HUMAN VALUES AND ETHICS

HUMAN

Humans are living, breathing entities capable of feeling and showing emotions, such as love, hate, compassion, and indifference. Some, but not all, humans are considerate and generous.

Humans are fallible, although some deny that. Most, but not all, humans are forgiving of the faults of others. Humans are still necessary, although many of their functions have been automated by machines.

Values

Value has been taken to mean moral ideas, general conceptions or orientations towards the world or sometimes simply interests, attitudes, preferences, needs, sentiments and dispositions.

**Values defined in Organizational Behavior as the collective conceptions of what is considered good, desirable, and proper or bad, undesirable, and improper in a culture.**

A value is a belief that something is good and desirable”.

According to R.K. Mukherjee, “Values are socially approved desires and goals that are internalized through the process of conditioning, learning or socialization and that become subjective preferences, standards, and aspirations”.

According to Zaleznik and David, “Values are the ideas in the mind of men compared to norms in that they specify how people should behave. Values also attach degrees of goodness to activities and relationships”

Values are an integral part of the personal philosophy of life by which we generally mean the system of values by which we live. The philosophy of life includes our aims, ideals, and manner of thinking and the principles by which we guide our behavior”

The characteristics of values are:

* These are extremely practical, and valuation requires not just techniques but also an understanding of the strategic context.
* These can provide standards of competence and morality.
* These can go beyond specific situations or persons.
* Personal values can be influenced by culture, tradition, and a combination of internal and external factors.
* These are relatively permanent.
* These are more central to the core of a person.
* Most of our core values are learned early in life from family, friends, neighborhood school, the mass print, visual media and other sources within the society.
* Values are loaded with effective thoughts about ideas, objects, behavior, etc.
* They contain a judgmental element in that they carry an individual’s ideas as to what is right, good, or desirable.
* Values can differ from culture to culture and even person to person.
* Values play a significant role in the integration and fulfillment of man’s basic impulses and desire stably and consistently appropriate for his living.
* They are generic experiences in social action made up of both individual and social responses and attitudes.
* They build up societies, integrate social relations.
* They mold the ideal dimensions of personality and depth of culture.
* They influence people’s behavior and serve as criteria for evaluating the actions of others.
* They have a great role to play in the conduct of social life. They help in creating norms to guide day-to-day behavior.

**Ethics**

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Ethics covers the following dilemmas:

* how to live a good life
* our rights and responsibilities
* the language of right and wrong
* moral decisions - what is good and bad?

Our concepts of ethics have been derived from religions, philosophies and cultures. They infuse debates on topics like abortion, human rights and professional conduct.

Approaches to ethics

Philosophers nowadays tend to divide ethical theories into three areas: metaethics, normative ethics and applied ethics.

* Meta-ethics deals with the nature of moral judgement. It looks at the origins and meaning of ethical principles.
* Normative ethics is concerned with the content of moral judgements and the criteria for what is right or wrong.
* Applied ethics looks at controversial topics like war, animal rights and capital punishment

What use is ethics?

If ethical theories are to be useful in practice, they need to affect the way human beings behave.

Some philosophers think that ethics does do this. They argue that if a person realizes that it would be morally good to do something then it would be irrational for that person not to do it.

But human beings often behave irrationally - they follow their 'gut instinct' even when their head suggests a different course of action.

However, ethics does provide good tools for thinking about moral issues.

Ethics can provide a moral map

Most moral issues get us pretty worked up - think of abortion and euthanasia for starters. Because these are such emotional issues we often let our hearts do the arguing while our brains just go with the flow.

But there's another way of tackling these issues, and that's where philosophers can come in - they offer us ethical rules and principles that enable us to take a cooler view of moral problems.

So ethics provides us with a moral map, a framework that we can use to find our way through difficult issues.

Ethics can pinpoint a disagreement

Using the framework of ethics, two people who are arguing a moral issue can often find that what they disagree about is just one particular part of the issue, and that they broadly agree on everything else.

That can take a lot of heat out of the argument, and sometimes even hint at a way for them to resolve their problem.

But sometimes ethics doesn't provide people with the sort of help that they really want.

Ethics doesn't give right answers

Ethics doesn't always show the right answer to moral problems.

Indeed more and more people think that for many ethical issues there isn't a single right answer - just a set of principles that can be applied to particular cases to give those involved some clear choices.

Some philosophers go further and say that all ethics can do is eliminate confusion and clarify the issues. After that it's up to each individual to come to their own conclusions.