

Values-Based Leadership: Lessons from the United States Marine Corps

Introduction and Overview

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The Marines describe The Basic School as a leadership and ethics academy. Like few organizations in the world, the Marines know that ethics and leadership are inseparable and that both are essential to defining their mission and to accomplishing it. In this regard and many others, corporations and non-profits have much to learn from the Marines. We designed this program with the Marine Corps to teach a few vital, foundational lessons related to leadership and ethics.

Ethical Organizational Culture

The first set of lessons about leadership and ethics relate to organizational culture. Unlike most organizations, the Marine Corps views culture as an independent variable in its own right that must be carefully attended to and managed in order to produce desired performance and outcomes at all levels--organizational level, unit level, and individual level. Marine Corps officers assume responsibility for the culture and its outcomes and seek to instill that same responsibility in all Marines. If you want to affect performance and outcomes, then you must attend to and manage your culture.

Admittedly, culture is difficult to manage. The scholarly debate regarding how to define culture, what dimensions characterize it, and how to measure it derives from several challenges related to the concept of culture, the most important of which is the "taken-for-granted" nature of any culture. Both the anthropological and sociological traditions informing the study of organizational culture agree that because it encompasses the underlying, taken-for-granted values, beliefs, assumptions, and principles that serve as the foundation for an organization's management system, culture is hard to detect, let alone manage (Denison 1997: 2; Cameron & Quinn 2006: 16).

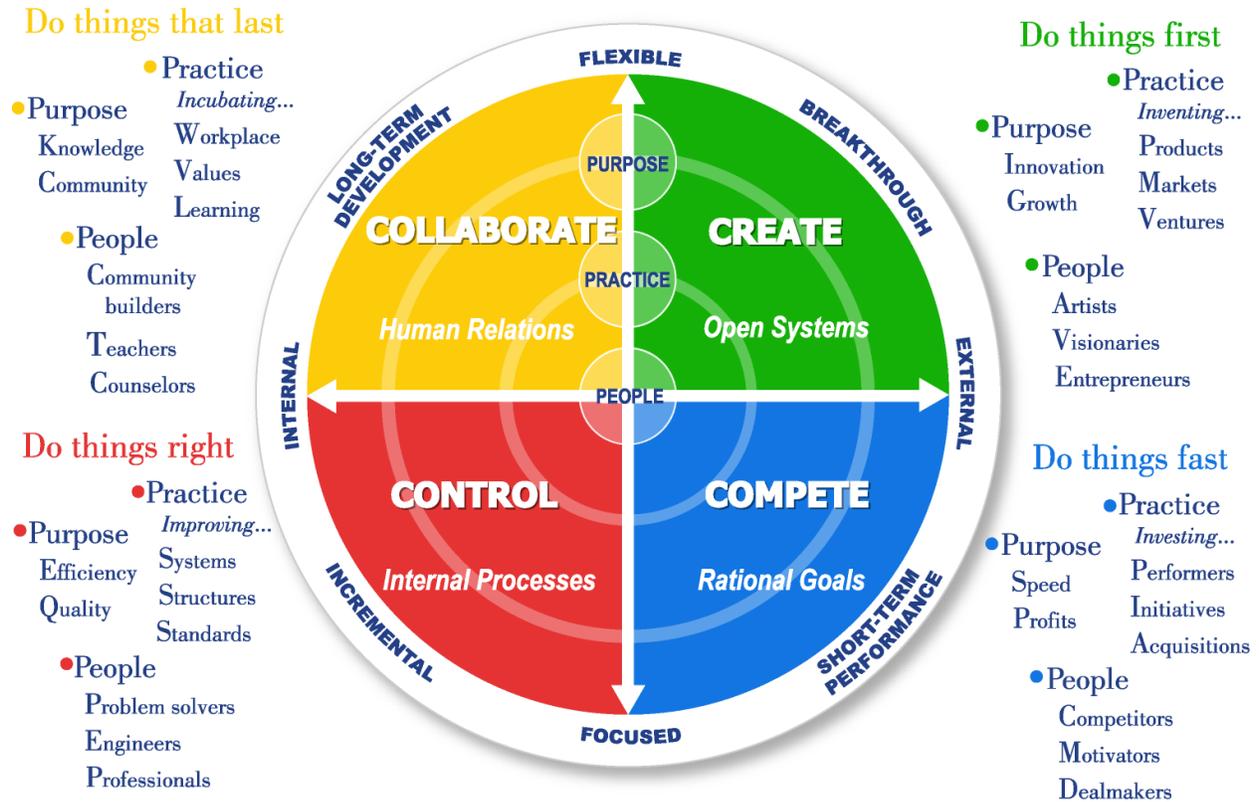
The model of culture most predictive of organizational outcomes, the Competing Values Framework, contains five (5) key measures of cultural content. These five dimensions isolate specific aspects of the organization's culture that need to be attended to and managed (Cameron & Quinn 2006: 151).

1. **Leadership style** and approach.
2. **Style of managing** employees—how they are treated and what the working environment is like.
3. The **organizational glue** or bonding mechanism holding the organization together.
4. **Strategic emphases** that define what areas of emphasis drive the organization's strategy.
5. **Criteria of success** that determine how victory is defined and what gets rewarded and celebrated.

The Competing Values Framework measures these five aspects of organizational culture and arranges them across four pattern dimensions exhibited by all organizations. These four patterns represent the fundamental organizing framework that people use when they gather, interpret, and utilize information related to human relationships because they capture the four processes that every organism and organization must perform, namely, stabilizing processes, adaptive processes, internally orientated processes, and externally oriented processes. Every organization, like every person, must be both stable and adaptable while also attending to the internal processes and external environment.

Extensive research has demonstrated that these four pattern dimensions give rise to "competing values," conflicting priorities or "both/and" paradoxes, because all four processes must be performed, with differing emphases, all the time. Research has also shown that companies that perform both adaptively and stably and that are oriented strongly both internally and externally outperform their competitors and peers by wide margins.

To make it easy to recognize these patterns, the Competing Values Framework assigned a color and title to each of the four patterns, as depicted in the model below. The model developed out of a remarkable research program that used sophisticated statistical modeling to discern the relationship among the well-documented, wide ranging lists of management skills and processes. The researchers discovered that the patterns of skills closely related to each other and, by degree, more distantly related to other skills, fell into clusters that closely approximated four dominant theories of management: Rational Goal models, Internal Process models, Human Relations models, and Open Systems models.



The competing values framework argues that organizations, departments, and leaders typically pursue one or more dominant action logics in creating value. These different action logics correspond to essential functions: maintaining focus and stability, being flexible and adaptable, focusing on internal processes and practices, and focusing on external people, processes, and practices. Obviously, these action logics operate in tension with each other; hence the term "competing" values.

Paradoxically, the means and modes of creating value in one of the diagonally related quadrants are perceived as destroying the value created by the means and modes of the other quadrant. Whereas the create quadrant exploits the new and the different, trading on variation and randomness to create value, the control quadrant strives to stamp out variation in the name of quality and efficiency. Similarly, the fast moving, autonomous processes of the compete quadrant are perceived as undermining the slow-developing, long-term processes of the collaborative quadrant. Most significantly, however, is the insight that organizations which manage these paradoxical tensions creatively by excelling in both control functions and creative functions, competing and collaborating, outperform other organizations by wide margins.

