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Ethics Awareness Inventory - Gain New Insight Into Your Ethical Perspective

Your Ethical Perspective

You tend to base your perspective on ethics on a concern for the instability of knowledge, the uncertainty of human judgment, and the lack of individuals who can truly qualify as experts in the discernment of what is right and what is wrong. Education does not provide all the answers. In your view, pragmatism, practical day-to-day experience, is the only reasonable guide to action. In judging whether an individual’s actions are ethical, you stress the practical consequences of his/her actions as the essential criteria for evaluating each case. Your distrust of any attempt to define universal principles and moral values is based, in part, on a distrust of the motives of the individuals involved. You believe that no principled solution is adequate for all time. As long as decision makers continue to disregard the cultures and lives of minorities, any discussion that suggests a unity of belief is absurd. For additional research: This category is most closely aligned in philosophy with a postmodern theory of ethics (See Michel Foucault and David Harvey).

Remember to review the BLENDED CATEGORIES section if your second highest score is within one or two points of your highest score.

Your Ethical Style

You believe that there are no absolute standards of right and wrong. With new knowledge and different circumstances, an individual’s beliefs and values may change periodically. Therefore, your approach to ethics generally tends to challenge all attempts to plan ideal social orders rationally. You tend to distrust institutionalized codes of ethics. The correct choice for a particular situation and a particular time is likely to evolve from a consideration of alternative viewpoints. You reject the use of power or control to suppress opposition to some “accepted” perspective, embracing broad representation in ethical decision making. Your ethical style requires a critical analysis of the far-reaching impact of each alternative, not a predetermined response to what appears to be “good” in the short-run.

Frustrations You Face in Addressing Ethical Dilemmas

- Your commitment to frequent reconsideration of a wide variety of differing alternative viewpoints is unsettling to others who seek a sense of security in believing that they have made the “right” decision.

- It is difficult, expensive and time-consuming to adequately analyze the far-reaching impact of an ethical decision. Extensive public input and debate is essential to the development of policy that supports tolerance and respect for diversity.

- In periods of crisis or chaos within your organization, short-term benefits and image frequently triumph over ethics as the primary concern.

- People you work with may not acknowledge the complexity of the world as you see it and will tend instead toward recommending highly simplified “solutions” that appear to be little more than window dressing.

- Without the structure provided by established standards of right and wrong, it is sometimes difficult to justify your ethical decisions to others. Consensus becomes an arduous task.
In today’s society, you are frustrated that those with the most power are attempting to define what is important to individuals under their control.

**ARTICULATION—A Guide to Communicating Your Perspective**

Your increased Awareness will assist you as you move to the next step of the A³ process—Articulation. The words you use to explain your ethical position have a profound impact on your effectiveness. How well you are able to accomplish your tasks, build relationships and support your decisions will depend on your ability to express the basis for your position and to justify your decision making process.

Equity-based perspectives are based on *practical experience* consistent with contemporary society. Individuals who score highest on this perspective value a regard for the cultures and lives of all people involved—including those on the fringes. They look for broad representation in decision making that minimizes the inappropriate use of power relationships and are concerned about how decisions affect the future.

Examples of Equity-based comments:

✓ “What do we expect the long-term impact to be for our grandchildren?”
✓ “We need to work on the basis of consensus, not majority rule.”

**Articulation of Your Perspective**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perspectives</th>
<th>Key Concepts</th>
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| **Equity** -- Absolutes are overrated. What counts is common agreement about that which positively affects the future of society. | ✓ Pragmatism  
✓ Experience  
✓ Cultural Sensitivity  
✓ Long-term Impact  
✓ Alternative Views  
✓ Critical Thinking  
✓ Diffusion of Power  
✓ Distaste for Rules |
| **Personal Attributes:** Practical, Equitable, Sensitive, Advocate, Mediator. | |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Phrases</th>
<th>Individual Style</th>
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| “Let’s be practical…” | Committed to…  
✓ Frequent review of policies  
✓ Fairness to all involved  
✓ Wider sense of community  
✓ Extensive broad input  
✓ Respect for diversity  
✓ Tolerance  
✓ Consensus |
| “We need to hear from the powerless…” | |
| “Diversity is important…” | |
| “We need to work to change bad rules…” | |