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Chapter 14

The Four Components of Acting Morally

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Abstract

The production of a moral act entails four inner psychological processes termed the *Four Component model*. These are (1) moral sensitivity, (2) moral judgment, (3) moral motivation, and (4) implementation. Analyzing the production of moral behavior in terms of the Four Component model is useful for explaining various failures in moral behavior, for providing a framework for or-

ganizing various research/theoretical traditions in the psychological study of morality, for understanding various theoretical controversies in the psychological literature, and for planning moral education interventions. Both cognition and affect are intertwined in each component, and the ensemble of four components are responsible for the production of moral behavior.

Do you wonder why people do bad things? Why does a terrorist kill innocent people? Do you ever ask yourself why people, who seem decent otherwise, treat you so insensitively? Why are people sometimes seemingly oblivious to the suffering of others? Or, have you wondered how some people can make such unfair decisions? And, have you thought about why it is so difficult for you to do what you think is right sometimes? When is the last time you thought about the complexity of morality? Was it yesterday or last week when you noticed someone cheating in class? Was it when the questionable actions of a

media star or politician hit the front page? Or was it when someone you know struggled with the option of getting an abortion? Chances are, you have been thinking about moral behavior, or its lack thereof, a lot since you have been reading this book. This chapter will focus on the complexity of psychological processes inherent in moral behavior which must work in concert in order for moral action to result.

What are the psychological aspects of morality? Psychology has traditionally divided morality into three units: cognition, affect and behavior. According to this tripartite division of morality, the cognitive developmentalists study thinking while the psychoanalysts study emotion and the behaviorists or social learning researchers study behavior. It has been assumed that each area has its own separate track of development. While they are convenient distinctions, these traditional divisions do not represent theoretically clear units of analysis. For example, think of a dilemma you faced recently. Perhaps it involved whether to help someone out or not, how to divide your time among several demands, or how to approach a sensitive issue with someone. As you think about the situation, notice whether you can (or you did) clearly divide your feelings from your thoughts. If you are observant, you will notice that they are inseparable. Furthermore, would you say that your behavior had nothing to do with your feelings and thoughts? We all sense that there are interconnections here, but that they are complex. So how *can* we usefully analyze morality?

There are at least four processes that produce moral behavior. These four processes or components comprise the Four Component model (see Table 14-1). Four internal psychological processes must occur for moral action to take place:

1. *Moral sensitivity* involves the receptivity of the sensory perceptual system to social situations and the interpretation of the situation in terms of what actions are possible, who and what would be affected by each of the possible actions, and how the involved parties might react to possible outcomes.
2. *Moral judgment* involves deciding which of the possible actions is most moral. The individual weighs the choices and determines what a person ought to do in such a situation.
3. *Moral motivation* implies that the person gives priority to the moral value above all other values and intends to fulfill it.
4. *Implementation* combines the ego strength with the social and psychological skills necessary to carry out the chosen action.

In order to produce moral behavior, our hypothetical person has to have both skills and persevering character in the face of opposition that arises during the course of the action's fulfillment. Before exploring each of the components in more detail, here are some general comments about the Four Component model.

The Four Component model represents the internal *processes* necessary to produce a moral act. These are not personality traits or virtues. Instead, these

TABLE 14-1 Inner Processes Producing Behavior

Major Functions of the Process	Cognitive-Affective Interactions
<i>Component 1</i>	
To interpret the situation in terms of how one's actions affect the welfare of others.	Drawing inferences about how the other will be affected and feeling empathy, disgust, and so on, for the other.
<i>Component 2</i>	
To formulate what a moral course of action would be; to identify the moral ideal in a specific situation.	Both abstract-logical and attitudinal-valuing aspects are involved in the construction of systems of moral meaning; moral ideals are composed of both cognitive and affective elements.
<i>Component 3</i>	
To select among competing value outcomes of ideals, the one to act upon; deciding whether or not to try to fulfill one's moral ideal.	Calculation of relative utilities of various goals; mood influences outlook; defensive distortion of perception; empathy impels decisions; social understanding motivates the choice of goals.
<i>Component 4</i>	
To execute and implement what one intends to do.	Task persistence as affected by cognitive transformation of the goal.