To help you understand both the content of Marine Corps culture and its patterns, we have provided you with David Freedman's book, ***Corps Business: The 30 Management Principles of the U.S. Marines***. Freedman tells stories that describe both the principles and the practices covering all five content dimensions of the Marine Corps' organizational culture—its leadership style, management style, bonding mechanisms, strategic emphases, and criteria for success.

By distilling the Marine Corps' culture down into management principles, Freedman will assist you in drawing lessons that you can take back to your organization from the Marines in order to manage your culture in areas like planning and decision making, organizational mission and structure, how you educate and develop managers, how you direct and motivate people, and how you create a performance culture that is tactically proficient and open to change.

Pay attention to the paradoxical nature of the Marine Corps' management principles and practices. Probably no organization manages these paradoxes better than the Marine Corps. To help you understand how the Marines manage these paradoxes in the direction of ever-greater value creation, I have color coded each of the principles according to the Competing Values Framework quadrants those principles relate to. When you see both red and green  or both yellow and blue , this indicates a principle that involves paradox.

Don't skip the foreword to *Corps Business* by former Marine Corps Commandant, General Charles Krulak. "The Leadership Imperative" he describes is timeless. So is the closely related, first reading in your packet, "What is Leadership? Some Classical Ideas" by Colonel Christopher Kolenda, who teaches leadership at the United States Military Academy. Kolenda describes the integrated set of beliefs about human nature, human action, human values, and human change that inform the profession of arms. Business men and women would do well to have such a well articulated set of beliefs to inform their profession!

To assist you in discerning the patterns of Marine Corps culture and the competing values that Marines manage, I have included "A Reader's Guide to Corps Business." The Guide lists and briefly describes the 30 management principles of Marine Corps culture, along with the related management competencies that these principles impact and a picture of the competing values that each of the 30 principles engages.

The management competencies are taken from Korn-Ferry/Lominger's competency library, widely considered the best-researched competency model and the one model most widely used by corporations around the world. We designed the Values-Based Leadership program to teach the competencies that are hardest to develop, as well as six of the Big Eight competencies—the rare competencies that define superior performers at every level of management (individual contributor, manager, executive):

- Command Skills
- Managerial Courage
- Dealing with Ambiguity (rare and defines top performers at all levels)
- Dealing with Paradox
- Decision Quality
- Timely Decision Making
- Delegation
- Conflict Management
- Learning on the Fly
- Motivating Others
- Organizational Agility
- Personal Learning
- Planning (rare and defines top performers at all levels)
- Problem Solving
- Priority Setting
- Strategic Agility (rare and defines top performers at all levels)
- Building Effective Teams (rare and defines top performers at all levels)
- Managing Vision and Purpose (rare and defines top performers at all levels)
- Motivating Others
- Understanding Group Dynamics

A Reader's Guide to *Corps Business*

Planning and Decision-Making

- Leadership Competencies: Planning, Problem Solving, Decision Quality, Dealing with Ambiguity, Timely Decision Making, Priority Setting.
1. **Aim for the 70% solution** (5-9).  *It's better to decide quickly on an imperfect plan than to roll out a perfect plan when its too late.* Velocity, flexibility, and competence in operations reflects decentralized decision-making.
2. **Find the essence (of the order, situation, or plan of action)** (9-16).  *When it comes time to act, even the most complex situations and missions must be perceived in simple terms.*

Organizational Mission and Structure

- Leadership Competencies: Organizing, Building Effective Teams, Organizational Agility
3. **Build a capability-based organizational mission** (21-22).  *Focusing on developing organizational talents creates opportunities, whereas focusing on particular products and services invites obsolescence.* The Marines' four primary competencies are: impact, speed, versatility, and proficiency with complex situations.
4. **Orient toward speed and proficiency with complex situations** (23-5).  *The ability to react quickly and effectively in chaotic environments usually trumps other competencies.*
5. **Organize according to the rule of three** (34-37).  *In times of stress, most people can handle exactly three key responsibilities.*
6. **Build authority on demand into the hierarchy** (42-45).  *Retain a strong management pyramid, but encourage people even at the lowest levels to make whatever decisions are necessary to accomplish the mission when management guidance isn't at hand.*
7. **Focus on the small team** (46-51).  *Most of the organization's critical tasks are accomplished by the lowest-level managers and their subordinates, so anything done to make them more effective will have a large payoff.*
8. **Organize around the task of the mission, not around functional units** (52-54).  *The size and makeup of the groups within the organizations should be changed according to the needs of each specific mission.*

Educating and Developing Managers

- Leadership Competencies: Developing Direct Reports and Others, Managerial Courage, Learning on the Fly
9. **Hire through trial (by fire)** (60-67).  *Challenging a prospective employee makes it easier to determine the fit, and initiates a bond between the hiree and the organization.*
10. **Employ extreme, state-dependent training; teach with sea stories** (68-75).  *Situations faced on the job should not seem more daunting than those faced in training.*
11. **Breed decision-making, whether tactical, operational or strategic, by analogy** (recognition-primed) (75-79).  *Managers can't be briefed on every possible situation, but they can be trained to recognize similarities between novel and familiar situations.*
12. **Cross-train** (87-96).  *Running through different jobs creates versatile managers who understand all aspects of the organization, even if at a cost in efficiency.*

Directing and Motivating People and Creating a Performance Culture

- Leadership Competencies: Directing Others, Command Skills, Delegation, Motivating Others, Informing. Priority Setting, Caring About Direct Reports, Confronting Direct Reports, Managerial Courage, Listening, Ethics and Values, Managing Vision and Purpose, Dealing with Paradox.
13. **Manage by end state and intent** (98-104).   *Tell people what needs to be accomplished and why, and leave the details to them. Communicate to STICC the message: here's the **Situation**, here's what I **Think** we should do, here's my **Intent**, my **Concerns** are...; now **Communicate** back to me what you've heard me say.*
14. **Distribute competence** (105-108).  *Obsessively and ceaselessly educate and train people at all levels of the organization. Outstanding performers become instructors; how you train is what you end up doing in real life; ensure that everyone reads widely and keeps up-to-date.*
15. **Reward failure** (109-114).  *Someone who never fails probably isn't pushing the envelope.*
16. **Make personnel functions the stepping stones for stars** (116-119).  *The development of the most promising managers should include taking responsibility for hiring, training, promoting, and transferring people.*
17. **Glorify the lower-levels of the organization** (120-132).  *The higher the manager, the harder he or she should work at making it clear that the rank and file are the heroes. Lead by*

example and role-model what you want; reinforce with positive feedback regarding performance and effort; reinforce constructively via disappointment and concern, not anger and reproach; care for subordinates as people with lives outside of work; motivate with challenging assignments.

