

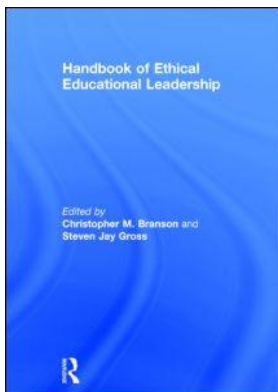
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Publisher: *Routledge*

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Handbook of Ethical Educational Leadership

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An Ethical Leadership Developmental Framework

Publication details

<https://test.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9780203747582.ch11>

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Published online on: 16 May 2014

How to cite :- Nancy Tuana. 16 May 2014, *An Ethical Leadership Developmental Framework from: Handbook of Ethical Educational Leadership* Routledge

Accessed on: 28 Nov 2023

<https://test.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9780203747582.ch11>

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II

Developing Ethical Educational Leadership

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11

AN ETHICAL LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENTAL FRAMEWORK

NANCY TUANA

Effective and responsible educational leaders must also be ethical leaders. By this I mean not only that their leadership decisions and practices must be based on ethical values and principles, but also that they “lead with ethics” in the sense of being committed to, and taking a leadership role in, ensuring the development of moral literacy throughout their communities. Effective ethical educational leadership, the focus of this handbook, is grounded in the recognition that ethical leadership, in the sense of *putting ethics in the foreground of all activities*, is essential for the entire educational community. It is not possible for one person, no matter how ethical or how effective a leader, to make a community ethical. An ethical community exists because the commitment to ethical leadership permeates the entire community. Too often, the focus on ethical leadership is limited to the education of the leaders of a school unit but neglects the second, and I would argue, more essential component of educating the entire community to *lead with ethics*. Such a limited focus can result in the mistaken impression that the field of ethical leadership should focus on the education of principals and administrators, rather than being a key element of education for all teachers at all levels.

For the same reason, when educators consider the ethical dimensions of teaching, it is not sufficient to be attentive only to creating a fair and equitable classroom environment. Educators must also have the skills needed to enhance the abilities their students require to learn how to lead with ethics as well. In other words, it is not sufficient to focus on the moral agency of the educator. *Ethical educational leadership also requires that teachers be effective ethics educators*. In holding this position, I agree with and build on Starratt’s (2007) argument that authentic learning is intrinsically ethical. “By authentic learning I mean a learning that enables learners to encounter the meanings embedded in the curriculum about the natural, social and cultural worlds they inhabit, and, at the same time, find themselves in and through those very encounters. That kind of authentic learning, I argue, is intrinsically ethical” (p. 165).

However, ensuring that teachers are able to promote moral literacy means that training for ethical leadership in education should include the skills teachers need to support the development of the knowledge and skills students, at all grade levels, need to be moral agents. *Good education must therefore include the development of moral literacy.* Unfortunately, teacher preparation is often sorely lacking in providing educators the skills and knowledge needed for this aspect of leading with ethics.

This section of the handbook focuses on a framework for educators to ensure that they have the essential foundation they need not only to be ethical leaders, but also to ensure that their classrooms and institutional settings contribute to the enhancement of the moral literacy of their students. This framework was originally developed in my 2007 essay “Conceptualizing Moral Literacy,” which was included in a special issue of the *Journal of Educational Administration* on the topic of moral literacy. Subsequent scholarly work on the topic of moral literacy by members of the University Council for Educational Administration’s Center for the Study of Leadership and Ethics (UCEA CSLE, 1999) has provided important resources for developing and extending the original model. The chapters in this section continue to build on this framework and are designed to provide resources for a more ethically responsible approach to educational leadership in both senses of the phrase introduced above.

I use the phrase “moral literacy” for various reasons. The term “literacy” is intended to stress a twofold connotation. The first is that it involves a complex set of skills and abilities that must be developed over time. Moral literacy is a lifelong achievement, for we find ourselves confronted with new, and sometimes unique, ethical issues throughout our lifetimes. The second is to underscore the importance of education for developing this essential form of literacy. Just as math, science, or reading literacy evolves over time and with effective educational support, so too moral literacy must be developed in stages and with repeated and age-appropriate instruction. Just as we do not learn everything we need to know about science in kindergarten or informally from our parents or our communities, so too moral literacy is best supported by making it a formal subject of study throughout the educational process. Moral literacy should become as essential to a good education as literacy in math, science, history, or literature. I intentionally use the term “moral” rather than “ethical” for the type of literacy I espouse in order to distance it from the typical focus on ethical reasoning training common in philosophical approaches to ethics or the rule-based approach common to codes of ethics. While ethical reasoning is certainly an important component of moral literacy, it is, as I will illustrate below, only one part of the knowledge and abilities needed to be a morally literate individual.¹

The framework I and others in this handbook advocate for moral literacy consists of three elements (Figure 11.1):

1. Ethical sensitivity
2. Ethical decision-making skills
3. Ethical motivation

While my essay serves to provide a broad introduction to each of these elements, the essays in this section of the handbook further explicate and build upon this framework.

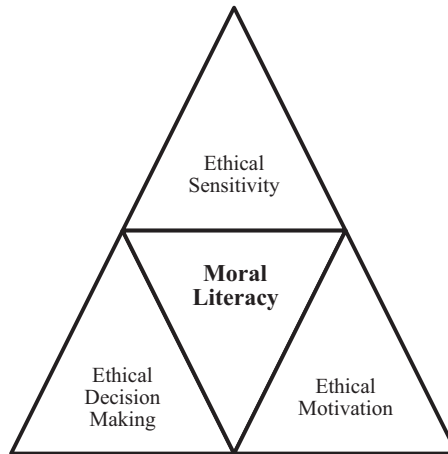


Figure 11.1 The ethical leadership development framework

ETHICS EDUCATION FOR/IN LIFE

Ethics education is for life. Effective ethics pedagogy leads with ethics. This conception of leading is woven into the very heart of education, as the term “pedagogy” comes from the Greek παιδαγωγέω (paidagōgeō): παῖς (país, genitive παιδός, paidos) means “child” and ἄγω (ágō) means “lead.” Hence, we design our curriculum to lead. But good education *leads to*, in the sense of cultivating skills. Education is not a rote memorization of facts but an education of the person into agency in which she or he becomes an inquirer and a creator. If pedagogy does not lead to the development of such lifelong skills, it is a failure.