are major units of analysis used to trace how a person responds in a particular social situation. The model depicts an *ensemble of processes*, not a single, unitary process. Therefore, behaving morally cannot be predicted from a single variable or single process. Behaving morally necessitates the effectuation of each process and the execution of the entire ensemble. This implies that the course of moral behavior may fail at any point due to a weakness in one skill or process. Some people may function well on one process but may be deficient in another. For instance, a person may demonstrate great sensitivity but poor judgment skills. Or, as another example, there are people you know who make excellent judgments but fail in follow-through. And there are those who have great tenacity but who make simple-minded judgments. See Table 14-2 for some examples from popular characters.

Each of the four component processes involves different kinds of *cognitive-affective interactions*. As we noted earlier, cognition and affect do not occur in separation. As Piaget contended, they are sides of the same coin. Unlike other

TABLE 14-2 Real and Fictional Characters That Represent the Components

Component	Strong in Component	Weak in Component
Moral sensitivity	Mother Teresa Mary Tyler Moore Bill Moyers The Tin Man (Wizard of Oz)	Archie Bunker Spock Bart Simpson
Moral judgment	King Solomon The Scarecrow (Wizard of Oz)	Snow White Ralph Cramden Lucy (I Love Lucy)
Moral motivation	The Biblical Paul Don Quixote Eleanor Roosevelt	Hitler Stalin Saddam Hussein Alex P. Keaton Scrooge
Implementation	Moses Hercules John Wayne The Virgin Mary Dirty Harry Scarlett O'Hara	Woody Allen characters Garfield Cathy

theories and theorists, the Four Component model holds that there are no cognitions completely devoid of affect, no moral affects completely lacking in cognitive aspects, and no moral behavior separable from the affects and cognitions that prompted it.

The processes are presented here in a *logical sequence*. However, this sequence does not assume that people perform each process in the order 1, 2, 3, then 4. Actually, there is evidence that the components interact with each other. For instance, one's notions about what is morally right or obligatory (Component 2) often influences one's sensitivity to possible actions and outcomes (Component 1).

The goal of presenting such a model is multiple. It provides a framework for programmatic research and for moral education programs. In addition, the Four Component model has been useful in organizing existing research on the psychology of morality and as a tool in analyzing theoretical problems. It may also help you in examining your own behavior and those of others you know.

Component 1

In order for a person to choose to respond to a situation in a moral manner, she must be alerted to the need for a particular action and be able to interpret the

events adequately. In other words, the individual must be sensitive to the situational information and constructively imagine various possible actions.

One aspect of sensitivity concerns response to cues in the environment. Individual differences abound in arousal to environmental events. One person's alarm may not be activated until he sees blood flowing, while another person reacts to minute details, a glance or expression, and finds momentous moral implications in every act.

Critical to interpreting the situation is empathy. It is usually defined as distress felt by the self which is triggered by the perception of distress in another person. It is a primary affective response which can be aroused in very young infants and which requires little cognitive development for its activation. As a child matures, so does her response to her empathetic feelings. She is first moved to distress when she hears another infant cry. As she develops a clear distinction between herself and others, she feels sympathy for another in visible distress. She seeks to comfort that person in ways that would comfort her. For instance, she might take her teddy bear to her mother when her mother is upset, assuming that the teddy bear is as comforting to her mother as it is to her. At age two or three, the child begins to realize that others may have different needs than she does. She begins to make inferences from her world knowledge that enable her to give more effective help to others. In late childhood, she is aroused by a tragic life situation as well as by immediate distress. That is, she may feel sad for a person who lives in poverty and has much less than she does.

If you will recall our earlier statement about affect and cognition, you will note how affective development is inseparable from a cognitive understanding or conceptions of others. It is this gradual development of both affect and cognition together that helps the adult interpret difficult social situations. It assists the adult in deciding which actions are possible and what influence they might have on the parties involved. The emerging field of social cognition is exploring the complications not only in cue detection, but in information integration and inference-making as well.

