Morality

We consider a person has a moral conscience when:

- They have standards that they use to distinguish right from wrong.
- Their standards for right and wrong are internalized and they do not depend on external forces to follow them.
- When they act in accordance with these standards, they experience pride; and guilt over acts that violate standards (Freud emphasizes fear and shame).

Moral Development

Freud believed that an effective conscience depended on the experience of negative emotions.

- Moral standards depended on identification with the parent and internalizing the conscience of the parent.
- Acting in accordance with these standards lead to feeling of self worth and being accepted and loved by the parent.
- Acting against parental standards leads to feelings of worthlessness, fear of punishment and fear of abandonment by the parent.
- For Freud, morality was essentially an irrational process based on emotional feelings that caused the individual to accept the moral precepts of their parents.

Physical Punishment and Moral Behavior

Freud’s theory supported physical punishment as a way of controlling children’s behavior.

- This reinforced a common religious view of a person as sinful and physical punishment was needed to curb natural inclinations toward evil, e.g., “span the rod, spoil the child.” Freud’s description of the ID was similar.
- Children misbehave and responsible parents punish. Physical punishment leads the child to respect authority, and to engage in good behavior, and supports a strong Superego.
- Behaviorism also appeared to support punishment. Punishment for a forbidden act leads to conditioned anxiety over its use.

When Parents Spank Children

When Parents Spank Children

A Poem for Young Children

….But as he jumped to reach a dish to put his fishes in,
A large meat hook that hung close by did catch him by the chin,
Poor Harry kicked and call’d aloud and screamed and cried and roared,
While from his wounds the crimson blood in dreadful torrents poured….

Parental Methods of Discipline

Power Assertion

- Physical punishment, deprivation of material objects or privileges, direct application of force, or threat.

Love Withdrawal

- Non-physical expression of disapproval of the child. Examples are ignoring the child, turning your back, refusing to speak or even listen, expressing a dislike for the child, or isolating or threatening to leave.

Induction

- Explanations or reasons for requiring the child to change his behavior. Pointing out the physical requirements of a situation (not strong enough, old enough etc.) or the harmful consequences of the behavior to others (other oriented inductions). Attempt is made to persuade or convince the child to change behavior. This strategy calls for skills in taking child’s perspective.
Spanking

Why PA and LW do not work

Arousal level
- PA and LW raise arousal to too high a level for complex thinking, induction does not.

Motivation
- Children misbehave for a reason. If you want child to stop misbehaving you need to provide a rational why they should.

Parent Child Communication
- Importance of developing a positive relationship with parents for communication. Focus - Important to focus on child's actions rather than parent's actions

What is learned
- When physical punishment is used children primarily learn to avoid pain - Mrs. Malarick's "reign of terror."

The Fear Issue - Is fear needed for children to act appropriately?
- Does fear work?
- Have you ever gotten a traffic ticket?
- Do you exercise to avoid a heart attack?
- Have you given up smoking to avoid cancer?

Spanking

It is clear that frequent harsh punishment is strongly associated with negative child outcomes, and although there is evidence that mild spanking in loving, attentive families does not seem to have deleterious effects, Why spank when it is not necessary and could cause harm? Why take the chance.
- It is not clear that spanking per se, has any positive effects.
- It is easy for parents to go too far. In addition children who are spanked are more likely to be angry, aggressive, and stressed.
- Furthermore, if punishment is needed it can be accomplished through time out or loss of privileges (but even these can create problems if used unreasonably).

Cognitive Developmental Approach

Learning right from wrong can be difficult and depends on the child's ability to make important distinctions.
- Difference between lying and being tactful, stealing and borrowing, punishment and aggression.

Jean Piaget believed that basis for moral behavior was the understanding of where rules came from and why they should be respected.
- All morality consists in a system of rules, and the essence of morality is to be found in the respect which the individual acquires for these rules” (Piaget, 1932).

Studies of Conscience Development

Correlation of type of discipline and conscience

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Discordant finding:
- In African American families it is associated with positive development in children (Lansford et al., 2004). Why?
  - Physical punishment in the black community is more likely to be mild, in the context of a loving relationship, and that it will help the child be a better person.
  - Similar arguments can be made in Asian American families in which we find that authoritarian parenting functions more positively.
  - Physical punishment in European American families more likely to administered by parents who are frustrated and angry, delivered in a context that is meant to be punitive rather than as a means toward a more positive outcome.
Piaget's Moral Stages

Premoral Stage, 1-5 years.
- Little concern or awareness of moral rules or how they should be applied

Moral Realism or Heteronomous Morality 5-10 years.
- Child understood a system of rules, but did not comprehend how or why they were formed, but adopted a attitude of Unilateral respect for parental authority (rule makers).
- Belief in immanent justice--if a rule is broken, punishment will follow.
- Expunatory punishment--if a person does something wrong he/she must be punished to pay for the transgression. Child may experience inappropriate guilt.
- Justice and rules are unchangeable. If rule is broken the person is bad regardless of their intent. Emphasis on damage done.