- 18. **Demand to be questioned** (133-137).  *Subordinates should feel free to disagree openly with their managers, up until it comes time to carry out a final and legitimate decision.*
- 19. **Instill values that support the mission** (140-154).  *The ability to get the job done can be a function of shared character. Only promote values that really drive the real mission of the organization; relentlessly self-critique on the basis of those values; root out SHAM.*
- 20. **Cultivate opposing traits (embrace paradox)** (155-6).   *Success often requires combining seemingly contradictory approaches.*
- 21. **Establish a core identity** (158-166).    *Everyone in the organization should feel that they are performing an aspect of the same job.*

Tactics and Organizational Change

- Leadership Competencies: Action Oriented, Drive for Results, Perspective, Strategic Agility, Learning on the Fly, Creativity, Dealing with Ambiguity.
- 22. **Match strengths to weaknesses** (172-3).  *Always tilt the playing field to the competition's disadvantage.*
- 23. **Surprise and disorient the opposition** (173-183).  *A confused and off-balance competitor can be routed with fewer resources. Clarity, trust in managers and management, and a fast OODA loop make this possible; high ethical values and standards keeps the OODA loop lubricated and impose clarity on ambiguous situations, enabling creativity and action.*
- 24. **Make tempo a weapon** (183-185).  *Controlling the pace of competition can exhaust and demoralize the competition.*
- 25. **Keep plans simple and flexible** (185-188).   *It's better to have a few options that can be easily adapted to changing situations than to try to make specific plans for every contingency. Use the Pre-Mortem to surface and prime attention and awareness for what could go wrong to derail the mission.*
- 26. **Make doctrine a living thing** (190-191).  *It's good to standardize practices, as long as one of them is to continually refine and occasionally change the practices.*

- 27. **Experiment obsessively** (193-194).  *Even the most successful organizations will eventually stop winning if it doesn't explore new approaches. 87% of the Fortune 100 stall and few regain momentum within a decade!*
- 28. **Build new tactics around new technology** (194-198).   *Fully leveraging technology requires new styles of competing.*
- 29. **Don't depend on technology** (198-199).  *Train to be effective regardless of which technologies are available.*
- 30. **Get an outside perspective** (199-202).  *Insights into organizational improvement can often come from people in seemingly unrelated fields.*

Values and Virtues

The second set of lessons regarding leadership and ethics relates to values and virtues. Values are defined as "desirable states, goals, or behaviors transcending specific situations that are applied as normative standards to judge and choose among alternative mode of behavior" (Schwartz 1992: 2). Cross-cultural research on human values reveals that people the world over prioritize a small set of ethical values, which researchers summarize as "Self-Transcending" values-- ideals like loyalty, responsibility, honesty, true friendship, social justice, equality, peace, and open-mindedness-- over all other values, and especially over "Self-Enhancing" values like pleasure, social power, wealth, ambition, influence and individual success, and self-indulgence (Schwartz 2006: 18). In fact, people the world over prioritize "Self-Direction" and "Stimulation" values like self-respect, creativity, curiosity, freedom, independence, daring, and a varied and exciting life second only to "Self-Transcending" values. Self-Enhancing values come in dead last, after values related to "Tradition," "Conformity," and "Security"-- so much for the myth of self-interested individuals maximizing their self-interest!

Culture transmits values. We acquire, maintain, and change our values in cultures. The Marine Corps Core Values of Honor, Courage and Commitment prioritize these universal human values and make them essential in defining the Marine Corps' mission and criteria for success. The Marines make no separation between the value they create for American society and the world and the ethical values they pursue. For the Marines, they are one and the same. Therefore, the value-creating "core competencies" that the Marines teach, train, educate for and develop are simultaneously both technical and ethical. Whereas modern management theory separates the technical from the ethical, effectiveness from ethics, the Marines do not.

The Marines, like the leaders of ancient Greece, Rome, China, and India, as well as leaders in the Middle Ages and Renaissance, and our early-Modern forebears, the founders of the American Republic and framers of the U.S. Constitution, believe that ethical value is intertwined with and inextricable from all other value and value creation, be it social, economic, political, aesthetic, spiritual, etc. These forms of

value cannot be created and maintained without ethical values, nor can ethical values be maintained without drawing upon and creating social, economic, political, spiritual, and aesthetic value.

Like the Ancients, the Marines also believe that to create human value, people must make those values and the skills and abilities to live them out, even and especially under difficult circumstances ("the fog of war"), part of their character. To form an ethical, value-creating disposition to act on behalf of the highest human values, people must possess character strength, or "virtue." Thus, the Marine Corps Core Values of Honor, Courage and Commitment give rise a preoccupation with cultivating the virtues described by The Basic School's Commanding Officer, Colonel Todd Desgrosseilliers, in his short piece, "On Ethos." Read this piece after reading and reflecting on "The Provenance of Marine Corps Values, The Basic School's Five Horizontal Themes, and the Marine Corps Commission Officers Oath and legal and ethical duties" and you will understand why the Marine's pursue ethics and excellence, character and competence, simultaneously, as one and the same thing.

Recent psychology and organizational theory has "rediscovered" the same emphasis that the Marine Corps places on values and virtues. The fields of "Positive Psychology" and "Positive Organizational Scholarship" are now researching and describing the individual, group, and organizational structures and dynamics of values and virtues and their role in creating the full range of human value, including economic value (Petersen & Seligman, Eds., 2004; Cameron & Spreitzer, Eds., 2012). University of Michigan Ross School of Business professors Kim Cameron and Robert Quinn, co-creators of the Competing Values Framework discussed above, are leaders of the positive organizational scholarship movement, which they view as an extension of the rich value-creation perspectives that the Competing Values Framework describes (Cameron, Dutton & Quinn, Eds., 2003). We have included a short white paper by Cameron summarizing the relation between virtue and organizational value, "Virtuousness and Performance: A Productive Partnership."

Some of the unappreciated, yet powerful affects of "Self-Transcending" values concerns their motivational quality, their role in identity formation, and the role that each of these affects plays in leadership. As Cameron notes in "Virtuousness and Performance," the Self-Transcending values pursued through a cultivation of virtue are inherently valuable and intrinsically motivating. We pursue them for themselves, not in order to gain something else by them. Therefore, Self-Transcending values like those pursued by the Marines are trustworthy and shared. Marines pursue them not in order to manipulate others or just to gain an instrumental advantage over others, but to realize the inherent value of them, a value that can be shared with others without diminishment.

For example, consider the Marine Corps value of Honesty, a key part of Honor:

Telling the truth. Overt honesty in word and action and clarifying misunderstanding or misrepresentation caused by silence or inaction when you should speak up. Respecting others' property and demonstrating fairness in all actions. Marines do not lie, cheat, or steal.

If a Marine practices this kind of honesty, the value of that enactment gets shared with others. The act of receiving the value of that honesty does not in any way diminish the worth of that value to the Marine. In fact, more "value" is created, not less. If a third party were to observe this honesty, even though he or she were not its intended beneficiary, that person could also benefit from it without diminishing its value to the Marine or the other parties.

Intrinsic values motivate action differently than instrumental values, like money. If I share money with you, by definition I have less of it. My motives in giving are less trustworthy because you might wonder why I am sharing it with you, knowing that your taking it means my having less of it. If I lend you money, I have less of it, at least temporarily. You might wonder whether I am taking advantage of you in order to make more money, like people who are taken advantage of in the common "\$4 for \$5" payday loans. Furthermore, as lender, I might not fully trust you to repay me. If you do keep your promise to repay me—and note that promise keeping is considered by all ethical traditions as a basic ethical duty and obligation—then I have more money and if you did something wise with the loan, you too have more value. Note, then, that even instrumental values rely on ethical values to realize their full potential!