Part and parcel of sensitivity are what we call "gut reactions." A particular situation can arouse strong feelings even prior to the perception of what the situation actually entails. One may feel instant empathy or an immediate antipathy for the person or persons involved. These primitive cognitions, which can be pre-verbal, are tacit and automatic. They can occur whether or not reflective judgment and consideration of the facts have taken place. These feelings may help or hinder our better judgment. When we sympathize with victims, we are more likely to come to their aid. But when we instantly recoil from a victim's looks or aspect, we may deny that person his full human rights. Affective arousal of this sort happens and must be taken into consideration when we are interpreting the social situation. First impressions are often poor guides for action but they must be recognized and dealt with responsibly if moral action is to ensue.

Proper interpretation of social situations is often difficult. Many years ago, a brutal killing in New York City captured the public attention for a while and spurred a great deal of psychological research. This was the case of Kitty Genovese. Now it is true that many violent killings occur every day in many cities. But what was seemingly unusual about the Genovese case was that the slaying took place while 38 people watched and did nothing. Kitty Genovese was walking home from work one evening when an assailant grabbed her purse and then stabbed her repeatedly with a knife. This was in a busy residential section of town. Kitty cried out when she was stabbed. Some lights in nearby apartments went on, some people looked out. But they did not respond. No one shouted out, no one called the police, no one went out to where Kitty was lying and tried to help her. The assailant ran off with her purse. Some time later, the assailant realized that Kitty was still alive and would be able to identify him. So he went back to where she was lying and stabbed her several times again. Kitty cried out again. And again, people peered from their windows and did nothing. Twenty minutes later the assailant came back for the third time and stabbed her some more to make sure she was dead. What is haunting about this event is the fact that 38 people witnessed a brutal and extended murder but did not attempt to intervene. At little personal expense, someone could have at least phoned the police.

There is evidence that people have trouble interpreting social situations, such as bystanders in emergency situations. When the 38 witnesses to the murder of Kitty Genovese were interviewed later, they indicated confusion about what had been happening. They were not completely clear that Kitty Genovese was being stabbed by a purse-snatcher; they thought perhaps they were observing a lovers' quarrel and would suffer embarrassment if they were to get involved. In other words, they were confused in their interpretation of the situation. This confusion led to inaction. Staub (1978) has reviewed many studies that demonstrate how helping behavior is determined by the level of cue ambiguity in the situation. If the subjects are not clear about what is happening, they do not help as much.

Once a person determines what is happening, he or she thinks about possible actions, who would be affected by the possible outcomes of these actions, and how these people would react. In emergency situations, these assessments often occur in split-second time, e.g., when an adult sees a child playing on a railroad track that holds an oncoming train. The adult quickly assesses the configuration of events: whether the child is old enough to understand a shout and to move obediently, how fast the train is moving, whether a physical intervention is necessary, whether the adult would be at risk of injury, what other options might be available, etc. On the other hand, in everyday life, these assessments may take a long time to make. For example, the ramifications of an abortion decision have implications not only for the fetus, but also for many aspects of the woman's life, her partner's life, her family and friends. This decision may take agonizing days of time to figure out.

Think about a time when you blamed yourself, afterwards, for lacking sensitivity to a situation. Were you preoccupied with something else at that time? Had the cues seemed irrelevant? Were you confused by what was happening? Did you experience strong gut reactions that pulled you in conflicting ways? These and likely other factors not yet identified help determine moral behavior. Let's consider another aspect.

Component 2

Having identified possible lines of action in terms of the Component 1 process, the function of Component 2 is to judge which action possibility is morally right and which is wrong. Moral judgment has been researched more extensively in modern psychology than any of the other components. There are two major research traditions offering an explanation of the mechanisms involved in forming a judgment. The first has evolved from social psychology and postulates that *social norms* govern the judgment of what is morally correct in a particular situation. A social norm has the following form: "In a situation with X features, a person ought to do Y." A number of social norms have been proposed, such as social responsibility, equity, reciprocity, and giving. For example, the norm of social responsibility prescribes that when you perceive a need in a person who is dependent on you, you should help that person. As an illustration, let us apply this approach to Lawrence Kohlberg's widely-known dilemma, *Heinz and the drug*. Heinz' wife is dying and a druggist has a remedy that he is selling at a price beyond the means of Heinz and his wife. The question is, should Heinz steal the drug for his wife? Heinz faces a moral dilemma. He notices a particular configuration in the event. Applying the norm of social responsibility, Heinz notices that a person who is dependent on him is in need. The norm has been activated. Heinz then infers that he should steal the drug. According to the social norm approach, as a person matures, he acquires more and more social norms which are then activated in special situations under particular circumstances.