Piaget's Moral Dilemma

Stage 1: The punishment and obedience orientation.
- The question in this case is whether the law is getting in the way of the most basic cooperation.
- "No one will think you are bad if you steal the drug, but your family will think you're an inhuman husband if you don't. If you let your wife die you'll never be able to look anybody in the face again."
- "Are these children equally guilty?" "Which one is naughtier? Why?"

Stage 2: The instrumental purpose orientation.
- You shouldn't steal the drug because you'll be caught and sent to jail if you do. If you do get away, your conscience would bother you thinking how the police would catch up with you at any minute."
- "Are these children equally guilty?" "Which one is naughtier? Why?"

Stage 3: The social contract orientation.
- It's a natural thing for Heinz to want to save his wife, but it's still always wrong to steal. you have to follow the rules regardless how you feel or regardless of the special circumstances."
- "Are these children equally guilty?" "Which one is naughtier? Why?"

Stage 4: The social order maintaining orientation.
- In this situation the rules are there and they all get broken.
- "Are these children equally guilty?" "Which one is naughtier? Why?"

Stage 5: The universal ethical principle orientation.
- Kohlberg doubled down on cognitive developmental approach. For Kohlberg moral behavior is rational by definition. "To know the good, is to do the good"
- Focus on the cognitive perspective of the moral agent not specific behavior
- Moral development proceeds by stages which are related to cognitive ability

Are Any Rules the same as Moral Rules?

Turiel's distinction between:
- Social Conventional Rules are customs determined by consensus, but no moral obligation, e.g., grace before meals, using a fork
- Some evidence by three years of age (Smetana)

Lawrence Kohlberg
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The Moral Dilemma of Heinz

DILEMMA: In Europe, a woman was near death from cancer. One drug might save her, a form of radium that a druggist in the same town had recently discovered. The druggist was charging $2,000, ten times what the drug cost him to make. The sick woman's husband, Heinz, went to everyone he knew to borrow the money, but he could only get together about half of what it cost. He told the druggist that his wife was dying and asked him to sell it cheaper or let him pay later. But the druggist said, "No." The husband got desperate and broke into the man's store. He climed onto a chair and stretched out his arm. But the jam was too high up, and he couldn't reach it. While he was trying to get it, he knocked over a cup. The cup fell down and broke.
- "Are these children equally guilty?" "Which one is naughtier? Why?"

The Moral Dilemma of Heinz

The Moral Dilemma of Heinz

Autonomous Morality, 10-up.
- Children recognize that rules and laws are made by people, by agreements that can be changed to accommodate situations. When judging a behavior, one should consider the actor’s intentions as well as the consequences of their behavior. Rules can be violated or changed to help others.
- Peer experience critical in reaching this last stage.
  - Demonstrates rules not based on unilateral respect for adult authority but on equal status relationships of peers that agree to them through consensus
  - Enhances understanding as to the purpose of rules and why they are needed
  - Provides practice in perspective taking as moral situations can be viewed from other perspectives

Rate from lowest moral reason to highest.
"The husband wouldn't like it if she died. It's not like an animal. If a pet dies, you can get along without it; it isn't something you really need. He should steal; he needs his wife."
- Stage 2: The instrumental purpose orientation.
- "It's a natural thing for Heinz to want to save his wife, but it's still always wrong to steal. you have to follow the rules regardless how you feel or regardless of the special circumstances."
- Stage 3: The social contract orientation.
- "You shouldn't steal the drug because you'll be caught and sent to jail if you do. If you do get away, your conscience would bother you thinking how the police would catch up with you at any minute."
- Stage 4: The social order maintaining orientation.
- "Where the choice must be made between disobeying a law and saving a human life the higher principle of preserving life makes it morally right—not just understandable—to steal the drug."
- Stage 6: The universal ethical principle orientation.
- "No one will think you are bad if you steal the drug, but your family will think you're an inhuman husband if you don't. If you let your wife die you'll never be able to look anybody in the face again."
- Stage 2: The *good boy–good girl* orientation, or the morality of interpersonal cooperation.
- "The question in this case is whether the law is getting in the way of the most basic claim that a member of a society has to life. If it is, then he should steal."
- Stage 5: The social contract orientation.

The Moral Dilemma of Heinz

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The Moral Dilemma of Heinz

The Moral Dilemma of Heinz
Cognitive stages.
- Strong evidence for stages if we exclude stages five and six.
- Individuals go through the stages in the order Kohlberg has them and they do not skip stages.

