm of "funny business" (anything beyond the two alternatives of killing the villager or walking away) took a big step toward effective moral problem solving. By rejecting the dilemma framing of this scenario, you were trying to reframe the situation to allow for more—and more ethically viable—alternatives. Trying to negotiate with the Terrorists is a good example of reframing the scenario to admit of more ethical alternatives of action than killing or walking away.
4. Congratulations on completing your first ethics module! You have begun recognizing and practicing skills that will help you to tackle real life ethical problems. (Notice that we are going to work with "problems" not "dilemmas".) We will now turn, in the next module, to look at those who managed to do good in the face of difficulty. Studying moral exemplars will provide the necessary corrective to the "no-win" Mountain Terrorist Exercise.

1.2 Theory-Building Activities: Virtue Ethics²

Based on material presented by Chuck Huff (St. Olaf College) and William Frey at the Association for Practical and Professional Ethics in 2005 at San Antonio, TX. Preliminary versions were distributed during this presentation.

²This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m13755/1.13/>>.

1.2.1 Module Introduction

This module uses materials being prepared for Good Computing: A Virtue Approach to Computer Ethics, to set up an exercise in which you will identify and spell out virtues relevant to your professional discipline. After identifying these virtues, you will work to contextualize them in everyday practice. Emphasis will be placed on the Aristotelian approach to virtues which describes a virtue as the disposition toward the mean located between the extremes of excess and defect. You will also be asked to identify common obstacles that prevent professionals from realizing a given virtue and moral exemplars who demonstrate consistent success in realizing these virtues and responding to obstacles that stand in the way of their realization. In a variation on this module you could be asked to compare the virtues you have identified for your profession with virtues that belong to other moral ecologies such as those of the Homeric warrior.

1.2.2 Three Versions of Virtue Ethics: Virtue 1, Virtue 2, and Virtue 3

Virtue ethics has gone through three historical versions. The first, Virtue 1, was set forth by Aristotle in ancient Greece. While tied closely to practices in ancient Greece that no longer exist today, Aristotle's version still has a lot to say to us in this day and age. In the second half of the twentieth century, British philosophical ethicists put forth a related but different theory of virtue ethics (virtue 2) as an alternative to the dominant ethical theories of utilitarianism and deontology. Virtue 2 promised a new foundation of ethics consistent with work going on at that time in the philosophy of mind. Proponents felt that turning from the action to the agent promised to free ethical theory from the intractable debate between utilitarianism and deontology and offered a way to expand scope and relevance of ethics. Virtue 3 reconnects with Aristotle and virtue 1 even though it drops the doctrine of the mean and Aristotle's emphasis on character. Using recent advances in moral psychology and moral pedagogy, it seeks to rework key Aristotelian concepts in modern terms. In the following, we will provide short characterizations of each of these three versions of virtue ethics.

1.2.3 Virtue 1: Aristotle's Virtue Ethics

- **Eudaimonia.** Happiness, for Aristotle, consists of a life spent fulfilling the intellectual and moral virtues. These modes of action are auto-telic, that is, they are self-justifying and contain their own ends. By carrying out the moral and intellectual virtues for a lifetime, we realize ourselves fully as humans. Because we are doing what we were meant to do, we are happy in this special sense of eudaimonia.
- **Arete.** Arete is the Greek word we usually translate as "virtue". But arete is more faithfully translated as excellence. For Aristotle, the moral and intellectual virtues represent excellences. So the moral life is more than just staying out of trouble. Under Aristotle, it is centered in pursuing and achieving excellence for a lifetime.
- **Virtue as the Mean.** Aristotle also characterizes virtue as a settled disposition to choose the **mean** between the extremes of excess and defect, all relative to person and situation. Courage (the virtue) is the mean between the extremes of excess (too much courage or recklessness) and defect (too little courage or cowardice). Aristotle's claim that most or all of the virtues can be specified as the mean between extremes is controversial. While the doctrine of the mean is dropped in Virtue 2 and Virtue 3, we will still use it in developing virtue tables. (See exercise 1 below.) You may not find both extremes for the virtues you have been assigned but make the effort nonetheless.
- **Ethos.** "Ethos" translates as character which, for Aristotle, composes the seat of the virtues. Virtues are well settled dispositions or habits that have been incorporated into our characters. Because our characters are manifested in our actions, the patterns formed by these over time reveal who we are. This can be formulated as a decision-making test, the **public identification test**. Because we reveal who we are through our actions we can ask, when considering an action, whether we would care to be publicly identified with this action. "Would I want to be publicly known as the kind of person who would perform that kind of action? Would I, through my cowardly action, want to be publicly

identified as a coward? Would I, through my responsible action, want to be publicly identified as a responsible person? Because actions provide others with a window into our characters, we must make sure be sure that they portray us as we want to be portrayed.