Effective ethics pedagogy leads with ethics in the sense of enabling students to appreciate and understand the ethical dimensions of the subjects they are studying and the experiences they are having in all the domains of their life. All educational institutions are committed to both formal and informal education, and both domains should lead with ethics.

The formal educational domain is rife with issues of ethical significance. Social science classes present students with ways of living different from their own. They present opportunities for moral literacy through understanding how different value systems shape ways of living, thereby providing a basis for better understanding not only other cultures, but also people within the students’ communities who hold values different than their own. History classes are filled with opportunities to understand justice and injustice: from a careful examination of the values and ethical principles that led to a war or how unethical motives and/or problematic assumptions about human nature led to slavery or servitude for some groups of people. Our science and technology classes are wonderful opportunities for thoughtful attention to the impact of these fields on society and reflection on the types of knowledge deemed valuable to know, as well as who is impacted by what we elect not to know. Literature and the arts are the perfect setting for engaging the moral imagination of students and providing them the opportunity to better understand ways of living.

The informal educational context also serves as an opportunity for leading with ethics by illuminating the importance of moral literacy for life. Schools provide various informal educational programs such as school anti-bullying programs, academic integrity programs, and anti-drug/alcohol efforts. While these programs may include a “compliance” component, i.e., the penalties for cheating or for bullying, they are most effective when they provide students with the ethical values and principles underlying the desired actions, i.e., respect, truthfulness, responsibility. In this way, students are not simply acting so as to avoid being punished, or simply following rules, but are coming to understand the principles and actions that constitute a value-led life.

But effective ethics education must also be *in the midst of living*, which is what I mean by ethics education *in* life. One mistake made by some ethics educators is to deploy artificial examples to illustrate ethical issues. The classic case of this is the “trolley problem” that has been used extensively in philosophy classes and publications to tease out moral intuitions. The philosopher Judith Jarvis Thomson (1976), offered the original description of the trolley problem:

A trolley is running out of control down a track. In its path are five people who have been tied to the track by a mad philosopher. Fortunately, you could flip a switch which will lead the trolley down a different track to safety. Unfortunately, there is a single person tied to that track. Should you flip the switch?
(pp. 8–9)

The issue with the trolley problem is not only that it is a fiction, but also that it is a caricature of the complexity of the types of ethical problems we face. Creating an artificial “landscape,” so to speak, for isolating one or another aspect of a moral problem—Is it acceptable to kill one innocent to save five? Is there a morally significant difference between killing and letting die?—obscures not only the complexity of the nature and context of the types of ethical issues our students are likely to face in their lives, but also their everydayness. The fiction of a trolley-like example does not impart the myriad ways in which ethical values and decisions are woven into the fabric of everyday life. Every time students interact with other students, they are making judgments and choices about what constitutes respectful behavior. Every time students work on an assignment, they are making judgments and choices about academic integrity.

If we do not educate *for life*, our students will be ill equipped to deal with ethics *in life*. It is not only naïve but ethically irresponsible to think that our students will not face challenging and complex ethical issues throughout their lives. Ethically responsible education must prepare them for these challenges. For this reason, ethical educational leadership must ensure that moral literacy is as key a subject matter in the schools as is math, science, or reading literacy.

Should one have any doubt about the difficulty, complexity, and indeed the “everydayness” of the ethical challenges our students will face not only in life, but in their educational settings, one need only stand where I am situated—at the

Pennsylvania State University in 2012. Since November of 2011, the entire Penn State community has been shaken to its very core by the Jerry Sandusky scandal. The extent of the child sex abuse was horrendous. Sandusky is a former Penn State University football assistant coach and founder of The Second Mile, a non-profit charity whose mission was to serve Pennsylvania underprivileged and at-risk youth and where Sandusky allegedly met the children he sexually assaulted. In 2012, he was tried for 52 charges of sexual crimes against children and found guilty on 45 counts of sexual abuse. While serial child molestation may be difficult to comprehend, the ethical wrongness of the action is not at all obscure. However, the ethical complexity of the situation at Penn State was fueled by allegations that some university officials covered up the incidents or did not do enough to protect children from Sandusky. The president of the university, Graham Spanier, was forced to resign, and the head football coach, Joe Paterno, and athletic director, Tim Curley, were fired. Sandusky maintains his innocence; his appeal for a retrial has been denied.

Over time, the investigation revealed that others might also have known that Sandusky was assaulting children but did not report it. We read reports of janitors who either witnessed the assaults directly or were told of the assaults by other janitors who claimed to have directly witnessed them. None of them reported the incidents. In one interview, it was suggested that the janitors did not report the incidents for fear of losing their jobs. Others, such as assistant coach Mike McQueary and the mother of one young boy, who found reasons to be concerned about the nature of Sandusky's interactions with her son, did report the incident. The molestations continued long after their reports.

While it is not appropriate for Penn State students or faculty or even our community members to pass judgment on the university or local officials who dealt with the various reports over time, we have, nonetheless, been called to examine what ethics would demand of us should we be in a similar position to those who witnessed or received a report or even had a suspicion about the abuse. Given the prevalence of child sexual assault (Table 11.1), it is unfortunately not unlikely that those of us who work with children will find ourselves in a similar situation. What counts as evidence and how strong must it be? What actions are ethically required of us? Is it sufficient to simply report the suspected abuse or are we morally obligated to press for action if our report does not have the desired effect? What are the virtues most salient to being the kind of person who would act, even if you thought your actions might not be effective or could result in someone's loss of a job or credibility? What principles and values should govern an institution like a university or a nonprofit organization, and how would it be best to instill and enact those principles and values to better ensure that a scandal like this could not occur?

Effective ethics education is, thus, essential for each of us to be able to act responsibly as we find ourselves in the midst of complex ethical issues. The framework below provides an outline of the abilities and skills needed to live a value-led life and provides a blueprint of the various components of effective ethics education.