Social experience.
- Kohlberg theorizes that cognitive development is not sufficient on its own to advance to higher stages but the individual must have experiences with moral situations that challenge their thinking and cause them to evaluate their moral positions.
- Peer experience more likely to foster moral development than experience than parents. When parents are confrontational, children are defensive and experience has negative effects. Parents should discuss important issues but be supportive.

Education.
- Leads to cognitive growth and experience with diverse perspectives. Higher education correlated with higher stages.

Criticism of Kohlberg’s Stages
Moral dilemmas are not representative of children’s moral problems.
Stages 5 and 6 are related on constitutional democracies.
That do not fit other countries ideologies.
Carol Gilligan: The theory is Sexist based on male moral perspective and denigrating feminine form of morality.
  - Gilligan’s distinction between morality of justice (male) vs. morality of care or interpersonal care (female).
  - Females orientation is connectedness with others, emphasize empathy, nurturance and concern for the individual
  - Males orientation is separateness, emphasize individual rights, reciprocity and fairness
  - However, research of this question finds females equal to males, and both sexes use both forms of morality.

Criticism
Is it moral reasoning or moral rationalization?
- One of the problems this theory faces is that it tells us that the actual decision that is made is not important but rather the reasoning involved. Does this mean any act can be justified if you give a good enough reason.
- Not surprisingly the correlation is weak between behavior we recognize as moral and the level of stage a person reasons at.
- Another way of looking at it, is that people make moral decisions based on emotional reasons but justify their action by a high level cognitive explanation.

Freud ignored cognitive component does Kohlberg ignore an important emotional component of moral behavior?

Emotions and Moral Decisions
Trolley Dilemma and Footbridge Dilemma, are logically the same, choosing to decide whether to allow a greater number of people to die or to sacrifice one person. The big difference is in the very strong emotion we feel in having to actually kill the person ourselves.

Say we take away the ability to feel emotions in this situation would we decide differently?
Brain and Moral Decisions

**Ventromedial Prefrontal Cortex**
- Processes the emotional feelings we associate with empathy, shame, compassion and guilt.

**Work of Antonio Damasio, University of Iowa.**
- Compared 6 people with ventromedial prefrontal brain damage
- 12 people no brain damage
- 12 people with brain damage in areas that regulate other emotions, such as fear
- No differences in solving
  - Scenarios involving no moral content, e.g., how to run a tractor to harvest turnips.
  - Scenarios that did not require participant to harm someone else, e.g., Decision to classify personal expenses as business to get an income tax reduction.
  - All members rejected scenarios that harmed others for personal benefit, e.g., killing a newborn if it couldn’t be cared for.
- However VMD patients about 3 times more likely to sacrifice someone else for the greater good, e.g., pushing someone off bridge.

Internalizing Moral Behavior

Parents are key in encouraging children to internalize moral behavior.
- Parents who share their empathic feelings with their children for others and communicate that they respect people and are kind-hearted have children who show more moral behavior.
- German citizens who hid Jews during the war report their parents "taught me to love my neighbor—to consider him my equal whatever his nationality or religion. Similar findings for freedom riders in the '60s.

Internalizing Moral Behavior

The constellation of emotions empathy, guilt, and redemption, can be powerful motivators of a strong individual morality.

Parents who use Induction encourage the emotions of empathy, guilt and redemption.
- Encourage empathy by pointing out how people feel when they are harmed.
- Point out that child’s actions have caused distress in another child, inducing guilt,
- Make suggestions on how the children should change behavior to make amends to be a "good" person (redemption).

Altruism: Development of the prosocial self

Intimately connected with moral behavior is Altruism:
- A selfless concern for the welfare of others that is expressed through prosocial acts such as sharing, cooperating, and helping, which is encouraged by parents who focus their children’s attention

Empathy, or the comprehension of another’s emotional state or condition is an important contributor to act altruistically but there are two components.
- **Sympathetic empathic arousal** – feelings of sympathy or compassion that may be elicited when we empathize with someone who is distressed. 
- **Self-oriented distress** – feeling of personal discomfort when we empathize with a distressed Person.

The first encourages altruism the second inhibits it.

Empathy and Personal Distress

Can you feel too much?

Feelings of empathy for another person can cause strong personal/self-oriented distress if the focus is on the self and not the person who is suffering (Eisenberg, 2000).
- Personal/self-oriented distress can lead to ignoring others in need because of the pain that it causes us
- Sympathetic empathic arousal – focus of the empathy is on concern for distressed others, leading to helping them

Learning to handle self-oriented distress takes time.
- Children as young as 2 have a hard time distinguishing empathy for others and their own self distress.
- Little relationship between empathy and altruism among preschool and young grade school children but grows stronger into adolescence
  - Growing ability to understand why others are distressed
  - Growing ability to suppress own distress when feeling empathy

Girl burnt in napalm attack, 1972, Vietnam War.
Development of a Conscience

So far we have been looking at how parents affect child’s moral behavior but could the standards and the motivation to act "morally" be built in?