The second major research tradition concerned with moral judgment is cognitive-developmental research, beginning with Jean Piaget's work, *Moral judgment and the child*, followed by Lawrence Kohlberg's more systematic and detailed research program and continuing with other cognitive-developmental psychologists. There are two critical assumptions made by theorists of this tradition. First, people automatically reflect on their social experience and construct meaning structures in response to their experience. Making moral judgments seems to come easily to people. Even young children display moral outrage when they feel cheated or experience unfair treatment. Particularly striking is the fact that people's moral intuitions about right and wrong can be so drastically different from each other's and that these intuitions will be held with such zealous certitude. The cognitive developmentalist seeks to under-

stand how people form their judgments, what makes these judgments so different and what comprises the fervor with which the beliefs and opinions are held.

Second, as people have social experience they develop more elaborate conceptions of the social world and a progressive understanding of the purpose, function, and nature of social arrangements. These shifting conceptual schemes of cooperation are termed "stages" of moral reasoning. Each of the stages is characterized by a distinctive notion of justice, that is, a conception of the possibilities and requirements for arranging cooperation among participants. Each stage is viewed as an underlying *general* framework of assumptions about how people ought to act toward one another, how people ought to cooperate together. Accompanying the particular conception of social organization is a distinctive sense of fairness. This concerns the reciprocity of cooperation—what is owed to others and what others owe to me. When a person is confronted with a decision about what is morally right in a social situation, the sense of fairness that is derived from a particular concept of organizing cooperation is the driving force behind the moral judgment.

At first, the young child is struck by the power and status of caretakers; he has the notion that the way to get along with these more powerful people is to do what you are told. According to this notion of getting along with others, being "good" is being obedient. This notion is referred to as *Stage One: Punishment and Obedience*.

But the child notices that each individual has personal likes and dislikes, interests and goals. The child begins to suspect that what the caretaker says is good is not necessarily what he considers to be good all of the time. "Mom and Popeye might say that eating spinach is good, but I don't agree. Why should I accept them or anyone else as my boss?" These new realizations undermine the earlier notion of blind obedience. In its place springs another idea: Even though people may have different opinions about what is good, they do not have to be at odds with each other all of the time. In fact, people can get along with each other by doing favors for each other. "You butter my bread and I'll provide you with jam." What is morally good is performing your favor in simple exchange for somebody else's favor. Morality is abiding by your part of the bargain. This is *Stage Two: Prudence and Simple Exchange*.

With further experience and reflection, the growing individual realizes that people do not simply get along by exchanging favors on an individual basis. Instead, there grows an understanding that people form enduring relationships in which the parties do not keep strict count of who owes what to whom; they orient toward understanding each other, maintaining the other's approval, caring, and support. Being morally good at this stage is to do those things that support and nurture caring relationships. Loyalty and being on the same wavelength are valued more than concrete favors. This is *Stage Three: Interpersonal Harmony and Concordance*.

Gradually, the circle of participants in the human being's conceptions of the social world expands; he grows into the awareness of more complicated schemes of cooperation as he becomes aware of the limitations of the Stage 3

notion, how to deal with strangers and groups of strangers with whom one will never be in relationship. Living in towns and cities, one must often deal with people on a short-term basis. Yet one also wants to be able to cooperate with them and have reasonable expectations about each other's behavior. Thus is conceived the idea of formal laws and formal organization. The law is publically set forth for all in a society to know; it prescribes behavior for everyone. Formal organizations have chains of command and role positions that circumscribe particular responsibilities and allow certain prerogatives. The morally right action is to keep within the law and to perform the allocated duties of your role, expecting that others in society are also obeying the law and fulfilling their duties. What would be unfair is for a person to think that she is above the law or to fail to fulfill the responsibilities of her duty within the society. This is *Stage Four: Law and Order*.