Table 11.1 The global prevalence of child sexual abuse

The study “Prevalence of Child Sexual Abuse in Community and Student Samples: A Meta-Analysis,” by Pereda et al. (2009) provides a snapshot of this offense. Based on an analysis of 65 research studies across 22 countries, the authors concluded:

- The mean prevalence of child sexual abuse globally was 7.9% for males and 19.7% for females.
- The highest prevalence rate of child sexual abuse geographically was found in Africa (34.4%). Europe showed the lowest prevalence rate (9.2%). America and Asia had prevalence rates between 10.1% and 23.9%.
- “South Africa has the highest prevalence rates for both men (60.9%) and women (43.7%).”
- “Jordan presents the second-highest prevalence rate for men (27.0%), followed by Tanzania (25.0%). Rates between 10% and 20% are reported for males in Israel (15.7%), Spain (13.4%), Australia (13.0%) and Costa Rica (12.8%), while the remaining countries all have prevalence rates below 10%.”
- Except for South Africa, the highest reports of child sexual abuse for females were in the following countries: Australia (37.8%), Costa Rica (32.2%), Tanzania (31.0%), Israel (30.7%), Sweden (28.1%), the United States (25.3%), and Switzerland (24.2%). All report prevalence rates above 20%. The figures for New Zealand (18.7%), Spain (18.5%), Great Britain (18.2%), El Salvador and Norway (each 16.9%), Singapore (15.9%), Canada (15.2%), and China (10.8%) fall between 10% and 20%.
- The authors concluded that the lower rate for males may be inaccurate due to underreporting resulting from the “possibility of greater shame and the fear that they will be labeled as homosexual (if the aggressor was another man) or weak (if the aggressor was a woman), which may combine with the fact that they are more often accused of having provoked the abuse.”
- A general conclusion was that “the results obtained in the present study confirm that the experience of child sexual abuse is a problem of considerable magnitude in all the societies analysed” (pp. 333–334).

ETHICAL SENSITIVITY

The conception of ethical sensitivity (Figure 11.2) I introduced in 2007 deviated from standard accounts in a number of ways. Bebeau, Rest, and Yamoore (1985) defined moral sensitivity as an awareness of how our actions affect other people. Narvaez (2001) defined ethical sensitivity as the interpretation of a situation in determining who is involved, what actions to take, and what possible reactions and outcomes might ensue and listed seven components: (1) reading and expressing emotion, (2) taking the perspectives of others, (3) caring by connecting to others, (4) working with interpersonal and group differences, (5) preventing social bias, (6) generating interpretations and options, and (7) identifying the consequences of actions and options. While these accounts identified important features of moral literacy, the first is too narrow to adequately encompass the nature of ethical sensitivity, and the latter mixes categories and types of moral literacy that involve different types of abilities and will be clearer if they are demarcated. Generating interpretations and options and identifying the consequences of actions and options, for example, are better understood as components of ethical decision making rather than of ethical sensitivity.

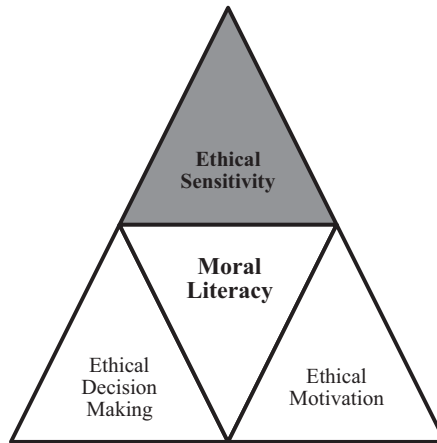


Figure 11.2 Ethical sensitivity

I define ethical sensitivity as consisting of three major components:

1. the ability to determine whether or not a situation involves ethical issues;
2. the ability to identify the moral virtues or values underlying an ethical issue; and
3. awareness of the moral intensity of the ethical issue (Figure 11.3).

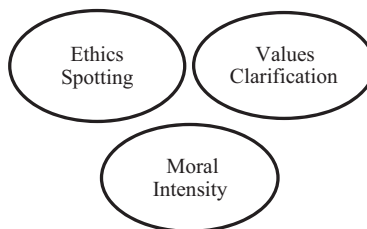


Figure 11.3 The three components of ethical sensitivity

The Ability to Determine Whether a Situation Involves Ethical Issues

The first component of ethical sensitivity, or what I call the ability to “ethics spot,” is often overlooked. As with the trolley example, we assume that what constitutes an ethical issue will be obvious. Unfortunately, this is not the case for a variety of reasons. First, the ability to ethics spot requires training in basic ethical principles and ethical values. Small children often do not understand that lying is ethically unacceptable because they do not yet appreciate the importance of honesty and integrity. Ethics education must, thus, include the ability to understand and appreciate ethical values and principles, for this is an essential foundation for ethics spotting.

Second, even with such training, some issues are so complex that it is difficult to determine whether or not they involve ethical issues. Take the case of individual contributions to greenhouse gas emissions. We know that the aggregated overall increases in greenhouse gases are resulting in anthropocentric climate change, which is already having harmful impacts on a number of regions and is expected to have exponentially larger negative impacts in the future if emissions continue at the present rates. However, the impact of the amount of greenhouse gases one individual emits, even if aggregated, has an imperceptibly small impact on climate change. Given this, does the fact that some of my actions result in greenhouse gas emissions constitute an ethical issue given how small an impact each of my actions will have on global warming? For example, is it an ethical issue to buy nonlocal foods or foods out of season? Is it an ethical issue to drive rather than to take public transportation to work? Is it an ethical issue to keep my home temperature at 70°F rather than 60°F?

But there is a third reason: What counts as an ethical issue will not always be transparent—in this case due not to the complexity of the issue but to *ethical insensitivity*. Ethical insensitivity occurs when an individual's or community's ability to recognize that an action or situation involves an ethical issue has been hampered by other factors. Christopher Branson (2009), in his account of “wisdom-led leaders,” calls attention to self-deception as a key element of what I'm labeling ethical insensitivity. These are instances in which self-deception obscures the true nature of one's action. As he explains:

The consciousness of wisdom-led leaders is influenced by authenticity and moral integrity. Authenticity is about being true to the values, motives, and beliefs that the leader really wants to live by. As such, authenticity is about achieving an inner victory over self-deception. It is about accessing one's second level of consciousness through, again, self-reflection and self-inquiry. Achieving authenticity is through one's consciousness scrutinising one's consciousness— one's thinking reflecting on the appropriateness and accuracy of one's thinking. (Chapter 4, p. 3)

There are a variety of additional factors that result in what I am calling ethical insensitivity. In the following sections I will discuss three of them, namely, community shared prejudices, moral blind spots, and habituating wrongdoing.

