

All About Philosophy

DEONTOLOGY - THE STUDY OF THE NATURE OF DUTY AND OBLIGATION
Deontological Ethics MAINTAINS THAT ACTIONS
- ARE NOT JUSTIFIED BY THEIR CONSEQUENCES. SOME THINGS ARE
- NORMALLY OBLIGATORY REGARDLESS OF THEIR CONSEQUENCES FOR (HUMAN) WELFARE.

Deontological Ethics - Duty-Based Morality

Deontological ethics is a theory of morality based on a "nonconsequentialist" view of people and moral decision-making. Deontology comes from the Greek word for "duty." Thus, deontological ethics maintains that actions are not justified by their consequences. Rather, factors other than good outcomes determine the "rightness" of actions. Unlike utilitarianism, where "the ends justify the means," deontologism argues that it is the "means that are important."

Deontological Ethics - The Categorical Imperative

Deontological ethics is grounded in the "Categorical Imperative," which was first developed by German philosopher, Immanuel Kant, in his "Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals" (1785). The Categorical Imperative simply declares, "Act as if the maxim of thy action were to become by thy will a universal law of nature." Are you willing to permit everyone to adopt the action? If Yes, your action is moral. If No, your action is immoral. In a nutshell, our internal responses are more revealing than our outward professions when we flip the moral actions back on ourselves.

Although the Categorical Imperative is very similar to the "Golden Rule" of Christianity, Judaism, and other religions ("do unto others as you would have them do unto you"), deontologism generally rejects any moral theory grounded

IN GOD OR A HIGHER (ABSOLUTE) TRUTH.