The Marines understand the intrinsically valuable and motivating nature of their Self-Transcending core values. They appreciate and guard the role that those values play in creating the trust which enables their instrumental values to realize their full potential. To ensure that the Marine Corps Core Values create as much value as possible, the Marines inculcate a new, collective working self-concept inside the mind and heart of every Marine Officer, as well as in every Marine. That new, working self-concept of oneself as a Marine Officer, of whom the core values of Honor, Courage and Commitment are expected, becomes the interpretative, cognitive, and emotional scheme by which the Marine Officer thinks, feels, and acts.

Leadership researchers, in seeking to understand the mechanisms by which Transformational Leadership produces its well-documented effects of generating performance that exceeds expectations, discovered that it was the inculcation of a new collective working self concept that explained these effects. Values turned out to be key in effecting Transformation. A coherent and consistently primed value system creates a new self-concept within followers, who come to perceive of themselves, think about their situations in terms of, and evaluate their actions in accordance with their new, collective self-concept or identity. Thus, researchers found that Transformational Leaders inculcate a new, collective self-concept around a consistent, coherent system of values.

By creating a new, collective self-concept, Transformational Leaders replace or override competing self-concepts that operate within each person. Our social behavior, it was discovered, is determined in large part by the concept of self that happens to be operating at the time of our acting. These "working self-concepts" come in three types, corresponding to our three different senses of our individual identity.

First, we all have an independent self-concept of what makes us different from others. When our independent self-concepts is enacted, we act with an eye toward our own self-interest as opposed to the needs and interests of others.

Second, we all have a relational self-concept, a concept of what aspects of our identity we have in common with others. When our relational self-concept is enacted, we are motivated to act in terms of our bonds with specific persons, seeking mutual benefit with them according to our roles.

Third, we all have the potential for a collective working self-concept, a concept of who we are as part of a group as a whole (the Marine Corps), as distinct from this or that particular person (my unit). When our collective self-concept is enacted, we are motivated to act in terms of the collective's welfare, as it is distinct from other groups' welfare.

Research indicates that which working self-concept prevails in any given situation depends on several factors, primarily 1) which self-concept is the most value-coherent and consistent and 2) which self-concept has been most recently "primed," or activated, via perceptual cues (words, symbols, behaviors, etc.).

To help you appreciate the meaning and mechanisms by which the Marines build and maintain the working self-concept of a Marine Officer, we have included "Making More Mike Stranks: Teaching Values in the United States Marine Corps" by Lt Col Michael Parkyn, Director of Leader Development at Marine Corps University, and excerpts from "The Warrior Ethos," by Steven Pressfield, the author of the celebrated book "Gates of Fire" about the famous Spartan Battle of Thermopylae. In "Making More Mike Stranks," you will discover that Pressfield's works are required reading for Marine Corps Officers, but you will probably be surprised by the content of the warrior ethos he describes. We have also included excerpts from Nathaniel Fick's *One Bullet Away: The Making of a Marine Officer*, to convey a sense of what Marine Corps Officer Candidate School and, for those who survive it, The Basic School, are like.

The Marine's inculcate the collective working self-concept of a Marine Officer through constant priming—dress, appearance, symbols, rituals, posture, speech patterns, etc. They also utilize "state-dependent learning" to ensure that this working self-concept is available and ready-for-use even under the most difficult circumstances, like war and ethical conflict. State-dependent learning holds that knowledge and skills must be learned under conditions that closely approximate the real-life conditions in which that knowledge and skill will be needed. If you learn something under conditions that are dissimilar, then that learning will be unavailable to you when you need it.

The principle of state dependent learning helps to explain why so much ethical training does not work. The conditions under which most people learn ethics bears no resemblance to the real-world conditions of ethical conflict and choice. Thus, the ethics training is not available when needed. We have excerpted selections from decorated veteran Dick Couch's book, *A Tactical Ethic: Moral Conduct in the Insurgent Battlespace*, to describe the reasons why the Marines teach ethics in a state-dependent manner. You will be experiencing the very latest evolutions of the training Couch describes.

If those in authority uphold core values consistently, even or especially under difficult circumstances, then two powerful mechanisms become activated, mechanisms which make all the difference in determining the ethical-and-value creating performance of an organization. First, consistent modeling

of values by virtuous authority figures (officers, managers, executives) creates "motive-based trust" (Tyler 2011). Motive-based trust refers to the assessment we make regarding the ethical character of those who we interact with, based on our experience of their behavior and observable traits. We trust the motives of people whose intentions we assess as ethical.

Researchers have demonstrated that the presence of motive-based trust explains not only why people follow ethical rules even when they have reason not to, but it also explains why people expend their discretionary effort on behalf of their organization (Tyler 2011). Discretionary effort, researchers have proven, is the source of value creation, economic and non-economic, and explains the superior profits enjoyed by industry leading firms (Pfeffer 1998). Core competencies are built out of discretionary effort. Ethical, self-transcending values inculcated into character are the ultimate source of such effort.

The second mechanism triggered by the consistent upholding of Self-Transcending values "values identification." Values identification refers to the degree to which members of the organization make the values of the organization part of their working self-concept. Thus, we come full circle in the virtuous cycle of Self-Transcending value-creation: Self-Transcending Values inculcated into the working self-concept of authorities enables motive-based trust and value-identification, which in turn creates a working self-concept around those values on the part of the organization's members. And so it goes, up and up, in a self-reinforcing cycle of value creation.

The Marine Corps' account of its value-creation processes and strategies is most comprehensively described in Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication 1, *Warfighting*, which is included in its entirety in this reading packet. Please read this document carefully and in its entirety. The doctrine it contains and the debates and discussions it continues to generate inform every aspect of Marine Corps culture and operations. *Warfighting* doctrine takes into account physical, moral, and mental forces involved in war. The training you will participate in is designed to address those forces directly.

To help you understand the dynamics and larger context of warfighting and its ethics, we have included several important readings. We excerpted a chapter from Karl Marlantes' acclaimed book, *What It Is Like To Go To War*, on "Loyalty." Marlantes, a decorated Marine officer who served in as a Marine Officer in Vietnam and the author of the best-selling novel of the Vietnam War, *Matterhorn*, describes the loyalty shifts within combat units and compares them to the Japanese ideal of "bushido."

In "Honor, Combat Ethics, and Military Culture," Faris Kirkland critically appraises the ethics of the U.S. military's culture and operations. Kirkland was a key figure in the post-Vietnam reformation of the military. The lessons learned from what went wrong during those years still resonate in the halls of The Basic School and throughout the Marine Corps.

Franklin Jones and Reuven Gal's "A Psychological Model of Combat Stress" describe the psychological dynamics of combat, which values-based leadership in combat must address. You will most likely experience these dynamics yourself during the field exercise portion of the *Values-Based Leadership* program.

Finally, Jonathan Shay's short piece, "Trust: Touchstone for a Practical Military Ethic" describes how ethics directly influences the O-O-D-A loop for good or for ill, and how ethics is therefore deemed essential by the Marines to combat effectiveness. Shay's work highlights why the Marines consider ethics to be a "force multiplier."

In light of this sophisticated understanding of the stresses and dynamics of combat, the Marines designed their state-dependent training in order to prepare their officers. The training that you will experience is informed by an equally sophisticated understanding of how ethics functions under the real-world conditions of warfighting.

