

Theories of Moral Development

Moral development = children's reasoning about morality, their attitudes toward moral lapses, and their behavior when faced with moral issues.

Several theoretical approaches have evolved

THEORIES OF MORAL DEVELOPMENT

- PSYCHOANALYTIC THEORY
- COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENTAL THEORY
- OPERANT **AND** SOCIAL LEARNING THEORIES
- DAMON'S VIEW OF MORAL IDENTITY

What makes for “Morality”?

1. **Concern for others**
 2. **Shame/guilt?**
 3. **Cognitive factors --- Understanding**
 1. **Role-taking**
- **BEHAVIORAL FACTORS**
 - **Not just “thinking” about the “right” thing to do, but acting on it.**

Developmental stages in “morality”

- Infant: Amoral- young infants do not understand right from wrong.
 - Child: Moral training
 - Shame and guilt
 - Impulse control
 - Internalize rules
 - Sensitive, responsive parents
 - Discuss issues
 - Firm but not harsh

PSYCHOANALYTIC THEORY

- A SENSE OF RIGHT AND WRONG IS FORGED IN THE CONTEXT OF HIGHLY CHARGED, CLOSE INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS.
- IN CLASSICAL THEORY, THE SENSE OF MORALITY DEVELOPS BASED ON THE TYPE RESOLUTION ACHIEVED DURING THE OEDIPAL/PHALLIC PHASE.

Cognitive-developmental

- Children's understanding of right and wrong develops in line with their understanding of other problems to be solved.
- Thus, thinking about right and wrong is related to sensorimotor, pre-, concrete-, and formal operational thinking.

Cognitive-Developmental (Continued)

- Piaget
 - Preschoolers are premoral-
 - Age 6-10
 - Consequences important
 - Rules external
 - Age 10-11
 - Intentions important
 - Rules internal
- Kohlberg: Reasoning by school age- theories based on Piaget

Heteronomous Morality

- 4 to 7 years
- Initial stage of moral development
- Rules seen as invariant, unchangeable, and beyond child's control and/or influence
- Intentions not considered
- Believe in immanent justice (immediate punishment for infractions)

Autonomous Morality

Piaget

AUTONOMOUS COOPERATION STAGE

- Beginning at 10 years
- Become fully aware that rules may and can be modified if people playing agree

Cognitive Development and Morality

- Adolescence
 - Shift to conventional reasoning
 - Identity includes morals, values
- Adulthood
 - Kohlberg: Postconventional is possible
 - Religion: Religious beliefs tend to change developmentally in a manner similar to other moral developments.

Kohlberg's "levels" of reasoning

Preconventional Morality (stages 1 & 2): follow unvarying rules -rewards and punishments

Conventional Morality (stages 3 & 4) approach problems in terms of their own position as good, responsible members of society

Postconventional Morality (stages 5 & 6)
universal moral principles – bigger than societal concerns

Differences between Men's Moral Voices and Women's Moral Voices

Men

- Justice
- Rights
- Treating everyone fairly and the same
- Apply rules impartially to everyone
- Responsibility toward abstract codes of conduct

Women

- Care
- Responsibility
- Caring about everyone's suffering
- Preserve emotional connectedness
- Responsibility toward real individuals

Differences between Men's and Women's View of the Self

Men

- Autonomy
- Freedom
- Independence
- Separateness
- Hierarchy
- Rules guide interactions
- Roles establish places in the hierarchy

Women

- Relatedness
- Interdependence
- Emotional connectedness
- Responsiveness to needs of others
- Web of relationships
- Empathy & connectedness guide interactions
- Roles are secondary to connections

Gilligan's Three Stages of Moral Development in Women

TABLE 11.2 Gilligan's Three Stages of Moral Development for Women

STAGE	CHARACTERISTICS	EXAMPLE
Stage 1		
Orientation toward individual survival	Initial concentration is on what is practical and best for self. Gradual transition from selfishness to responsibility, which includes thinking about what would be best for others.	A first grader may insist on playing only games of her own choosing when playing with a friend.
Stage 2		
Goodness as self-sacrifice	Initial view is that a woman must sacrifice her own wishes to what other people want. Gradual transition from "goodness" to "truth," which takes into account needs of both self and others.	Now older, the same girl may believe that to be a good friend, she must play the games her friend chooses, even if she herself doesn't like them.
Stage 3		
Morality of nonviolence	A moral equivalence is established between self and others. Hurting anyone—including one's self—is seen as immoral. Most sophisticated form of reasoning, according to Gilligan.	The same girl may realize that both friends must enjoy their time together and look for activities that both she and her friend can enjoy.