- **Aisthesis of the Phronimos.** This Greek phrase, roughly translated as the perception of the morally experienced agent, reveals how important practice and experience are to Aristotle in his conception of moral development. One major difference between Aristotle and other ethicists (utilitarians and deontologists) is the emphasis that Aristotle places on developing into or becoming a moral person. For Aristotle, one becomes good by first repeatedly performing good actions. So morality is more like an acquired skill than a mechanical process. Through practice we develop sensitivities to what is morally relevant in a situation, we learn how to structure our situations to see moral problems and possibilities, and we develop the skill of "hitting" consistently on the mean between the extremes. All of these are skills that are cultivated in much the same way as a basketball player develops through practice the skill of shooting the ball through the hoop.
- **Bouleusis.** This word translates as "deliberation." For Aristotle, moral skill is not the product of extensive deliberation (careful, exhaustive thinking about reasons, actions, principles, concepts, etc.) but of practice. Those who have developed the skill to find the mean can do so with very little thought and effort. Virtuous individuals, for Aristotle, are surprisingly unreflective. They act virtuously without thought because it has become second nature to them.
- **Akrasia.** Ross translates this word as "incontinence" which is outmoded. A better translation is weakness of will. For Aristotle, knowing where virtue lies is not the same as doing what virtue demands. There are those who are unable to translate knowledge into resolution and then into action. Because akrasia (weakness of will) is very real for Aristotle, he also places emphasis in his theory of moral development on the cultivation of proper emotions to help motivate virtuous action. Later ethicists seek to oppose emotion and right action; Aristotle sees properly trained and cultivated emotions as strong motives to doing what virtue requires.
- **Logos** Aristotle's full definition of virtue is "a state of character concerned with choice, lying in a mean, i.e. the mean relative to us, this being determined by a rational principle, and by that principle by which [a person] of practical wisdom would determine it." (Ross's translation in **Nichomachean Ethics**, 1106b, 36.) We have talked about character, the mean, and the person of practical wisdom. The last key term is "logos" which in this definition is translated by reason. This is a good translation if we take reason in its fullest sense so that it is not just the capacity to construct valid arguments but also includes the practical wisdom to assess the truth of the premises used in constructing these arguments. In this way, Aristotle expands reason beyond logic to include a fuller set of intellectual, practical, emotional, and perceptual skills that together form a practical kind of wisdom.

1.2.4 Virtue 2

- The following summary of Virtue 2 is taken largely from Rosalind Hursthouse. While she extensively qualifies each of these theses in her own version of virtue ethics, these points comprise an excellent summary of Virtue 2 which starts with G.E.M. Anscombe's article, "Modern Moral Philosophy," and continues on into the present. Hursthouse presents this characterization of Virtue 2 in her book, **On Virtue Ethics** (2001) U.K.: Oxford University Press: 17.
- **Virtue 2 is agent centered.** Contrary to deontology and utilitarianism which focus on whether actions are good or right, V2 is agent centered in that it sees the action as an expression of the goodness or badness of the agent. Utilitarianism focuses on actions which bring about the greatest happiness for the greatest number; deontology seeks those actions that respect the autonomy of individuals and carry out moral obligations, especially duties. These theories emphasize **doing** what is good or right. Virtue 2, on the other hand, focuses on the agent's becoming or **being** good.
- **Can Virtue 2 tell us how to act?** Because V2 is agent-centered, critics claim that it cannot provide insight into how to act in a given situation. All it can say is, "Act the way a moral exemplar would act." But what moral standards do moral exemplars use or embody in their actions? And what moral

standards do we use to pick out the moral exemplars themselves? Hursthouse acknowledges that this criticism hits home. However, she points out that the moral standards come from the moral concepts that we apply to moral exemplars; they are individuals who act **courageously**, exercise **justice**, and realize **honesty**. The moral concepts "courage," "justice," and "honesty" all have independent content that helps guide us. She also calls this criticism unfair: while virtue 2 may not provide any more guidance than deontology or utilitarianism, it doesn't provide any less. Virtue 2 may not provide perfect guidance, but what it does provide is favorably comparable to what utilitarianism and deontology provide.

