

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

Comparing Hoppe – this proposal – Stef

my experience
of Hoppe

this proposal

my experience of
UPB, the book

neutral language
about morality?

take store of
emotions

language evokes
emotions

feel: logic puzzle,
clarity, invitation
to find mistakes,
not urgent

think

evaluate

about morality ✓

feel: exciting,
important, righteous;
at times confusing

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

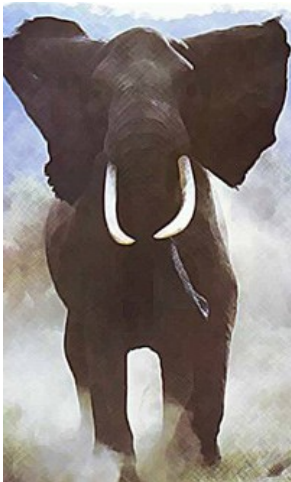
Morals & Emotions

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

logical AND
emotional
problems

2. some people

morals: rational(?)

there are no rules,
except what is useful –
90% will get emot.
when questioned

no universality,
no empathy