When the individual becomes aware of the limitations of the law and the status quo, he begins to think of other ways than the current structure to organize society-wide cooperation. The individual uses a guiding principle for conceptualizing role and rule systems. He seeks to balance the benefits and burdens of living together for mutual benefit and in avoidance of exploitation. The individual understands that specific laws, rules and roles are instruments, not ends in themselves, for achieving general human values. The use of moral principles is distinctive of *Stages Five and Six: the Principled Stages*.

Most research in this area has been centered around the conceptualization of justice, postulating it as a core concept that handles the balancing of benefits and responsibility within a cooperative scheme. Thus, development consists in the subject's increasing awareness of the possible kinds of cooperative arrangements. Some theorists disagree with this formulation and have suggested concepts to either replace justice or to accompany it. Such postulations include benevolence, honor, duty, and filial piety.

An interesting study that supports the contention that justice concepts are not the only way that people make moral judgments was conducted by Lawrence (discussed in Rest, 1979). She studied radically fundamentalist seminarians. After the seminarians had formulated judgments about moral dilemmas, they reported that they had set aside their own personal views about fairness. They stated that it was wrong for them to allow their own sense of justice to intrude on questions of value, which have all been previously adjudicated by the highest authority, God himself. The moral questions they faced were answered by church or Biblical teaching. This study indicates that allegiance to an ideology may override a person's own moral intuitions. As another instance of ideological commitment preempting one's intuitive sense of fairness, consider Abraham and Isaac in the book of Genesis. According to this story, Abraham understood that God wanted him to offer his only son as a sacrifice to the Lord God. Like any normal father, he abhorred the thought and intuitively thought the idea was unfair. But his religious sense of obedience was more powerful than his own intuitions. On the way up the mountain to the designated place, Isaac asked his father, what will we sacrifice? With a heavy

heart, Abraham kept his silence while he prepared the altar. Then he bound his son and laid him on the altar. As he took the knife to slay his son, an angel interrupted him saying that his faith was evident and that he need not follow through. But the fact remains that Abraham had judged that the right thing for him to do was to sacrifice his son, against his own intuitions of justice.

Although some theorists in the field of morality have regarded research in moral judgment as comprising the whole of morality, the Four Component Model regards such work as only relevant to Component 2. Accordingly, moral judgment is not the whole of morality. It does not tell us how sensitive a person is or whether the person has the skills to implement her moral ideal. And it indicates nothing about Component 3, what other values may preempt a moral ideal.

Component 3

Once a judgment has been formed about what is the most moral action there also arises the awareness of how the moral course of action may interfere with optimizing other values. Moral values are not the only values that people have. A person may value pleasure, career advancement, art, music, status, etc. These other values may conflict with the chosen moral value. For instance, you may decide to forego the new bicycle in favor of giving a donation to a needy cause. Or, you might think that a critic of your organization does have a justified complaint, yet you value the reputation of your organization and don't acknowledge the criticism. It often happens that choosing the moral course of action is in conflict with some other value.

Many of our religious, legendary, mythic, and folktale heroes have to undergo value conflicts. Consider the adventures and conflicts of Ulysses, Hercules, Jesus, John the Baptist, Luke Skywalker, and Pinocchio. Remember how Lancelot was attracted to the legendary Round Table of King Arthur. Lancelot was an outsider who proved himself to be not only outstanding in athletic and noble feats but in his pure upright character. To his misfortune, and that of the kingdom, he fell in love with the queen, Guinevere, and she with him. For years, they stayed silent and avoided each other's solitary company, out of love for Arthur and for the good of the Round Table and the kingdom. Arthur was aware of their feelings and never left them alone either. Through the plotting of Mordred, Arthur's heir, they finally discovered themselves together, alone. Another value, amorous fulfillment, took hold and got the best of their earlier resolve. They were discovered and brought the kingdom down with them.

