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Essay # 3

My core values stem from a combination of nature and nurture in my upbringing. My core values were most likely established with a religious framework, meaning that a lot of the values originate from the 10 commandments. It was important to have built into your core as a human to “not kill”, “honor thy parents”, and to “not commit adultery”. The religious framework also uses many bible parables that should be used to influence your daily life. Growing up I believed these ideals and core frameworks without any question. It wasn’t until I was older where I started to realize that many of the teachings and ideals were either outdated or they were not applicable to a lot of modern situations. Religious frameworks are part of the Divine Command Approach, where only God knows that’s ethical, and God isn’t bound by any standard of wrong or right. Because of how religion likes to emphasize that people shouldn’t question “God’s wisdom”, I believe that it does a disservice to the individual because they are not utilizing their ability for critical thinking when it comes to their faith. Because of this, I do believe that believing so wholly in religion so early in life has given me a false sense of security with my beliefs, where I didn’t apply critical thinking to what I was reading or what I was doing.

Aside from a faith based core framework, I believe I have also adopted a framework stemming from a political standpoint or a Common Good Approach. A Common Good Approach begins with the ethics that our actions should contribute to ethical communal life, and this will produce the “best people”. When modern media started reporting on political matters more, I began to be passionate about different types of human rights, conversation efforts, and local laws. Overall I would say my political framework for ethical reasoning encompasses the idea that people should have basic human rights, the environment should be protected, and that every living thing on the planet should be given respect. I have learned to question and critically think about policies that could affect not only me directly, but other groups of people and policies that are important to me. It is difficult to listen to all sides of an issue and to think about how different political outcomes and influence different people. Because I work on listening to all sides of the issue, I believe that having a strong political framework has helped me work on my critical thinking skills. I do think that questioning your ethical political beliefs will help anyone with working on their critical thinking.

Another framework I also consider with my own ethical reasoning is the framework relating to the Duty-Based Approach, deontological ethics. Immanuel Kant was the first to write about this type of ethics, where the importance of intention was emphasized. I do believe that the intention of a person should come into consideration when there are consequences to an action. Sometimes in ecology a management decision might end up in a negative outcome, but the intention of the management was virtuous and positive. It’s hard to manage any wild population, so I believe it’s important to take into account the intention of what was trying to be accomplished before people are heavily punished or criticized. Even though I wasn’t raised with these ethics, it is something that I have had to learn to take into account when I make any critiques. This framework does encourage critical thinking because it forces you to view a perspective that might not be your own, and take into account the intention that led to the outcome. In ecology, this might not be so easy to do because the public doesn’t have as much knowledge as the group of scientists does, and might quickly cast harsh blame on a management decision.