Community Shared Prejudices

Community shared prejudices can make it difficult to see that our actions have ethical significance. The classic case of community shared prejudices is the history of slavery, where many people believed that it was morally acceptable to enslave a group of people because they believed that these individuals were not “fully human.” At certain historical moments, there was little opposition to certain forms of slavery due to the prevalence of the view that there was nothing morally problematic about the practice. Being able to ethics spot in such a context is very difficult and requires the ability to question the very values and worldview in which one has been raised.

In a similar way, community shared prejudices occur in many contexts and can be difficult to identify, particularly for those who are raised in or trained to be a member

of that community. Examples of current prejudices might be the following: counting monetary gains or losses in an economic cost/benefit analysis as a way to make decisions about vehicle safety in car manufacturing; the moral standing of nonhuman animals and the practice of farming animals; the assumption and insistence that there are two and only two sexes.

Moral Blind Spots

Bezzina and Tuana (forthcoming) discuss the concept of “moral blind spots” to elaborate on the category of ethics spotting. In the context of business organizations, Dennis Moberg (2006) explained the high incidence of corporate scandals in the early 21st century as resulting, in part, from blind spots that undermined the moral capabilities of corporate executives. His argument is that the problem resulted not simply because of the actions of the wrongdoers, but from a system in which neither they nor the business community in which they worked grasped the ethical wrongness of the actions. Moberg argues that communities internalize “frames,” which are “well-learned sets of associations that focus people’s attention on and label some aspects of a situation to the exclusion of others” (p. 414). These frames, in turn, “create blind spots, those defects in one’s perceptual field that can cloud one’s judgment, lead one to erroneous conclusions, or provide insufficient triggers to appropriate action. For example, if people frame an interpersonal conflict situation as a fundamentally competitive one in which benefits can only be distributed in inflexible parcels, they are blinded to the possibilities of collaborative action” (ibid).

Moral blind spots, while in some sense similar to community shared prejudices, are significantly different. Community shared prejudices result in people *seeing an action as either not within the domain of ethics or as ethically justifiable*: Slavery is acceptable because some races are not fully human; women are naturally subservient to men because they are incapable of self-governance and thus must be controlled; farming and eating animals is not an ethical issue because animals have no moral standing. Moral blindness is, rather, a way of seeing the world that obscures one to the fact that an action *that one would agree is unethical* is occurring. There is reason to believe, for example, that the startlingly high rates of incest coupled with the low reportage rates is, in at least some cases, due to blind spots caused by false interpretive frames, i.e., that incest is a rare occurrence that happens in only severely dysfunctional families and that, were it happening, it would be easy for a nonmolesting relative to know that it was. Moral blind spots can also result from something being too painful to acknowledge, and thus we unconsciously suppress or turn away from it; again not an uncommon reaction with incest or other forms of child sexual abuse, where there can be denial even in the face of evidence of the abuse (cf. Gladwell, 2012).

Habituating Wrongdoing

In addition to the complexity of issues, self-deception, community shared prejudices, and moral blindness, habitual wrongdoing can blunt an individual’s ethical sensitivities. Repeated small thefts from one’s business setting, “little white lies” on one’s tax statements, “pirating” music by illegally downloading it from the Internet, can become so “normalized” that individuals stop seeing those actions as unethical.

Here, unlike the other two domains, habituating a behavior can make the ethical significance of the behavior fade into the background. Downloading becomes so “normalized” that the same people who would not hesitate to illegally download a song or an album from the Internet would refuse to walk into a music store and take a CD by slipping it into their pocket or bag because they would see that as stealing. Similarly, a worker who would not even think about taking \$100 out of the till might nonetheless take office supplies home from work for personal use without even seeing that doing so is unethical.

The cultivation of ethical sensitivity, the ability to determine whether a situation involves ethical issues, is augmented in a variety of ways. The *cultivation of empathy or compassion* is a frequent element of the development of the ability to ethics spot. Being sensitive to the impact of injustice—feeling compassion for the victim of a bully or for the suffering of those living in poverty—is often a way to understand that there is an ethical issue. Compassion does not address the question of responsibility or enable us to formulate ethical obligations, but it can both help us see that we are in the moral domain and help to move us to action. Given this, the cultivation of empathy and compassion is a frequent component of moral literacy. In addition, the removal, or minimizing, of ethical insensitivity requires the cultivation of the ability to critically analyze our own and our society’s practices.

Another key element of ethics spotting is the *ability to identify the values underlying the situation* and what virtues are relevant to the situation. This leads us to the second domain of ethical sensitivity.

The Ability to Identify the Moral Values or Virtues Underlying an Ethical Issue

One important technique to strengthen the ability of students to ethics spot is to provide them training about ethical values. In his analysis of authentic school leadership practices, Paul Begley (2003) argued that “the skills of authentic and expert leaders will extend beyond management. All leaders consciously or unconsciously employ values as guides to interpreting situations and suggesting appropriate administrative action” (p. 11). I agree with Begley and extend his position to argue that leading with ethics, in the sense of foregrounding ethics in all activities, is essential for the entire educational community. This means that the ability to identify underlying ethical values is a key element of moral literacy but is often a skill that one must cultivate over time. It is also an ability that education can help students develop.²

There are two components of this aspect of ethical sensitivity. These are an appreciation and ability to identify what is or is viewed as:

- (a) the intrinsic value of things or states and
- (b) ethical values and the co-related virtues.

Intrinsic value is perhaps the most foundational, yet most controversial, of all aspects of ethical values. What things or states possess intrinsic ethical value has been a site of contention not only between cultures and even within one culture, but also

throughout the history of ethical theory. Some posit that there is only one thing with intrinsic ethical value; others hold that there are multiple things or states that possess intrinsic ethical value. Human life, human flourishing, human freedom, human happiness, and human pleasure are common referents of intrinsic ethical value. Some have also argued that knowledge, wisdom, love, and spiritual enlightenment have intrinsic ethical value. While less common, there are cultures and theorists who hold that nonhuman animals or even ecosystems possess intrinsic ethical value.

What we view as holding intrinsic ethical value shapes many of our ethical beliefs. Indeed, there is a clear correlation between what we hold as having intrinsic ethical value and those traits we see as being ethical values. Common ethical values include: freedom, trustworthiness, respect, loyalty, responsibility, fairness, caring, and sanctity. Many of these are correlated with the view of human life and/or human flourishing as having intrinsic value.