More contemporary and true-to-life examples are often found in government circles. Consider John Dean, who, in his book, *Blind Ambition*, describes his activities as special counsel to President Nixon prior to and during the

Watergate scandal. He admits that he was motivated by ambition to succeed. Questions of morality and justice were circumnavigated by his desire to convince everyone else that he, too, could play "hardball."

An interesting illustration from research was performed by Damon (1977). He asked youngsters how they thought ten candy bars *ought* to be distributed as a reward to those who had worked on making bracelets. In their interviews, the children described various schemes for a fair distribution and explained why their particular scheme should be implemented. When these same children were subsequently given the ten candy bars to distribute, they deviated from their espoused schemes of fair distribution, giving themselves a disproportionate number of the bars. Thus, the children's moral intuitions and judgments were compromised by a more attractive value, the pleasure of eating those tasty bars.

Given that a person is aware of various courses of action and their outcomes in a particular situation, many of which hold alternative attractions, why is it that a person ever chooses the moral option? What is it that motivates the selection of moral values over other values?

Psychologists have come up with many theories to explain why moral values are ever chosen over other values. The following are among these theories:

1. People choose moral values because evolution favors species with inbred altruism. Creatures that help each other have a survival advantage. Parenting instincts and other altruistic behavior is demonstrable among animals, and is part of human genetic inheritance also.
2. Shame, fear, and guilt over transgression is what makes people do the right thing. Consider interactions among coaches and athletes, military officers and recruits, religious leaders and their congregants. These negative affects can be powerful controlling devices.
3. People learn to do the right thing through the pervasive mechanisms of social modeling and reinforcement. Behaviorists believe that moral behavior is just learned behavior. There is no special motivation to "be moral."
4. People choose to do the moral thing through allegiance to a higher power. Moral motivation is derived from a sense of awe for a deity, one's country, a crusade, etc.
5. People become motivated to choose moral values over other values from the experience of living in a just community and in caring relationships. Having these experiences leads a person to prize these relationships above other values.
6. People do the moral thing from a motive to maintain their own self-concept which includes a sense of integrity. Everyone has a notion of who they are and what they stand for. If I consider myself to be a moral person, I will want to act in moral ways. I want to preserve my identity.

7. People chose to do moral values through social understanding. Education is a broadening experience that can overcome prejudice and pettiness as it fosters social responsibility.

These are a few of the explanations that psychologists have given to account for the prioritizing of moral values over other values that a person may have. It may turn out that there is no one theory that explains all moral motivation, but that various and multiple motives account for some people's behavior some of the time. It is obvious, however, that moral motivation must be one component in the production of moral behavior.

Component 4

Component 4 necessitates working around impediments and unexpected snags. It requires resisting distractions and other allurements. Envisioning and keeping in sight the final goal is vital. These characteristics of perseverance, resoluteness, and competence comprise what we call "character" or "ego-strength." Failure in these self-regulative behaviors has been termed weakness of the flesh, weak-willedness, and cowardliness. Ego strength is essential for any long-term task, irregardless of its morality. It is indispensable in preparing for a marathon, practicing for a recital, climbing a mountain, obtaining a degree, robbing a bank, or carrying out genocide. We observe failures in this process, and call them wimps or regard them as having weak characters.

Research is uncovering some compelling information about how to develop and enhance these skills. Individuals who cheer themselves on seem to be able to increase their perseverance at a task. Self-confidence and perceived efficacy at the task influence coping behavior, effort, and staying power. In one study of Stage 4 ("law and order") subjects, those with high ego strength cheated less than those subjects with low ego strength. Others suggest that what a person thinks about during the course of helping another may determine his persistence at the task. If an individual thinks of the task as fun, easy or satisfying, he is more likely to stick with it. One self-regulation technique studied involves cognitively transforming the goal object. In a study by Mischel (1976), children were instructed to think about their reward objects, marshmallows, as cotton balls, while others were told to consider the marshmallows as marshmallows, e.g., as soft, chewy, and sweet. The children who focused on the consummatory qualities were unable to wait as long as the children who focused on transforming the object in their minds. Again, as with the other components, it is obvious that cognition and affect interact in Component 4 also.

