**Thinking Ethically: A framework for Moral Decision Making**

The obvious but perhaps challenging first step in understanding moral dilemmas is to gather the information. Some moral questions spark debates simply because we neglect to verify the facts. Despite being obvious, the first step is also one of the most crucial and commonly skipped. But possessing the information is insufficient. Facts by themselves can only provide information about what is, not what should be. An appeal to values is necessary in addition to gathering the facts in order to resolve an ethical dilemma.

Ethics is a discipline that deals with right and wrong, although it does not always result in the same conclusions for everyone. Choosing an ethical position can be challenging for both liberals and conservatives. Of course, there are circumstances that, by any standard, are wrong. Other matters, however, are less unambiguous in terms of right and wrong. Philosophers, religious leaders, and other thinkers have shaped numerous methods to ethical decision-making to help us navigate our thinking on such challenging issues. Fairness and Justice, the Common Good, Utilitarianism, Rights, and Virtues are the five main approaches to values that deal with moral dilemmas.

**Fairness and Justice Approach**

According to the teachings of the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle, "equals should be treated equally and unequal’s unequally," the fairness or justice approach to ethics finds its origins in his words. According to this perspective, the fundamental moral question is: Is an activity fair if it treats everyone equally or if it exhibits partiality and discrimination?

Favoritism rewards some individuals without having a valid basis to single them out, whereas discrimination places burdens on those who are not different from those who are not subjected to them. Favoritism and discrimination are both wicked and unjust. According to Aristotle, ethical knowledge is more like general information than exact knowledge like logic and mathematics or understanding of diet and exercise. In addition, he believed that since virtue is a practical rather than theoretical discipline, one must really practice virtue in order to become "good." In a similar vein, practicing is just as important as studying if one wants to excel at a sport like football. Aristotle starts by defining what was righteous. He started by concluding that everything had been done with a goal in mind, and that aim was "excellent." He referred to happiness as the Highest Good, the ultimate objective. According to Aristotle, happiness could neither be achieved solely in pleasure or solely in honor and fame. Finally, he discovers contentment "by determining the particular function of man." The purpose of a person is to do what makes it unique from other living things—to be adept at reasoning or logos. Because they are pursuing their essence or purpose, as discovered in the rational soul, those who accomplish this are the happiest.

According on how successfully he achieved this, Aristotle claimed that people may be divided into one of four groups: the virtuous, the continent, the incontinent, or the evil. This method typically focuses on how equally or unequally we divide the advantages and liabilities among group members through our actions. In this strategy, those with an interest in the outcome are asked what is fair for all stakeholders.

Consistency in how people are treated is necessary for fairness. "Treat everyone the same unless there are ethically meaningful disparities between them," the principle reads.

**The Common Good Approach**

Greek thinkers also introduced the idea that contributing to community life through our acts is a virtue in and of itself. According to this perspective, ethical reasoning is based on how society interacts, and respect and compassion for all people, especially the weak, are necessary for such reasoning. This method also draws attention to the universal issues that are crucial to ensuring everyone's welfare. This could be a legal framework, efficient law enforcement and fire protection agencies, medical services, a public education system, or even open spaces for enjoyment.

This method of approaching ethics makes the assumption that society is made up of people whose own well-being is intrinsically related to the well-being of the group. The pursuit of shared ideals and objectives ties community members together. The idea of the common good first appeared in the works of Plato, Aristotle, and Cicero more than 2,000 years ago. The common good was more recently described by current ethicist John Rawls as "certain generic circumstances that are equally to everyone's advantage." With this strategy, we put our attention on making sure that the social structures, institutions, and environments we rely on are advantageous to everyone. Affordable health care, effective public safety, international harmony, a just legal system, and a clean environment are a few examples of things that are available to everyone.

Arguments for the common good encourage us to think of ourselves as part of the same community while considering big issues like the type of society we want to create and how we will do so. The common good approach pushes us to recognize and advance those interests we hold in common while simultaneously recognizing and valuing the freedom of people to pursue their own goals. It offers a picture of society as a group of people working together to achieve shared ideals and objectives.

The principle of the common good approach states;

“What is ethical is what advances the common good.”

**The Rights Approach:**

The other significant approach to ethics has its origins in the philosophy of the 18th-century philosopher Immanuel Kant and other thinkers who shared his emphasis on the individual's freedom of choice. The ability to freely select what to do with one's life and the moral entitlement to have those choices honored are what these philosophers claim distinguishes human beings from inanimate objects and gives them dignity. Human dignity is violated when people are used in ways they did not voluntarily select. People are not tools to be used. Along with this fundamental right, there are numerous more connected rights. These other rights might be considered as various facets of the fundamental right to be treated whatever we desire. These rights include:

**The Right to the Truth:** We have a right to the truth and to information on issues that have a big impact on our decisions.

**The Right of Privacy**: In our private lives, we are free to act, think, and communicate as we like, so long as we respect the rights of others.

**The Right not to be injured:** Unless we freely and intentionally do an act that warrants punishment or unless we freely and knowingly elect to risk such damage, we have the right to be unharmed and uninjured.

**The Right to what is agreed:** We are entitled to the promises made to parties with whom we have voluntarily entered into a contract or agreement**.**

In deciding whether an action is moral or immoral using this approach, we must ask, do all moral rights of those involved in the conduct seem to be respected? Actions are unlawful to the extent that they violate a person's rights; the more egregious the violation, the more unlawful the activity.

According to the Rights Approach, some activities or interests must be respected in order for our behavior to be appropriate, particularly those facets of our lives that are so important to us that they should be shielded from intrusion by others.

Every individual has a fundamental right to respect and to be recognized as a free, equal, and sane being who is capable of making his or her own judgments. This means that in order for a person to have the freedom to live their own life, other rights (such as privacy, free consent, freedom of conscience, etc.) must be respected.

Among judgements