

My preferred ethical framework from chapter two would have to be act utilitarianism. This is mainly from elimination of the other options, all of which have a heavy emphasis on what *other* people believe to be right or moral. I have a hard time accepting any moral system that could, for example, call murder moral. This immediately rules out both cultural and subjective relativism, divine command theory, and ethical egoism. The remaining options are Kantianism, act and rule utilitarianism, social contract theory, and virtue ethics. Both Kantianism (by virtue of the categorical imperative) and rule utilitarianism share the flaw that they can be read to state that it is not moral to do something such as becoming a plumber, because if everyone were to become a plumber that would obviously not lead to a workable society. They're useful ethical frameworks on a case-by-case basis but not, in my opinion, useful to live your life by. Virtue ethics has the problem that what an individual regards as a "virtuous" person can drastically change from one person to another. Very few people look at the actions they're taking and think, "These are the actions of an unvirtuous man." This leaves social contract theory and act utilitarianism. I very much like social contract theory when it comes to governing and large scale ethics, but relies too heavily on other people to be used as a personal ethical framework. By elimination, that leaves act utilitarianism, the idea that what makes an act moral is how much happiness it brings to the world overall.

While this isn't *quite* the ethical framework I actually live by (I believe intent has an impact on the morality of an action), it is close enough that I can give a number of examples of it being applied and how it might be applied in my day-to-day life. One example would be giving to the homeless. \$5 to someone who hasn't eaten in two days

will bring far more happiness to them than to a college student with a nice apartment. So if I have the money to give, I will. Another example would be smoking. It might bring a very small temporary boost to happiness, but the long term health impact is massively negate. It's not really a moral issue in my mind, but it's close enough that ethical frameworks can help make a decision.

My favorite aspect of this framework is the fact that it is itself moral by a number of other frameworks. For example, act utilitarianism passes the categorical imperative. If everybody decided tomorrow that a moral act is one that makes the world a happier place, everything would get a lot better. It also passes virtue ethics by what I personally consider a virtuous man. An argument could be made that ethical egoists would practice act utilitarianism as well, because it would be in their best interest to live in a happy world. Obviously being moral by other frameworks doesn't make my chosen ethics better or worse, but not having to argue over which is the better model does its small part in making the world a happier place for myself at least.

There are many, many, *many* workable ethical frameworks out there beyond the few covered in this chapter. So many that it would be entirely unrealistic to try and enforce any one or even any subset of them. The best we can do is try and individually chose frameworks that can work well assuming that our choice is not the only one used. Any ethics that says, "This is the only way to behave morally" is so restrictive that it will most likely lead to unethical behavior in the per pursuit of a perfect world where everybody does exactly what you believe they ought. I believe the most important aspect of any ethical model is a tolerance (within reason) of other ethical models. Of course, what is within reason is also up for debate.

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