How do morality, emotions and rational thinking fit together?

by Janne Wilhelm and Florian Kugler
What is a moral theory?

A theory about what anyone should do / should not do, right / wrong, moral / immoral, good / bad, evil. Increasing emotional charge – same content.
contacting your perceptions
Emotions

what did you **experience** when Florian was talking about Hoppe's theory? what did you **feel**?

what are emotions?
Rationality

what is rationality?
Why do we have these abilities?

**Emotions:**
- quick decisions
- giving you direction
- final purpose

**Rationality:**
- how to get from here to there
- what are efficient means
- abstract reasoning

– difference between animal and person
Morality

Is it an emotional thing?
- anger, shame, fear, ...

Or a rational thing?
- abstract rules, universal arguments

Morality
= what's meant by „should“, „bad“, „right“, „must“, ...
Proposal for a way to approaching ethics (5 steps)

1. be aware of your emotions
   do: recognize, accept them
   don't: fight them, nor let your self get flushed away

– store a snapshot in your body, then clear the table
Proposal for a way to approaching ethics (5 steps)

2. think rationally, clearly, calmly
contradictions? what do the words mean? what do my own experiences say about this?
don't: I want this to be true or false; I find this repulsive; what will people think of me?

– stay connected with emotional snapshot as fuel
Proposal for a way to approaching ethics (5 steps)

3. intuitively decide when to stop

check: what is your criterion for truth? what is your standard for proof? have these been met?
Proposal for a way to approaching ethics (5 steps)

4. re-program your emotions

give yourself time, stay in the discussion within your self
Proposal for a way to approaching ethics (5 steps)

5. test-drive
live your new emotional reactions and convictions

– how do the changes affect your life?
Proposal for a way to approaching ethics (5 steps)

1. be aware of your emotions
2. think rationally
3. decide when to stop
4. re-program your emotions
5. evaluate
Comparing
Hoppe – this proposal – Stef

in common:

- about: what is right/wrong behaviour
- same rules for all persons
- no logical contradictions allowed
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>my experience of Hoppe</th>
<th>this proposal</th>
<th>my experience of UPB, the book</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>neutral language</td>
<td>take store of emotions</td>
<td>language evokes emotions</td>
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<tr>
<td>about morality?</td>
<td>think</td>
<td>about morality ✔</td>
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<tr>
<td>feel: logic puzzle,</td>
<td>evaluate</td>
<td>feel: exciting, important, righteous; at times confusing</td>
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<tr>
<td>clarity, invitation</td>
<td></td>
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<td>to find mistakes,</td>
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<tr>
<td>not urgent</td>
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</tbody>
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References

„Gestalt Therapy“ by Perls, Hefferline, Goodman

excerpts of awareness exercises:
www.trans4mind.com/transformation/transform4.22.htm

„Thinking hats“ by Edward De Bono

„Dear Self“ by Erik Lugnet

„Manual for creating atheists“ by Peter Boghossian
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Thank you!
Applying this when talking with others

1. recognize your emotions and theirs
tell them! & tell them (if) you can appreciate their emotions

2. propose to set emotions aside during the discussion
if the matter is important, it's worth giving it the unclouded brainpower of both of you
Applying this when talking with others

3. agree on criteria for truth
   – else it's not a debate!

4. recognize together that one or both of you WILL need to change their emotional reactions
   accept that this is difficult
   – else it's not a debate!

5. agree to meet again and compare notes on your experiences
Morals & Emotions

1. some people
   morals: emotional
   some rules are holy, highly emotional defenses
   no sense of self

3. very few people
   let me decide for myself which rules will get my emotional reaction
   if not universal → personal preference, pers. responsibility

2. some people
   morals: rational (?)
   there are no rules, except what is useful – 90% will get emot. when questioned
   no universality, no empathy

logical AND emotional problems