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| ETHICS IN FOCUS |
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Topic: VALUE BASED JUDGEMENT

Value-based judgment refers to the process of making ethical decisions based on one's personal values and beliefs. Values tell us what we want to do or achieve in our life.

Values are basic and fundamental beliefs that guide or motivate attitudes or actions. They are the things believed by a person or group of people to be important in life. Values are subjective in that values change from person to person, therefore what one considers a value another may not take consideration. Furthermore, a person's values can change from time to time hence values are not consistent.

Examples of values may include integrity, honesty, respect, courage, loyalty, kindness, humility, compassion, generosity, self confidence, sincerity, and many others. Once an individual realizes their own values, they will be inclined to act in direction of these values. This is because values influence ethical decision-making.

However, people are incline to adopt the values that they are raised with. People also tend to think that those values are right because they are the values of a particular culture.

How one can identify their values;

First, one has to identify the times that they were happiest. In this a person has to take note of what they were doing and all other factors that made them happy.

Then the person hasto identify what made them proud the most, the reason as to why they were proud, whether other people shared the pride and other factors that contributed to the feelings of pride. This can either be in one’s career or personal life for example a promotion at one’s work place.

Third, the person has to identify the time he was most fulfilled and satisfied. Here the person has to take note of the desire that was fulfilled and how the experience was meaningful to their life.

The person then has to determine their values based on his/her experiences of happiness, pride and fulfillment. Depending on the experiences one has had, they can determine their values from the common values such as service to others, courage, adventurousness, altruism, empathy and others.

Finally, the person has to select a fundamental option from his or her values. This is a value that guides a person’s life.

Ethical decision making often involves weighing values against each other and choosing which one to elevate. For example one may chose to elevate and make decisions using honesty as a guide instead of loyalty to a friend in case the friend has not acted morally in a certain situation. This is justified even according to duty-based ethics where one has to act according to obligation and not inclination.

Value denotes the degree of importance of some thing or action, with the aim of determining what actions are best to do or what way is best to live hence being a guide to normative ethics. Altruism as a value, for example can be used by a person to make sound decisions since it emphasizes that consequences produced by an action have to be favourable to others even if they are not favourable for the agent. This also encourages selflessness.

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