Think about the United States, as a nation, during the Second World War. Unlike during the Vietnam war, there was a national resolve to see the conflict through. The society as a whole was cheering on individual and united efforts to overcome the enemy. Women were encouraged to take traditionally male jobs in order to maintain the economy and the troops. The nation focused on

winning, on keeping up the troops' morale. The positive emotions were rallied and prevailed upon the negative effects of the situation. People suffered rationing without undue complaint. Family losses were expected and honored. Most of all, the United States believed it could accomplish the task of defeating the enemy, who turned out to have perpetrated more evil than at first realized. This perseverance, grit, tenacity, strong character, and ego strength is what is distinctive about Component 4—a necessary component for doing good or doing evil.

Interaction of the Components

We have noted that there is a multi-faceted complex of processes that must take place in order to engender moral action. In addition, the components must interact harmoniously until the action has been completed. Research and common sense indicate that sometimes one component compels so much attention that one or more of the other components is ineluctably slighted. For example, when emotions are manipulated, behavioral differences can result; being dutiful with one moral action can cause insensitivity to another situation that has sprung up in the midst of the first and before the first has been completed, i.e., steadfastness and resolve can interfere with sensitivity; as the personal costs of a moral action become more and more clear, there is often a reappraisal of the situation and the phenomenon called "blaming the victim" may result. All sorts of seemingly trivial changes in a situation can influence subsequent behavior, e.g., number of people in the vicinity, gender of those involved, immediate prior experience, attractiveness of the participants, and so on. The complexity of interactions often make it difficult to sort out the causal factors of non-moral behavior.

Consider a recent and stark event, the case of Brian Watkins. He, a 22-year-old, his parents, and older brother and wife were in New York City for the U.S. Tennis Open. One evening, they planned to go out on the town and were taking the subway. As they waited on the platform with a dozen or so other people, they were swarmed by a group of about 10 teenagers. The young people demanded the father's money. When he did not react fast enough, his pocket was slashed from his pants. The mother screamed and tried to intervene. She was pushed down and kicked in the face. Her younger son, Brian, jumped to her aid. At that moment, one of the youths pulled out a four-inch blade and plunged it into Brian's chest. The attackers grabbed the father's wallet and ran off. Brian ran after them, up two flights of stairs and then collapsed. His parents sought help from anyone and everyone. No one listened to their cries for help. They were astonished at the apathy. No one had tried to intervene. No one was jumping to their aid now, either. Even the token booth operator had turned his head away. When they finally caught someone's attention out in the street, paramedics were summoned. It was too late. Brian's severed pulmonary artery brought about his death but one half hour later. In this situation, it was obvious

to witnesses what was happening. There was no confusion as in the Genovese case. What then was the matter? Staub (1978) has demonstrated that when people are concerned about themselves, they are less helpful. As is often the case in a large city, people were no doubt focused on their own safety. Staub noted that when a person is concerned about performance, achievement or self-representation, they are less likely to be sensitive to others. This is also true when a person has received negative feedback about herself. He concludes that when people are focused on the self, there is less attention and concern for the needs and welfare of others. On the other hand, when self-esteem or good feelings are boosted, there is apparent increased helpfulness. Thus, situational cues seem to be altered by psychological states. Component 3 (motivation) interferes with Component 1 (sensitivity) and prevents Component 2 (judgment) from taking place.

Conclusion

In conclusion, there may be one or more reasons for moral failure. Moral behavior requires a complexity of processes—at least four. It is a mistake to portray the whole of morality as simply empathy, or simply concepts of justice, or merely genetic predisposition to be altruistic, or solely mimicking a model, etc. Attempts to predict moral behavior from just one of these components is likely to produce weak associations inasmuch as the link of one component with behavior leaves the other three components to vary randomly. Moral failure may occur at any point in the chain of processes as a “weak” link, sabotaging moral action. If moral behavior is the end goal of moral education, then moral education ought to be addressing all four components. Moral development entails gaining proficiency in all four component processes across all situations.

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