To help you understand the training and your experiences in it, I have concluded this introduction with a short description of the research that informs the training and debriefing methods that you will experience. I originally wrote "The five universal, prewired ethical concerns and how they influence decision-making" at the request of the Marine Corps officers who were responsible for the creation of this program. They asked me to describe the theory and practice that lies behind the techniques we use to construct the training and to debrief it. Some of this research is very recent and all of it represents ongoing traditions of exploration and practice, most of which have not yet reached businesses or business school training. I have included in the packet key readings that inform both these traditions and the practices you will experience at The Basic School. I hope that you will feel stimulated to learn more about these emerging areas of knowledge and practice.

The five universal, prewired ethical concerns and how they influence decision-making

The idea that all humans come "pre-wired" for five basic ethical concerns is known as Moral Foundations theory. Developed by Dr. Jonathan Haidt and others, the theory and research agenda was created to understand why morality varies so much across cultures yet still shows so many similarities and recurrent themes.

In brief, Moral Foundations theory proposes that five innate and universally available psychological systems form the foundations of "intuitive ethics," the pre-rational, ethically-charged responses people make to specific stimuli (Haidt 2001; Haidt & Bjorklund, 2008). Intuitive ethics builds upon the dual processing models of cognition developed by recent neuroscience. Dual processing theories have produced decisive evidence indicating that humans operate with two types of cognition, two parallel systems for processing information, forming judgments, and taking action. For shorthand reference, researchers call these two systems System 1 ethical functioning, or S1 ethics, and System 2 ethical functioning, or S2 ethics. (For a summary review of the theories and research, see Lapsley & Hill, 2008.)

System One operates when we are up-close and in the throes of a demanding experience. System Two operates when we step back or away from demanding experience in order to reflect upon it. System 1 (S1) cognition is emotionally "hot" cognition and operates automatically, unintentionally and unconsciously. S1 occurs invisibly. Only its results show and they issue in holistic judgments that are

more felt than thought. System 2 (S2) processing is emotionally "cool" cognition. S2 processing requires effort and intention, operates slowly, and can be more or less controlled. It issues in judgments arrived at by induction, deduction, or abduction. The two systems are summarized below.

| System 1 processing is... | System 2 processing is... |
|--|------------------------------|
| <i>Hot cognition</i> | Cool cognition |
| <i>Fast and effortless</i> | Slow and effortful |
| <i>Automatic</i> (unintentional, not controllable) | Intentional and controllable |
| <i>Unconscious process</i> | Conscious process |
| <i>Inaccessible; only results show</i> | Accessible; process viewable |
| <i>Holistic, metaphorical</i> | Analytical, "factual" |
| <i>Context dependent</i> | Context independent |

Intuitive ethics versus directed reasoning ethics

According to intuitive ethics, the vast majority of our day-to-day, in the moment, ethical judgments are produced "intuitively" by S1 processing. That is, we arrive at our ethical judgments instantly and unconsciously. The reasons that we speak to ourselves and others occur after-the-judgment has already been made. The after-the-fact rationalizations for our intuitive judgments are not unimportant, but they are not what drives the ethical decisions that were made. The "intuitive" ethics model is represented in figure 1, below.



Figure 1: intuitive model of ethical judgment and reasoning

This "intuitive" processing stands in direct opposition to the Directed Reasoning Model that has dominated Western philosophy and thinking about ethics. According to the Directed Reasoning Model,

we form ethical judgments on the basis of deductive or inductive reasoning, which may or may not be "colored" by emotionality. A goal of the Directed Reasoning Model is to remove as much emotion as possible from one's reasoning in order to form a detached, rational judgment. The Directed Reasoning Model is represented in figure 2, below.

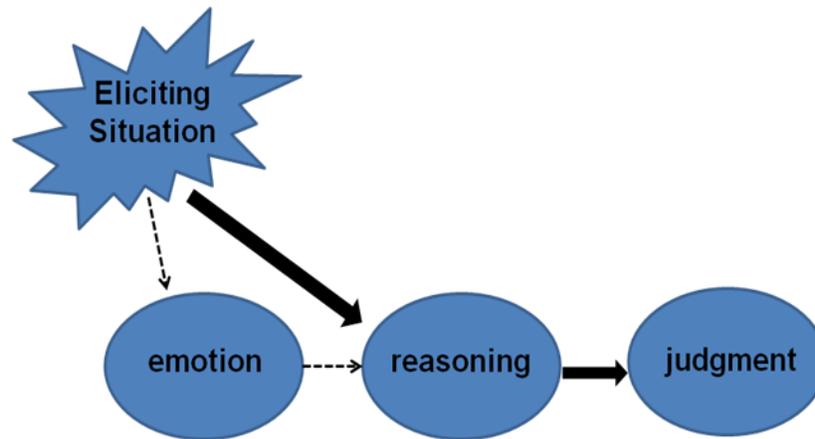


Figure 2: directed reasoning model of ethical judgment and reasoning

Moral Foundations theory postulates that given the intuitive nature by which S1 judgments operate, each person arrives at his or her ethical judgments by running them through the five foundational moral concerns that became prewired into humans as a result of our long evolutionary development as social animals. The five universal, ethically prewired concerns are:

1) **Harm/care**, a set of pre-wired concerns related to our long evolution as mammals with attachment systems and an ability to feel (and dislike) the pain of others. This foundation underlies virtues such as compassion, kindness, gentleness, and nurturance. We feel compassion especially toward vulnerable creatures, saddened, angered or outraged when they are harmed, and feel elevated and inspired by those who go above and beyond in caring for them.

2) **Fairness/reciprocity**, a set of concerns related to the evolutionary process of reciprocal altruism—we share with those who share with us. This foundation generates ideas of justice, rights, and autonomy, which have formed a large part of the Western ethical traditions. Fairness includes concerns about equality as well as proportionality.

3) **In-group/loyalty**, a set of concerns related to our long history as tribal creatures able to form shifting coalitions. This foundation underlies virtues of patriotism and self-sacrifice for the group. One of the most powerful prewired ethical concerns, in-group loyalty gets activated by the "one for all, and all for one" feeling of strongly bonded groups. The out-group, by definition, does not receive the same ethical concerns or treatment when this set of concerns predominates.

4) **Authority/respect**, a set of concerns shaped by our long primate history of hierarchical social interactions. This foundation underlies the virtues of leadership (authority, formal or informal) and

followership (seeking services of protection, direction, and order) and generates an automatic deference to legitimate authority and respect for traditions. Research evidence, such as the famous Milgram experiments and the Stanford Prison Experiment, strongly suggests that the authority foundation is the most powerful of all the prewired ethical concerns.

5) **Purity/sanctity/sacredness**, a set of concerns shaped by the evolutionarily developed psychological reactions centering on disgust and contamination. This foundation underlies religious and quasi-religious notions of striving to live in an elevated, less carnal, more noble way, but it also informs the widespread idea of the body as a temple which can be desecrated by immoral activities and contaminants, an idea not unique to religious traditions.

Not only does each person automatically and unconsciously use these five foundations in forming his or her S1 ethical judgments, but each culture also constructs specific virtues, narratives, and institutions on top of the five prewired ethical foundations, thereby creating the unique moralities we see around the world. Moral Foundations theory also accounts from the conflicting moralities within cultures, such as those between liberals and conservatives.

One function of the Marine Corps Core Values is to aid in the establishment, maintenance, and promote the faithful adaptation of a clear and compelling culture (ethos) that conveys the specific virtues expected of Marines. The particularity of Marine Corps rituals, stories, and institutions (like The Basic School) communicate important expressions of the five pre-wired ethical concerns. Marine Corps culture is famous for inculcating lifelong moods, motivations, attitudes and beliefs.