- **Virtue 2 replaces Deontic concepts (right, duty, obligation) with Aretaic concepts (good, virtue).** This greatly changes the scope of ethics. Deontic concepts serve to establish our minimum obligations. On the other hand, aretaic concepts bring the pursuit of excellence within the purview of ethics. Virtue ethics produces a change in our moral language that makes the pursuit of excellence an essential part of moral inquiry.
- Finally, there is a somewhat different account of virtue 2 (call it virtue 2a) that can be attributed to Alisdair MacIntyre. This version "historicizes" the virtues, that is, looks at how our concepts of key virtues have changed over time. (MacIntyre argues that the concept of justice, for example, varies greatly depending on whether one views justice in Homeric Greece, Aristotle's Greece, or Medieval Europe.) Because he argues that skills and actions are considered virtuous only in relation to a particular historical and community context, he redefines virtues as those skill sets necessary to realize the goods or values around which social practices are built and maintained. This notion fits in well with professional ethics because virtues can be derived from the habits, attitudes, and skills needed to maintain the cardinal ideals of the profession.

1.2.5 Virtue 3

Virtue 3 can best be outlined by showing how the basic concepts of Virtue 1 can be reformulated to reflect current research in moral psychology.

1. **Reformulating Happiness (Eudaimonia).** Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi has described flow experiences (see text box below) in which autotelic activities play a central role. For Aristotle, the virtues also are autotelic. They represent faculties whose exercise is key to realizing our fullest potentialities as human beings. Thus, virtues are self-validating activities carried out for themselves as well as for the ends they bring about. Flow experiences are also important in helping us to conceptualize the virtues in a professional context because they represent a well practiced integration of skill, knowledge, and moral sensitivity.
2. **Reformulating Values (Into Arete or Excellence).** To carry out the full project set forth by virtue 3, it is necessary to reinterpret as excellence key moral values such as honesty, justice, responsibility, reasonableness, and integrity. For example, moral responsibility has often been described as carrying out basic, minimal moral obligations. As an excellence, responsibility becomes refocused on extending knowledge and power to expand our range of effective, moral action. Responsibility reformulated as an excellence also implies a high level of care that goes well beyond what is minimally required.
3. **De-emphasizing Character.** The notion of character drops out to be replaced by more or less enduring and integrated skills sets such as moral imagination, moral creativity, reasonableness, and perseverance. Character emerges from the activities of integrating personality traits, acquired skills, and deepening knowledge around situational demands. The unity character represents is always complex and changing.
4. **Practical Skill Replaces Deliberation.** Moral exemplars develop skills which, through practice, become second nature. These skills obviate the need for extensive moral deliberation. Moral exemplars resemble more skillful athletes who quickly develop responses to dynamic situations than Hamlets stepping back from action for prolonged and agonizing deliberation.

5. **Greater Role for Emotions.** Nancy Sherman discusses how, for Aristotle, emotion is not treated as an irrational force but as an effective tool for moral action once it has been shaped and cultivated through proper moral education. To step beyond the controversy of what Aristotle did and did not say about the emotions (and where he said it) we place this enhanced role for emotions within virtue 3. Emotions carry out four essential functions: (a) they serve as modes of attention; (b) they also serve as modes of responding to or signaling value; (c) they fulfill a revelatory function; and (d) they provide strong motives to moral action. Nancy Sherman, **Making a Necessity of Virtue: Aristotle and Kant on Virtue** (1997), U.K.: Cambridge University Press: 39-50.