Ethics education that includes this aspect of ethical sensitivity will incorporate various elements into the curriculum at age-appropriate levels. One important component is to help students develop the ability to identify what different cultures, or even groups of people within a culture, understand as constituting intrinsic value and to be able to trace the impact of those beliefs on actions, institutions, laws, and the like. This might include a discussion of times when beliefs about intrinsic value were in tension with practices. For example, how prejudice resulted in violations of beliefs regarding the intrinsic value of human life. This component of the curriculum might also include a discussion of the meaning of the various ethical values and their relevance to particular policies or practices. A discussion of academic integrity would provide an opportunity for students to identify the ethical values underlying school policies, as well as provide the basis for a discussion about the virtues a person with integrity would want to cultivate, such as honesty, trust, respect, fairness, and responsibility.

A valuable classroom exercise is to identify a community—the classroom, the township, a profession—and ask students to identify the values and correlated virtues that they believe are important to ensuring that it is an ethical community. In addition to identifying the various values and virtues, students can be encouraged to begin to see linkages among values and between values and virtues. For example, a virtue like trustworthiness is typically linked to traits such as honesty, reliability, keeping confidences, and honoring commitments. Students will sometimes not agree about the list of relevant values. This in turn presents a pedagogical opportunity to discuss why there might be differences in values and to think about how value differences among individuals or groups can lead to different judgments about right and wrong actions.

Discussions of values and related virtues can, in turn, help students ethics spot even in difficult cases. They can begin to understand why someone who views animals as having intrinsic ethical value might oppose farming animals or might advocate vegetarianism. A discussion of honesty and fairness can help them begin to appreciate why an action where their ethical sensitivities have become dulled—downloading music or texting test answers—is ethically problematic. The ability to ethics spot is, of course, only the first step. But it is a crucial ability nonetheless.

Awareness of the Moral Intensity of the Ethical Issue

The third component of ethical sensitivity is particularly important for those difficult ethical situations where there are competing ethical demands or competing ethical values. It can also help students appreciate differences in ethical sensibilities among people or cultures.

The moral intensity of an action is often linked to the seriousness of the harm that could result from the action and/or the urgency of a response. An appreciation of the moral intensity of an ethical issue can be enhanced by efforts to cultivate students' moral imagination and their empathy, so that they can better appreciate the impact of actions.

The ability to weigh the moral intensity of a situation is an important ability to assist students when they are faced with competing ethical demands. They may face a situation where they have promised to help tutor a friend before an upcoming test but then get a call from another friend who is experiencing an emotionally difficult situation and needs their support. Moral intensity can be one factor in the process of deciding among competing ethical demands. How urgent is the problem the second friend is facing? How quickly does he need help? How does his need compare with that of the friend who wants tutoring help? Another illustration can be found in the types of conflicts professional engineers sometimes face between the principles of their professional code of ethics. A not uncommon example is a tension between the maxims of "Hold paramount the safety, health, and welfare of the public" and "Act for each employer or client as faithful agents or trustees." If a client is asking that the engineer keep the budget of the job within the parameters of the contract but the engineer identifies an issue that could impact public health but would be expensive to fix, the engineer faces competing ethical demands. Again, while not the complete answer, the moral intensity of the situation is a relevant factor. If risks and impacts from not fixing the issue are high, that argues against ignoring the issue. But if the impacts would be small and/or the risks not high, then that makes the tension less salient.

The moral intensity of an issue is, however, also linked to values. Those with different value systems can have very different views of the moral intensity of an issue. Those, for example, who see animals as having intrinsic value may view loss of species diversity due to climate change as an issue with high moral intensity, while others might see it as not being an ethical issue unless the loss of diversity impacts human flourishing.

Training in identifying the moral intensity of a situation and how various people or groups view this moral intensity can therefore help students understand the basis of ethical disagreements. Being able to determine whether the conflict is due to differences in the values groups hold to be relevant to the issue or the moral intensity of the ethical issue can help students appreciate positions different than their own and understand the nature of ethical disagreements. This is an invaluable ability in understanding other cultures or engaging in cross-cultural dialogue. It can enable them to identify the particular nature of the disagreement and help disputing groups better appreciate the source of their disagreement.

These three components of ethics sensitivity provide students with the skills they need to both identify when a situation involves an ethical issue and better understand

the reasons why people disagree about ethical issues. While not sufficient for full moral literacy, ethics sensitivity is a key ability for those who lead with ethics.

ETHICAL DECISION MAKING

Ethical decision-making skills involve a set of abilities (Figure 11.4):

1. An understanding of the various ethical frameworks and how they might apply to the issue:
 - a. What are the consequences of actions or inactions and what is the ethical relevance of those consequences?
 - b. Are there rights that must be taken into consideration? What are the relevant moral obligations?
 - c. What virtues are relevant to the situation and what actions would best support those virtues?
 - d. What relationships are relevant to the situation and what would an ethics of care require?
2. Identifying and assessing the facts relevant to the ethical issue
3. Identifying the relevant stakeholders
4. Identifying and assessing the values individuals or groups hold to be relevant to the ethical issue
5. Generating and evaluating options for action.

Ethical Frameworks

Rather than advocating for a particular ethical framework, I encourage an integrated approach to ethical frameworks for moral literacy. The different ethical frameworks

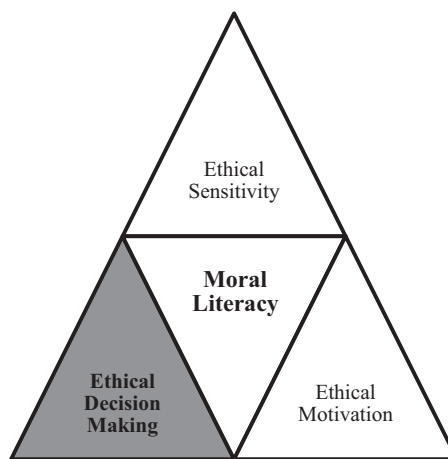


Figure 11.4 Ethical decision making

are not inherently incompatible if seen as guidelines for ethical analysis. Furthermore, an integrated approach to ethics education provides students with the abilities to identify the consequences of actions, determine the rights that are relevant and discuss corresponding obligations, and consider the ethical import of different types of relationships. It also continues the attention to values and the corresponding virtues initiated in the curriculum on ethical sensitivity.

