

ETHICAL WORLDVIEWS OF SOLDIERS QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

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Moral Relativism - Moral Values and beliefs are ultimately arbitrary, morality is determined by one's own tastes and preferences - "What's right for you may not be right for me"

Cultural Relativism - What is "right" becomes what is believed to be right in a given culture or group, any cultural norm is moral for that culture and outsiders cannot make a moral judgment on a particular act since no norms transcend culture, cultural acceptance determines the validity of moral norms
(*Conventionalism*) - "When in Rome, do as the Romans"

Ethical Egoism - An individual should act in his/her own self interest, morality of an act is determined by one's self interest, self interest is the guide for moral decisions - "Looking out for #1" or "It's all about me" "Nice Guys finish last"

Social Contract Theory - Community members are bound by the pursuit of common values and goals; the view that persons' moral obligations are dependent upon a contract or agreement among them to form the society in which they live, such a contractual community is voluntary and one willingly ascribes to agreed upon values and norms - "All in the Family"

Human Rights - The rights that are considered by most societies to belong automatically to everyone, human rights aims at identifying the fundamental prerequisites for each human being leading a minimally good life, human rights are believed to be universal and deem what is ethical or moral - "It is in your best interest"

Utilitarianism - The moral rightness of an action depends on outcome or consequences of that action (tyranny by the majority), the moral choice is the COA that produces more good consequences than harmful ones
(*Consequentialism*), morality of an act always determined by the end result – "The Greatest Happiness" -

Deontological - Morality must focus on the act itself not on what derives from it, nothing is good except reverence for duty, acting out of an intention to fulfill our duty meets our ethical obligation - "It's Your Duty"

Virtue Theory – (*also known as Aretaic Ethics*) Morality is primarily concerned with traits of character that are essential to human flourishing, it is an ethic of



character and not duty, moral duty involves attitudes as well as actions - "Be Good"

Divine Command Theory – (also known as *Theological Voluntarism*)

Whatever God commands is right, so morality is best achieved by obedience, human reasoning cannot be trusted and best outcomes are a result of following God's directives found in the Bible, God is the source of moral truth and communicates His will to humanity via commands, right and wrong comes from God and nothing else matter - "God said it, I believe it, that settles it" or "Sit down, shut up, do as I say"

Emotivism - Morality is a matter of sentiment rather than fact, moral judgments are not facts at all, but emotional expressions about an action or person, this view appeals to emotion and not reason in moral decision making, moral judgments simply express positive or negative feelings about an action – "Hooked on a Feeling"

Natural Law Ethics - There is consistency in the way the world should work, moral law is universal and consistent, God is the source for right and wrong and not nature thus revealed by moral sense and conscience found in man, "Doing what comes naturally" "Who told you that was wrong"

Situation Ethics – Morality is relative to the situation in which one finds oneself and the moral obligation is to do the loving thing in that situation, no law is absolute with the exception of love, love should be the driving force for resolving moral dilemmas - "All you need is love"

Behaviorism – One behaves in a certain way as a result of physical causes, behavior is determined by environment, ethical statements are simply used to modify behavior, moral responsibility is meaningless as one cannot truly control their behavior - "I couldn't help myself"

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