1.2.6 Flow Experiences

- The psychologist, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, has carried out fascinating research on what he terms "flow experiences." Mike Martin in **Meaningful Work** (2000) U.K.: Oxford,; 24, summarizes these in the following bullets:
- "clear goals as one proceeds"
- "immediate feedback about progress"
- "a balance between challenges and our skills to respond to them"
- "immersion of awareness in the activity without disruptive distractions"
- "lack of worry about failure"
- loss of anxious self-consciousness"
- time distortions (either time flying or timeslowing pleasurably)"
- the activity becomes **autotelic**: an end in itself, enjoyed as such"

1.2.7 Virtue Tables

The table just below provides a format for spelling out individual virtues through (1) a general description, (2) the correlative vices of excess and defect, (3) the skills and mental states that accompany and support it, and (4) real and fictional individuals who embody it. Following the table are hints on how to identify and characterize virtues. We start with the virtue of integrity:

Virtue	Description	Excess	Defect	Obstacles to realizing the virtue in professional practices	Moral Exemplar
Integrity	A meta-virtue in which the holder exhibits unity of character manifested in holding together even in the face of strong disruptive pressures or temptations	Excess: Rigidity—sticking to one’s guns even when one is obviously wrong(2,3)	Defect: Wantonness. A condition where one exhibits no stability or consistency in character	Individual corruption: Individuals can be tempted by greed toward the vice of defect. Lack of moral courage can also move one to both extremes	Saint Thomas More as portrayed in Robert Bolt’s A Man for All Seasons. More refuses to take an oath that goes against the core beliefs in terms of which he defines himself.
				Institutional Corruption: One may work in an organization where corruption is the norm. This generates dilemmas like following an illegal order or getting fired.	

continued on next page

Table 1.2

1.2.8 Exercise 1: Construct Virtue Tables for Professional Virtues

1. Discuss in your group why the virtue you have been assigned is important for the practice of your profession. What goods or values does the consistent employment of this virtue produce?
2. Use the discussion in #1 to develop a general description of your virtue. Think along the following lines: people who have virtue X tend to exhibit certain characteristics (or do certain things) in certain kinds of situations. Try to think of these situations in terms of what is common and important to your profession or practice.
3. Identify the corresponding vices. What characterizes the points of excess and defect between which your virtue as the mean lies?
4. What obstacles arise that prevent professionals from practicing your virtue? Do well-meaning professionals lack power or technical skill? Can virtues interfere with the realization of non-moral values like financial values? See if you can think of a supporting scenario or case here.
5. Identify a moral exemplar for your virtue. Make use of the exemplars described in the **Moral Exemplars in Business and Professional Ethics** module.
6. Go back to task #2. Redefine your description of your virtue in light of the subsequent tasks, especially the moral exemplar you identified. Check for coherence.
7. Finally, does your virtue stand alone or does it need support from other virtues or skills? For example, integrity might also require moral courage.

1.2.9 Exercise 2: Reflect on these Concluding Issues

- Did you have trouble identifying a moral exemplar? Many turn to popular figures for their moral exemplars. Movies and fiction also offer powerful models. Why do you think that it is hard to find moral exemplars in your profession? Is it because your profession is a den of corruption? (Probably not.) Do we focus more on villains than on heroes? Why or why not?
- What did you think about the moral leaders portrayed in the **Moral Exemplars in Business and Professional Ethics** module?
- Did you have trouble identifying both vices, i.e., vices of excess and defect? If so, do you think this because some virtues may not have vices of excess and defect? What do you think about Aristotle's doctrine of the mean?
- Did you notice that the virtue profiles given by your group and the other groups in the class overlapped? Is this a problem for virtue theory? Why do our conceptions of the key moral values and virtues overlap?
- Did you find the virtues difficult to apply? What do you think about the utilitarian and deontological criticism of virtue ethics, namely, that it cannot provide us with guidelines on how to act in difficult situations? Should ethical theories emphasize the act or the person? Or both?
- The most tenacious obstacle to working with virtue ethics is to change focus from the morally minimal to the morally exemplary. "Virtue" is the translation of the Greek word, *arête*. But "excellence" is, perhaps, a better word. Understanding virtue ethics requires seeing that virtue is concerned with the exemplary, not the barely passable. (Again, looking at moral exemplars helps.) *Arête* transforms our understanding of common moral values like justice and responsibility by moving from minimally acceptable to exemplary models.

Moral Leaders³ The profiles of several moral leaders in practical and professional ethics. Computer Ethics Cases⁴ This link provides several computer ethics cases and also has a description of decision making and

³<http://www.onlineethics.org>

⁴<http://www.computingcases.org>

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