What is the role of parents and peers in moral development

- Piaget and Kohlberg: Parents play only a small role
 - Peers are important
- Walker (1991): Explored parental style of moral reasoning used in discussions with children. Observed how families discussed both hypothetical and real-life dilemmas.
 - (a) Parents adapt their moral reasoning styles to those of their children;
 - (b) Children evidence higher level of moral reasoning during family discussions than in a standard interview (Vygotsky);
 - (c) Parental discussion style, particularly regarding the child's real-life moral dilemma, predicts the future growth of the child's moral reasoning.
- The most beneficial style entails a high level of representational and supportive interactions
- Representational=Socratic; eliciting child opinions, clarifying, checking for understanding
- Supportive=positive affect, encouragement to participate, humor)

Learning Theories

- **Operant**
- Our sense of right and wrong is learned through a history of reinforcers and punishers, much as any behaviors or traits are learned
- **Social-Cognitive**
- Our expectations and beliefs influence which behaviors are learned. Vicarious reinforcers (as learned by observing peers, media, parents, and others) influence our sense of right and wrong as well as our actual behaviors.

Social Cognitive Theory Emphasizes

- Moral Behavior is what counts
- Observational Learning plays a key role
- Moral Behavior is situation specific

What is fair? The development of sense of fairness.

William Damon: Research on positive justice

How shall we divide up resources? (pizza, winnings, global federal revenue)

The stages:

Level 0 (under 4, 4-5)

- * I should get it
- * We should get it because we are girls

Level 1 (5-7, 6-9)

- * Strict equality
- * Reciprocity; merit, deserving

Level 2 (8-10, 10 and up)

- * Moral relativity; special needs vs. deserving
- * Equality, reciprocity, needs -- all coordinated and integrated

Moral Identity-Damon

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Damon's Description

Age period	Nature of empathy
Early infancy	Characterized by global empathy, the young infant's empathic response does not distinguish between feelings and needs of self and others.
1 to 2 years of age	Undifferentiated feelings of discomfort at another's distress grow into more genuine feelings of concern, but infants cannot translate realization of other's unhappy feelings into effective action.
Early childhood	Children become aware that every person's perspective is unique and that someone else may have a different reaction to a situation. This awareness allows the child to respond more appropriately to another person's distress.
10 to 12 years of age	Children develop an emergent orientation of empathy for people who live in unfortunate circumstances—the poor, the handicapped, and the socially outcast. In adolescence, this newfound sensitivity may give a humanitarian flavor to the individual's ideological and political views.

Role Taking Skills

- Understanding thoughts/emotions
- Able to compare them to their own.
- Empathy slowly develops – begins at around 2 years.
- Characteristics of children's role taking skills overall
 - Age 3-6: Egocentric
 - Age 8-10: Concrete thinking
 - Age 12+ : Multiple perspectives
- Important for moral questions

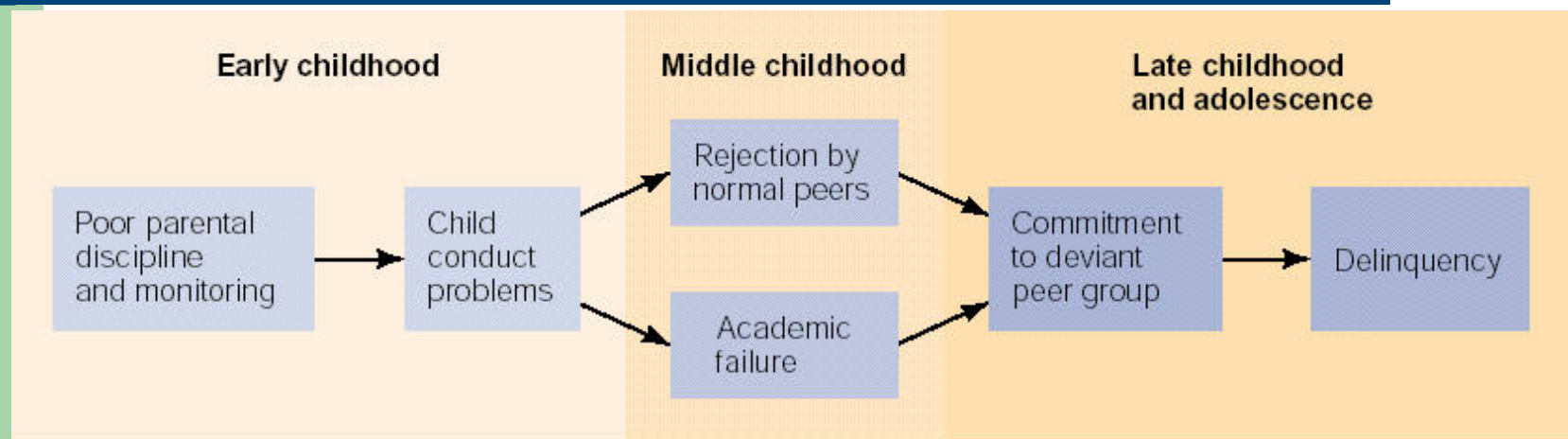


Figure 13.4

Factors that Promote moral Growth

- Cognitive development; stimulation; exposure to conflicting views
- Relevant social experience – interact with people who have different points of view – promotes “cognitive disequilibrium”
- Opportunities to sort out differences with peers.