As I argued in my original 2007 essay, a robust approach to this component of ethical decision making is to consider questions like the following:

- What would be the likely consequences of acting in this way? How do I factor in uncertainty about the impacts of actions? Who is responsible for unintended consequences of such an action? Have I anticipated the effects of this decision on all who are involved? What are the impacts of this action on future generations?
- Is the intention of the action relevant to its ethical worth? That is, if good consequences result from an action taken due to an unethical intention, is the action ethical or unethical? What if the action was ethically motivated but resulted in harm, does that make the action unethical?
- What duties are relevant to this situation and which rights should I be attentive to? Are there any competing rights or duties, and if so, how are they to be balanced?
- What would a virtuous person do? What kind of person would I be if I acted in this way? Does this decision uphold my basic moral values and have I been attentive to and respectful of the values of others involved?
- Does my decision nurture good relationships and address the particular needs and interests of those relationships? Do certain individuals or groups have a greater stake in the outcome either because we have special obligations to them or because they have greater needs?³

Another approach is that of Shapiro and Stefkovich's (2011) multiple ethical paradigms (see also Chapter 14 of this handbook). They offer four paradigms: the ethics of justice, the ethics of critique, the ethics of care, and the ethics of the profession. While not identical to the frameworks noted above, there are various overlaps between them. And similar to my advocating an integrated approach to ethical frameworks in ethics education, Shapiro and Stefkovich note that using the different paradigms allows educators and students to be attentive to different approaches to ethics, but they also stress that the approaches are not to be seen as mutually exclusive and urge attention to instances where use of more than one of the paradigms leads to a better approach to an ethical issue.

Identifying and Assessing the Facts Relevant to the Ethical Issue

An often overlooked aspect of ethical decision making is ensuring that one has an accurate understanding of all the facts relevant to the issue. While it seems obvious that any type of empirical reasoning should be grounded on a solid evidentiary basis, too often we forget that ethical analyses also involve an empirical component. We cannot, for example, analyze the ethical acceptability of genetic manipulation

without understanding what types of genes are being modified, for what purposes, and with what consequences. Thus, a key component of any ethical analysis is developing a robust understanding of the issue, including all the relevant facts, as well as making sound inferences from those facts. In addition, moral literacy in this domain requires understanding which facts are uncertain and the nature of that uncertainty. Ethical decision making thus involves critical reasoning skills. What we sometimes discover is that what appear to be ethical disagreements are actually empirical disagreements about the relevant facts or appropriate inferences from those facts.

Identifying the Relevant Stakeholders

The notion of a *stakeholder* was initially introduced in a business context to contrast with stockholders and to signal that there are other parties that have a stake in the decisions made by corporations in addition to those who hold equity in them. In his book *Strategic Management: A Stakeholder Approach*, R. Edward Freeman (1984) introduced the term as follows: “A stakeholder in an organization is (by definition) any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization’s objectives” (p. 46). Similarly, in the analysis of an ethical issue, it is important to identify all the relevant stakeholders who are affected by the issue at stake, whether positively or negatively, or who should have a say in how the situation is addressed.

The question of who to count as a stakeholder often leads to questions concerning moral standing. For example, many believe that when we are making decisions that will have long-term impacts on health or well-being, stakeholders should include not only those people currently alive, but also future generations. The notion of intergenerational justice, for example, entails the view that all present generations may be obligated by considerations of justice not to pursue policies that create benefits for themselves but impose costs on those who will live in the future. A more controversial question is whether anything other than humans has moral standing. Some, for example, argue that some nonhuman animals should be accorded at least partial moral standing, while others would argue that species and ecosystems also have moral standing.

Reflection on the relevant stakeholders is an important component of ethical reasoning in that it helps to identify the range of impacts of an action or policy and consider which are ethically relevant, the types of rights and duties that are relevant and to whom, and the nature and significance of the relationships that result in someone or something being a stakeholder, as well as to reflect upon who should have a say in the decision and why.

Identifying and Assessing the Values Individuals or Groups Hold to Be Relevant to the Ethical Issue

Ethical reasoning skills include the value clarification skills of ethical sensitivity but builds on them by developing the ability to assess them. Assessing values includes the following skills:

- (a) Determining the ethical import of the values I, or others, hold to be relevant to an issue: The ability to identify relevant values does not provide us with

all that is required to make responsible ethical choices. Take the case of a teacher whose student is requesting that she be allowed to redo a failed assignment because a personal problem prevented her from properly focusing on the assignment by the time it was due. While compassion is very likely to be a value relevant to this situation, exactly how we should see it as factoring into an ethically responsible decision regarding the request requires careful analysis. The degree to which compassion is relevant to our decision has to do with other factors—for example, the impact of the problem on the student and how we see that impact affecting them. If it was a relatively minor personal problem, we will likely weigh the relevance of compassion differently than if it was a difficult or high-intensity problem. In particular, we often have to weigh competing ethical values and their import, which leads us to the next skill.

- (b) Being able to weigh competing values: While I may see compassion as relevant to the above instance, I will also have to balance it against other values, such as fairness. Decisions about how to compare and calculate the import of competing values is a crucial element of moral literacy, for some of the most difficult ethical issues are those involving having to decide how to ethically balance different values, such as compassion and fairness.
- (c) Identifying mistakes in value assessments: Another important ethical reasoning skill related to values is the ability to analyze whether all and only the values relevant to the situation were taken into consideration. Mistakes in value assessments can happen in a variety of ways. An analysis of the ethical acceptability of an action may have overlooked a value that was relevant to the analysis or mistakenly included values that were not actually relevant. It might also have misinterpreted the salience of the values so identified, underestimating the significance of some values relative to others.

Generating and Evaluating Options for Action

Ethical decision-making skills are also needed to generate and assess options for action when we find ourselves confronted with an ethical issue. When I teach ethics or train other faculty to integrate ethics into their classes, I advocate that when students are examining an ethical issue, they should not only go through the steps identified above (what is the ethical issue, who are the relevant stakeholders, what are the relevant facts, etc.), but should identify and then assess five different courses of action. My point in this advocacy is to help students see two things. First, while for complex ethical issues there may not be a uniquely correct ethical choice, the students will typically identify some choices that are clearly wrong when asked to identify multiple courses of action. Second, being asked to compare the different action choices provides them with additional training in ethical reasoning skills. Assessing what it is about a proposed action that makes it an unacceptable choice (violation of rights, overlooking crucial values, etc.) helps to strengthen all of the skills listed above. In addition, being asked how they would rank the different options that seem to them to be ethically acceptable, and to justify that ranking, not only helps students develop their ethical decision-making skills, it also helps them understand the

complexity of ethical choices and reinforces the importance of their becoming morally literate in order to be ethically responsible in all aspects of their lives, whether in their professions, in the personal domain, or as citizens.