How the five prewired ethical concerns influence combat decision-making

By itself, the concept of intuitive S1 processing argued by Moral Foundations theory is incomplete and inadequate for explaining ethical decision-making in combat. Two additional insights are needed. First, the extensive research conducted by Gary Klein and others and described in his pioneering book, *Sources of Power: How People Make Decisions*, from which we have included three short chapters, demonstrated that in addition to S1 processing that comes hard-wired in us, we also develop tacit, recognition-primed intuitions based on the library of patterns we have accumulated over the course of our experience (Klein, 1999). These recognition-primed intuitions explain the difference in performance between those who are novice and those who are competent, proficient, or expert.

According to Klein's extensive research with the Marine Corps, Air Force, as well as with firefighters, neo-native intensive care nurses and physicians, and many other practitioner groups, we diagnose the situations we face in real-life by drawing on the library of experience with similar or analogous situations. On the basis of our recognition of what is occurring, primed by our prior experience of similar situations, we mentally simulate one course of action and mentally evaluate it for feasibility and fit. If our mental simulation of the course of action works, we then start implementing it. If, however, our mental simulation of the course of action reveals problems or insurmountable obstacles, then we mentally back up and re-think the situation and then project another single course of action and repeat the mental simulation.

As in the case of Moral Foundations Theory, Klein's recognition-primed decision-making model holds that our intuition forms our judgment, not abstract reasoning, whether inductive or deductive. And like Moral Foundations Theory, recognition-primed decision making theory views the verbal reasons people give for their actions not as causes of the judgment or action but as after-the-fact rationalizations for the course of action that they arrived at "intuitively." The combination of Moral Foundations Theory and Recognition-Primed Decision-Making Theory is depicted in Figure 3, below.

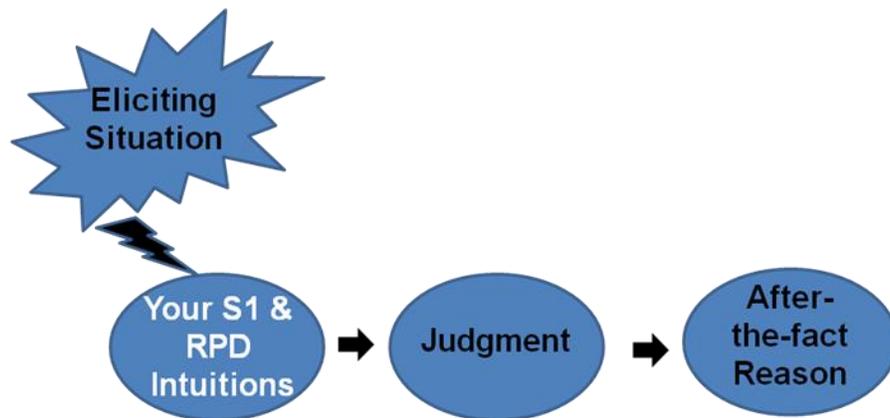


Figure 3: addition of recognition-primed intuitions to the intuitionist model of ethical judgment

Note that because the reasons given for one's judgment occur after the fact, the product of an S2 rationalization that mostly likely will not reflect fully or even accurately on how the judgment was actually arrived at, the actual workings of the recognition-primed intuitions will have to be teased out and rendered explicit by following the actual narrative of the actor's perceptions, interpretations, and actions as events unfolded. In its most basic form, in order to understand the actual, recognition-primed intuitions of the actor one needs to know what was going on in their Observe-Orient-Decide-Act loop, that is:

1. What they were attending to in the situation and their sense-making of the situation—their data and how they interpreted it (Observe and Orient).
2. What course or courses of action they mentally simulated in order to solve the problem and what their evaluation of each course of action was (Decide).
3. What their real goal or goals were. Goals affect the evaluation of the course or courses of action and also determine how we assess the situation with an eye for what we can do to solve the problem—the kinds of leverage points that we seek out in the situation (Decide).
4. What leverage points they thought they were applying in taking the actions they did (Act). Note that what we learn about the situation as act upon it also changes the nature of our goals, so one must be alert to shifts in the actor's goals as he or she receives feedback from the situation regarding his or her actions.

Although these processes were described in linear fashion-- Observe-Orient-Decide-Act-- in reality they are non-linear. As depicted in Figure 4, below, each process serves both as input to and output of other

processes. Faced with ill-structured, VUCA situations—volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous-- we assess the situation with our goals in mind, think of a solution, try it out mentally or physically, realize that it won't work or that parts of it won't work, realize what we are missing, and then add to our definition of our goals in order to generate new approaches that we think will work.

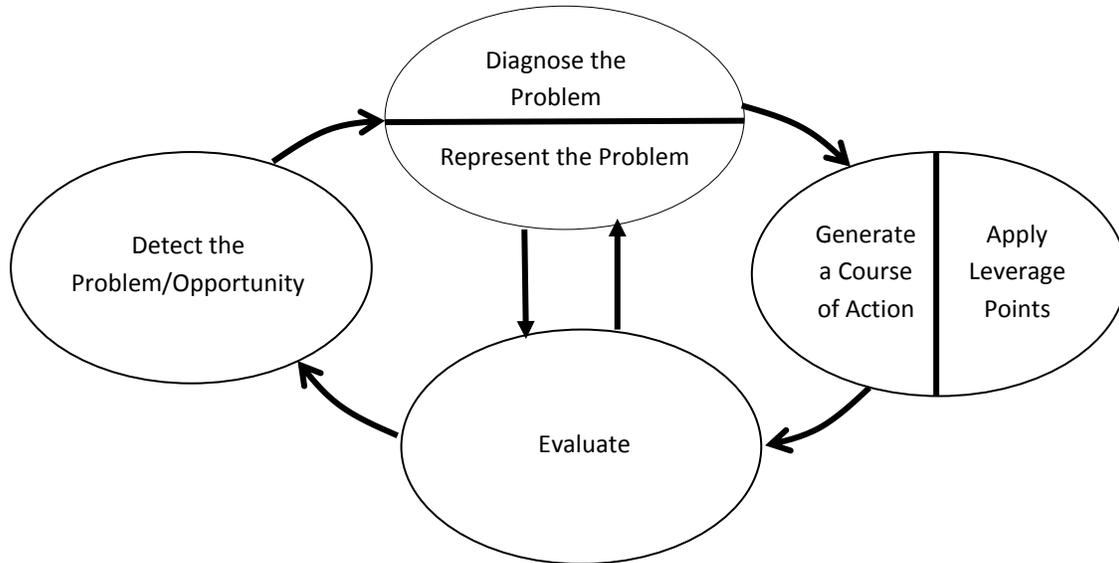


Figure 4: non-linear account of problem solving

A great deal more could be said about recognition-primed intuitions that cannot be covered in this brief paper, such as the processes by which we mentally simulate courses of action and evaluate them, as well as the processes by which experience-based pattern recognition and action repertoires are built up into expertise and communicated to others and among teams. For anyone seeking to understand and develop expertise, I recommend careful study Klein's book, *Sources of Power: How People Make Decisions* (MIT Press, 1999).

