MORALITY

OVERVIEW

Morality is a broad-reaching term with several philosophical meanings. Generally speaking, morality is a system or code of conduct which view actions on a spectrum of right (moral) versus wrong (immoral). These codes of conduct serve to guide behaviors and treatment of others which, actions which can be measured in terms of compassion, fairness, honesty, loyalty, and rights. Since views of what is right and wrong vary based on individual, group, or society, it can be challenging to define morality by any of these terms. However, one of the more basic descriptions of morality is rooted in acting to avoid or prevent harm to others.[1]

Terms related to morality include principles, beliefs, and values. Although these terms are often used interchangeably, there are some differences. A principle is a basis of thought around which beliefs are formed.[2] Beliefs are principles or ideas that one holds to be true, as well as the confidence that something exists, regardless of proof. While religion is common in the discussion of beliefs, beliefs do not necessarily have to be religious. Beliefs can apply to anything that can be proven to be true, as well as things that cannot be proven directly.[3] Values refers to the measure of importance given to one's beliefs, usually developed over a long period of time. The greater value a belief has to an individual, the more likely that individual is to act upon that value.[4]

Each of these terms can be applied to assess a variety of topics within customs and traditions. Different individuals, group, or societies accept different codes relating to customs and traditions, which include behavior, etiquette, language, religious practices, respect, and sex.[5] Ethics is another a term commonly grouped with morality, as ethics are often rooted in the moral code of right versus wrong. While ethics are also widely adopted on a societal level, being ethical does not necessarily mean going along with societal norms. If a group or society does not follow ethical codes, it would not be considered moral to follow the actions of others within that group.[6] On a spiritual level, to act morally suggests a belief in and value for moral principles.

RESOURCES

1 https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/morality-definition/

2 https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/principle

3 http://www.dictionary.com/browse/beliefs

4 http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/values.html

5 https://www.reference.com/world-view/examples-moral-beliefs-79b315faff1c223e#

6 https://www.scu.edu/ethics/ethics-resources/ethical-decision-making/what-is-ethics/

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For more information, tools, and resources about morality, visit:

http://www.allaboutphilosophy.org/morality.htm

https://www.britannica.com/topic/ethics-philosophy

https://www.psychologytoday.com/basics/ethics-and-morality

https://www.quora.com/What-is-the-difference-between-ethical-beliefs-and-moral-beliefs