ETHICAL MOTIVATION

The third domain of moral literacy is ethical motivation. As I have endeavored to explain in this essay, moral literacy involves a progression of skills that begin with the ability to ethics spot, or to appreciate that a situation involves an ethical dimension, and evolve to include the ability to assess different ethical positions or understand and appreciate the complexity of ethical issues. But full moral literacy is not simply a cognitive endeavor; a central and essential element is ethical motivation, which involves a number of components (Bezzina & Tuana, forthcoming), including (Figure 11.5):

1. Moral purpose
2. Moral courage
3. Moral hope

The link between literacy and action is as crucial to moral literacy as it is to reading literacy. If education leads to the *ability* to read but not to the *will* to read, then education has failed. The goal of education is not simply to impart a series of skills, but to provide the type of environment in which students engage in those skills in practice and experience how they are of benefit to their and others leading better lives. Similarly, moral literacy includes not just knowledge and skills, but also the types of moral habits and sentiments that are essential to *acting morally*, to facing ethical problems in our everyday experiences. Moral literacy is about *engagement* with everyday moral issues in which we take a stand, learn from our mistakes as well

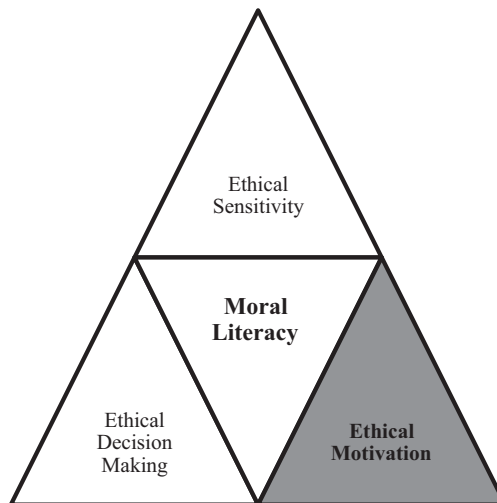


Figure 11.5 Ethical motivation

from our good choices, and appreciate how ethical issues are intertwined with a host of issues. The simple act of buying a new car, for example, raises aesthetic issues (Do I like this shape or color?), as well as economic issues (Can I afford this?) and ethical issues (How much will driving a car like this contribute to rising greenhouse gases and global warming?). Moral literacy, thus, cannot be separated from the real-life contexts in which it arises (the argument against “trolleyology” noted above). Nor can it be separated from moral motivation and, ultimately, ethical action.

Moral Purpose

Moral purpose is a key element of ethical motivation. It is a state of commitment to a set of ethical values and goals. Moral purpose can be individual or community shared. Many scholars have identified individual moral purpose and clear personal values as central elements of authentic leadership (e.g., Begley 2003; Hodgkinson 1991). But while one goal that education may aspire to is that students develop moral literacy and lead value-led lives, to do this, education itself must be shaped by shared moral purpose. As John Dewey (1909) explained, “We need to translate the moral into the conditions and forces of our community life, and into the impulses and habits of the individual” (p. 58). Similarly, Michael Fullan (1993) insists: “Teaching at its core is a moral profession. Scratch a good teacher and you will find a moral purpose” (p. 12).

Moral purpose signals the importance of acknowledging that the image of ethical action, or indeed ethical education, as focused on the viewpoint of individuals who are isolated moral agents making decisions solely through conscious cognitive processes (Kohlberg, 1984) is lacking. Moral action happens in the midst of living and in and through our interactions with others—our family, our friends, our coworkers. And it is in the midst of these relationships that we enact moral literacy. As Dewey (1897) phrases it:

I believe that moral education centers about this conception of the school as a mode of social life, that the best and deepest moral training is precisely that which one gets through having to enter into proper relations with others in a unity of work and thought. The present educational systems render it difficult or impossible to get any genuine, regular moral training.

(p. 78)

Similarly the moral purpose of a profession, such as the moral purpose of education, arises from a community that embraces a shared sense of moral purpose via a shared commitment to explicit values.

Building shared moral purpose is a sophisticated enterprise that requires leaders to navigate the complexities of modern schools in times that are ethically ambiguous. The challenge for leaders is often to choose between two “goods” rather than a good and a “bad” (Duignan, 2003). Educational leaders in complex times find themselves constantly engaged in discerning the moral purpose of a community and how best to bring it alive and nurture it in a way that will allow it to shape the educational experience (Bezzina, 2012, p. 249).

Shared moral purpose must be explicitly cultivated and emerge out of the particulars of the circumstances in which the schools are part, including the national curricular standards and expectations and the economic situation of the school and the community of which it is a part. Shared moral purpose is a key to ethical motivation, but to be effective, it must be continually reinforced, reflected upon, and engaged in the context of the complexities of shaping curriculum and cultivating educationally responsible relationships. According to Michael Bezzina (2008), clear and explicit dialogue about the moral purpose of education, in turn, reinforces shared ethical leadership across the school community, which is the more expansive sense of leading with ethics, with which I opened this essay.

Moral Courage

Rushworth Kidder (2005) explains the importance of moral courage in his book by the same title in the following way:

[W]hile many have fine values and develop great skill at moral reasoning and ethical decision making, such mental activity counts for little if their decisions sit unimplemented on the shelf. What's so often needed is a third step: the moral courage to put those decisions into action. More broadly, what's needed is the courage to live a moral and ethical life.

(p. viii)

While not all ethical actions require moral courage, living by our values can take tremendous courage. As we know from the battlefield, as well as from the instances of the good Samaritans who have gone into burning buildings to rescue others trapped within, living our values may mean risking physical well-being to save another. But the risk can also be to reputation or financial well-being. The janitor who did not report Sandusky feared that he would lose his job. Arthur Anderson and the many other accountants and executives who failed to report the financial misdeeds at Enron likely feared economic and criminal damages would result from doing so. The student who fails to report bullying may fear personal physical or reputational damage.