The application of Recognition-Primed Decision-Making to Marine Corps training has been profound and wide-reaching. We have included "Fighting in the Fog: Dealing with Battlefield Uncertainty," by Marine Corps Major John Schmitt and Gary Klein, which describes the sources of battlefield uncertainty and the inadequacy of digital models of information processing for dealing with that uncertainty. Schmitt and Klein then describe the recognition-primed capabilities that make commanders effective.

"Cultivating Intuitive Decisionmaking" by General Charles Krulak, the 31st Commandant of the Marine Corps, discussing the importance of training Marines to develop their intuitive decision-making skills if they are to deal adequately, affectively, and ethically with the situations arising regularly in the "three-block war" [now termed the "four-block war" with the addition of training indigenous forces to assume security and kinetic combat operations]. Krulak argues for the importance of intuitive decision-making in training for expertise in the maneuver warfighting described in Marine Corps doctrine *Warfighting*.

Studies have shown that the ability to draw upon one's recognition-primed library of patterns in forming judgments explains the difference between those who are expert and those who are novice, or just merely competent. For example, in the U.S. Army study reported by Mica Endsley, which is included in these readings (Endsley, 2006), the situation awareness of new platoon leaders differed significantly from that of experienced platoon leaders. Experienced platoon leaders demonstrated significantly different and more effective perceptions of the combat situations they faced, which led to more adequate and effective comprehension of what was going on in the situation, which issued in significantly different and more effective projections of what might likely happen if specific courses of action were taken. All of these "situation awareness" abilities—perceiving, comprehending, and projecting—occurred "intuitively" and were developed from extensive experience in different types of combat experience. The taken-for-granted intuitions that enable expert performance also operate at the team level. The Marines structure and train their units to develop the "team mind" that operates within highly trained and cohesive units.

The second insight we need in order to make adequate sense of how combat decision making actually occurs comes from the empirical research of people's actual ethical behavior known as "Behavioral Ethics" (Bazerman and Tenbrunsel, 2011). Behavioral Ethics researchers describe the "bounded ethicality" that constrains moral decision-making and judgment. Contrary to the Directed Reasoning model, Behavioral Ethics articulates a wide range of biases—cognitive and emotional—that distort our ability to think, feel and act ethically.

At the heart of these biases stands the "temporal bias" that constrains all ethical decision-making and action. The "temporal bias" identifies the biases and distortions that occur in the process of forming moral judgments, acting, and then reflecting on one's actions and offering justifications for one's actions. Our behavior is governed by different self-concepts, cognitions, and perceptual processes before, during, and after acting.

Prior to acting, when a person is anticipating the situation he or she is about to encounter or is predicting how he or she will behave in a particular situation, the person attends to high-level, abstract features of the situation and forms judgments about them based on the predominance of the "Should Self." The Should Self is a product of S2, cool cognition processes and encompasses our intentions toward our ethical ideals and principles and "the belief that we should behave according to our ethical values and principles" (Bazerman and Tenbrunsel, 2010: 66).

During the action, however, the person attends to concrete, specific and emotionally-charged details of the situation. As we act the Should Self diminishes and the "Want Self" predominates. The product of S1, hot cognition processes, the Want Self encompasses our self-interest and our S1 judgments regarding how our self-interest is faring with regard to the five universal, ethical prewired concerns-- *Am I being harmed or cared for? Are those I shared with sharing with me?* Thus, during the action, the Want Self forms judgments according to self-interest in terms of the degree to which 1) it is being harmed or cared for, 2) it is being reciprocated with or treated fairly, 3) the norms, values expectations and needs of the in-group to which it belongs are being fulfilled or violated, 4) what authority wants or

decrees is being fulfilled, and 5) whether things the self considers sacred or profane, pure or contaminating, elevating or disgusting are being violated or fulfilled.

The predominance of the Want Self during action explains why the moral perimeter of our ethical concern shrinks, especially when we are under stress, pressure, threat or in conflict, and why people behave with a relative disregard for ethical considerations and implications during such moments. Responding to automatic processing messages from the brain, especially regarding pain signals, the visceral processes of our bodies and our S1 cognitions dominate. The ethical dimensions of the situation that we had anticipated when our S2, Should Self was in charge "fade out." The ethical fading that occurs during action causes us to frame the situation in narrowed, self-interested terms that favor our survival and that of our in-group. The situation becomes interpreted as "just a business decision" or "just what the mission requires." The predominance of the S1, Want Self also explains why people are so poor at predicting how they will behave in a given situation; hence the so-called "behavioral forecasting bias."

After acting, as we gain distance from our visceral responses and the specific, emotionally charged details of the situation, the S2 Should Self brings the ethical implications of our choices back to awareness. The discrepancy between how we Should have acted and how we actually did act causes cognitive, moral and emotional dissonance. This dissonance gives rise to one of several "recollection biases," mechanisms whereby we distort what did actually did in order to restore our sense that our actions actually comport with our Should Self.

Some of the more common recollection biases are:

1. **Psychological Cleansing:** a process of moral disengagement whereby we selectively turn on or turn off our ethical standards. People rationalize the morally problematic aspects of their behavior by appealing to social conventions or social context ("When in Rome...") or by reducing or changing their standard ("My garment made by children is ok because child labor is acceptable for developing nations..."). Changing the moral standard, consciously or unconsciously, leads to the subtle, small-step descending staircase that degrades our ethical behavior, popularly known as the **slippery slope**.
2. **Selective Remembering or Misremembering:** remembering behaviors that support our Should Self image while conveniently forgetting those that don't. Over time, this leads to ethical desensitization.
3. **Abstract principle rationalization:** focusing on the abstract principle related aspects of our behavior, rather than on the small, specific details of our actions. We give accounts that describe the forest, not the specific trees as encountered, minute by minute.
4. **Historical Revisionism:** coding only those aspects of the story that are advantageous to the self and its in-group while forgetting, purging, or never even coding those aspects of the story that are not. We rarely listen fully and accurately to others' versions of the situation or others' interpretations of our actions, especially if they are members of our "out-group."

5. **Blaming authority or the hierarchy:** deferring to authority in order to explain away or justify one's behavior-- "I was just following orders." This bias operates on the S1 prewired concern for deferring to authority, probably the most powerful prewired ethical concern, and is available for use in any organizational setting.
6. **Blaming subordinates or victims:** shifting responsibility for blame onto followers or to the people victimized by our actions. We fail to take responsibility for the orders or instructions we give, the way we give them, or the implied values and priorities that our actions bespeak to others. We also find it easier to blame the people suffering the results of our actions than to blame ourselves for their suffering, even if we are only partially responsible.
7. **Outcome bias:** if the result favors the self or self-'s in-group, we view the action as ethically justified.

The ethical operations of the temporal bias are represented in Figure 5, below.



Figure 5: temporal bias of ethical decision-making

Given the operations of the temporal bias and the S1 nature of the five, ethically prewired concerns that operate automatically and unconsciously, you cannot just accept at face value what people tell you after they have acted. The actor will distort what happened, failing to see the unconscious processes and the effects they had on behavior as well as misremembering what actually did occur. This explains why it is essential to have participant-observer instructors and why the Marines video-tape the Ethics Decision Games. The instructors, because they are not directly involved in the action, will experience less powerful S1 dynamics during and distortions after action. The videotape captures "objectively" whatever aspects of the situation the cameraperson directs the lens to.

How ethical learning occurs

These combined insights from intuitive ethics, recognition-primed decision-making, and behavioral ethics' temporal bias underscore the importance of talking about the ethics and values at stake in our actions, individually and collectively. In fact, according to intuitive ethics almost **all of our ethical learning comes to us from others when they respond to our after-the-fact rationalizations for what we did or experienced**. This cannot be overemphasized. Ethically speaking, we learn very little, if at all, from ourselves or in private reflection. We learn a great deal, however, from what others say when they

react to what we've said and done. Put another way, if you want to learn ethics, you need critics—friendly and not-so-friendly.

Jonathan Haidt first described this phenomenon in his important article, "The Emotional Dog and its Rational Tail: A Social Intuitionist Approach to Moral Judgment" (Haidt 2001). Reasoned persuasion, whereby a person offers her post-hoc rationalization to another person, stimulates that listener's intuitions and judgments. If the listener speaks back, then ethical learning can begin. The interactive necessity for ethical learning is depicted in Figure 2, below, which is copied directly from Haidt's paper.

As depicted in the figure, links #3 and #4 are the most important sources of ethical learning. According to link #3, the reasoned persuasion link, when person A offers post-hoc his or her post-hoc rationalizations to person B, those rationalizations interact with person B's own intuition, causing him or her to react and possibly learn from person A. When person B responds the cycle returns to person A. By listening to the rationalizations of person B, person A receives new inputs to inform his or her intuitions.

Link #4, the social persuasiveness of one's example, is also postulated as a key link for ethical learning. Hence the importance of the behaviors modeled by leaders. Note that according to Haidt, neither link #5, the reasoned judgment link whereby one changes one's own judgments based on rational arguments and ethical principles, nor link #6, the private reflection link whereby one changes one's intuitions just by thinking about them and reasoning them through, has much effect on our ethical learning. Most philosophers are wrong about how we form ethical judgments and learn.

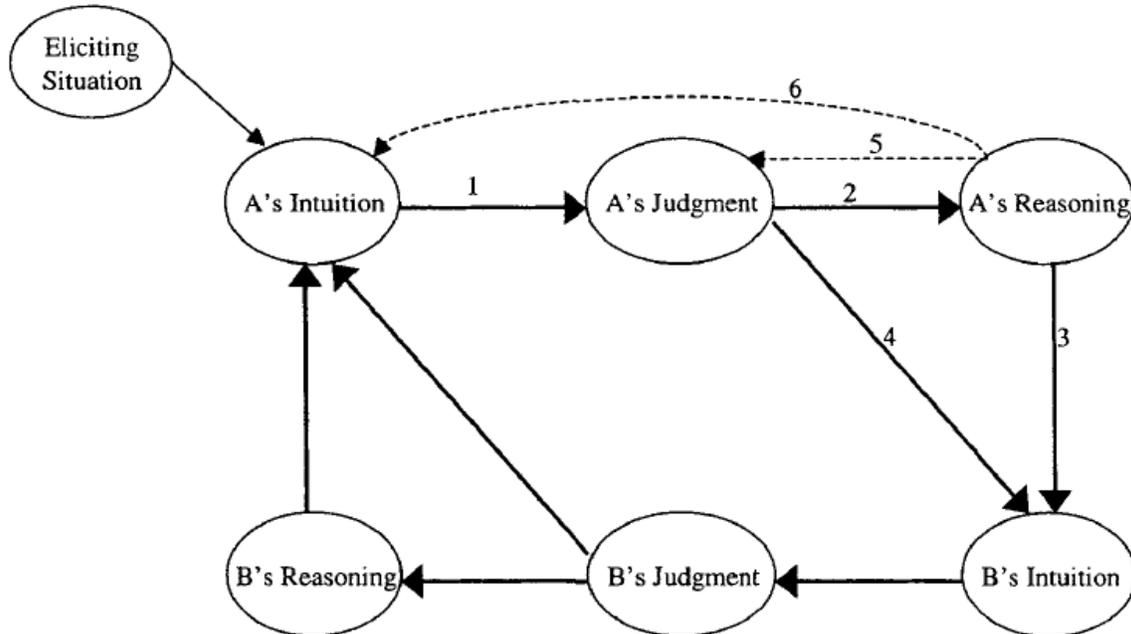


Figure 2. The social intuitionist model of moral judgment. The numbered links, drawn for Person A only, are (1) the intuitive judgment link, (2) the post hoc reasoning link, (3) the reasoned persuasion link, and (4) the social persuasion link. Two additional links are hypothesized to occur less frequently: (5) the reasoned judgment link and (6) the private reflection link.

Conclusion: render explicit your ethical judgments and your processes, inquire of others

It appears from the most recent research that what most of us learned in college philosophy classes about how we form ethical judgments is wrong. Contrary to the theories of most modern philosophers, the evidence from cognitive science, neuroscience, decision-making in natural settings, and behavioral ethics strongly indicates that we form our ethical judgments intuitively and that we are prone to all kinds of biases in predicting and recollecting our ethical behavior. In other words, whether we are aware of it or not, we are making ethical judgments all the time and we are not as ethical as we think we are.

Given the intuitive nature of ethical judgment and the biases to which we are prone before, during, and after acting, the most important thing we can do is to talk about our decisions and listen to others. ALL ethical learning comes from listening to other people, especially when they are responding to our judgments, behaviors, and after-the-fact rationalizations.

Next to talking about the ethics of our decisions and actions, the second most important thing we can do is to refine the feedback that we give and receive regarding the actual processes by which we observe, orient, decide and act. Process feedback which breaks down "intuitive" judgments into the component parts—detecting problems, representing problems, diagnosing problems, generating and mentally simulating courses of action in rapid, serial fashion, applying leverage points as we act, and evaluating our course of action, leverage points, and representation and diagnosis of the problem—is the most difficult kind of feedback to give and get and is also the most valuable form of feedback. The better we get at giving and receiving this kind of feedback, the quicker we learn and the quicker we become the ethical experts we aspire to be. We will practice this kind of feedback in this program, with the hope that we can learn as many of the valuable lessons from the United States Marine Corps as possible and transfer them back with us to our workplaces and organizations.

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For additional reading:

www.MoralFoundations.org contains articles, assessments, research, and background information on Moral Foundations Theory.

Ethical Know-How: Action, Wisdom and Cognition, by Francisco Varela (Stanford University Press, 1992).

- Perhaps the best single description of what is wrong with the directed reasoning model and why, this short book (75 pages), based on three famous lectures, applies insights from contemporary neuroscience and cognitive science to describe and explain how ethical judgments actually occur.

Moral Imagination: Implications of Cognitive Science for Ethics, by Mark Johnson (University of Chicago Press, 1993).

- Johnson, one of the leading cognitive scientists in the world, explains how our moral understanding operates on the basis of metaphor, analogy, and narrative. If you want to know why stories work so well or why people resort to metaphors to explain their situations, this book will change forever what you learned in college philosophy class about ethics.

The Happiness Hypothesis: Finding Modern Truth in Ancient Wisdom, by Jonathan Haidt (Basic Books, 2006).

- From the creator of Moral Foundations Theory, this popular, highly readable book uses recent research and evidence from neuroscience and social psychology to explain why ancient truths about life are true and what to do with those truths. Don't miss chapter 1 "The Divided Self," chapter 3 "Reciprocity and Vengeance," or chapters 7 "The Uses of Adversity" and 8 "The Felicity of Virtue."