Like moral purpose, moral courage can be individual, but it can also be collective, cultivated within a community. Indeed, this is what student honor codes often aim to do—to encourage the entire educational community to strengthen and enact moral courage. Whether in the commitment to take responsibility for one's own educational development, even when that may mean not getting the high grades one hoped for, or the courage it takes to report wrongdoing by another, honor codes are designed to strengthen both individual and community moral courage (McCabe & Trevino, 1993, 1997; McCabe, Trevino, & Butterfield, 1999). Moral courage gives us the strength needed to remain people of integrity, that is, to reinforce and live our commitment to ethical values and principles in the face of danger and hardships resulting from doing so and to accept and endure that risk to well-being.

A component of moral courage is also the willingness to acknowledge our ethical lapses and take responsibility for them, even when we know that doing so will come

at a cost to ourselves. Too often, the domain of moral courage is limited to future actions, that is, choosing to stand by our values even when we know that doing so will put us at risk. But such an account overlooks the fact that moral courage is also required to acknowledge ethical failures to ourselves and others. These admissions may result in the loss of respect from those whose opinions we care about, as well as other impacts, such as losing one's job.

Moral Hope

If we do not believe that ethical change is possible or our ethical goals are attainable, we will not commit to a moral purpose. Indeed, moral courage goes hand-in-hand with moral hope and motivates us to risk hardships to do what is right and attain what is just. Without hope, we experience despair or cynicism, and perhaps even indifference. But not all forms of hope are in the moral domain. We often hope for a bright future for ourselves or our loved ones. We might hope to win the lottery or to get a promotion. These are not instances of moral hope. Moral hope is aimed at the achievement of moral purpose, at the belief not only that it is the moral purpose of education (to take one instance) desirable but that it is *possible* and that the choices I and others make are relevant to its success. Bezzina and Tuana (forthcoming) have argued that moral hope is a vital element for moral agency: "Hopelessness or despair leads not only to suffering, but also to an impaired ability to act, not only in one's own interests, but also in the interests of others" (p. 12).

Moral hope, however, is not parochial. It cannot be limited to achieving moral purpose in my classroom or for my school, but rather encompasses the hope that all education achieves moral purpose. It is an important element of ethical motivation because hope is not an abstract concept or merely a belief, but a state of being in which we are called to action. Moral hope is not a belief, but a disposition to act. Moral purpose combined with moral courage and moral hope leads to moral agency.

CONCLUSION: MORAL AGENCY

Moral literacy (Figure 11.6) aims, always, at moral agency and ethical action—not just that we know what is right, or that we can identify appropriate values, or can provide a justification of why one action choice is better than an alternative, but that we *do what is right*. Any account of moral literacy that does not include a focus on what motivates right action would be lacking. Ethical sensitivity and ethical reasoning skills must be translated into ethical action through ethical motivation.

The three elements of moral literacy are mutually sustaining and reinforcing. For example, dialogue about shared moral purpose helps to minimize ethical insensitivity caused by blind spots. Moral courage also enables individuals and groups to question community shared prejudices and, thereby, reassess unethical behavior, such as racism or sexism, that has been normalized by being habituated. Moral hope and moral courage combine to catalyze us from knowing what is right to doing what is right.

Moral hope and moral courage are also the wellspring from which actions toward justice emerge, for acting consistently with moral purpose requires the belief that

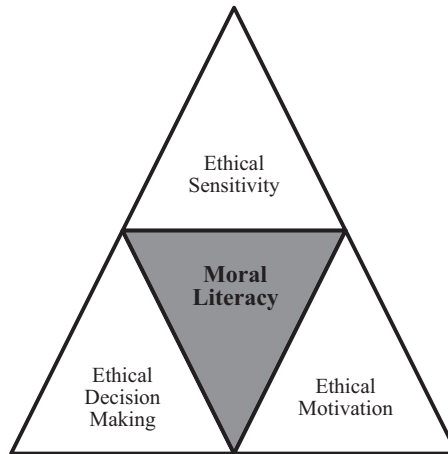


Figure 11.6 Moral agency

one can affect change, and this means believing both that change is indeed possible (moral hope) and that I am capable of having an impact (moral courage). This combination of moral hope and moral courage has been labeled moral potency. Hannah and Avolio (2010) define moral potency as

a psychological state marked by an experienced sense of ownership over the moral aspects of one's environment, reinforced by efficacy beliefs in the capabilities to act to achieve moral purpose in that domain, and the courage to perform ethically in the face of adversity and persevere through challenges.

(p. 261)

They argue that moral potency provides the psychological resources that “bridge moral thought to moral action” (p. 292). For example, “before [teachers] will act in a way that aligns consistently with moral purpose (moral agency), they need a sense of their own role as an influential player in this domain (moral potency) reflected in their sense of a capacity to act in ways that make a difference; their ownership of, and commitment to, moral purpose; a sense of hope; and the requisite courage to act” (Bezzina & Tuana, forthcoming, p. 6).

The school culture, indeed the broader culture in which schools are located, has a huge impact on moral agency. As the essays in this volume repeatedly stress, our schools need to create a “virtuous cycle” (Weaver, 2006, p. 351) in which resources and opportunities for exercising moral agency are offered to all members of the school—not just principals or teachers, but to all the students as well as the staff—and in this way, each person, in turn, contributes to strengthening the moral culture of the school.

Ultimately action will be taken by individuals who are morally literate and who have moved through their sense of moral potency to a position of moral agency. Thus leaders will need to work with their communities in ways that will promote

this transition. The likelihood of this happening is enhanced within a community in which moral purpose is explicit, in which norms and structures enhance commitment and the sense of efficacy, and in which an underlying sense of hope shapes courageous ethical action (Bezzina & Tuana, forthcoming, p. 19).

Moral literacy is, thus, not an end in itself, but a path to moral agency and ethical action.

NOTES

1. There is no agreed-upon distinction between the moral and the ethical. Individual theorists will sometimes mark a distinction between the terms, but there is little agreement on the uses of these terms among theorists. For this reason, my distinction between ‘moral’ and ‘ethical’ is simply pragmatic.
2. Begley’s (2003) concept of spheres of values is one tool designed to promote this ability.
3. For a more detailed discussion of these different frameworks, see the study by Tuana (2007).

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