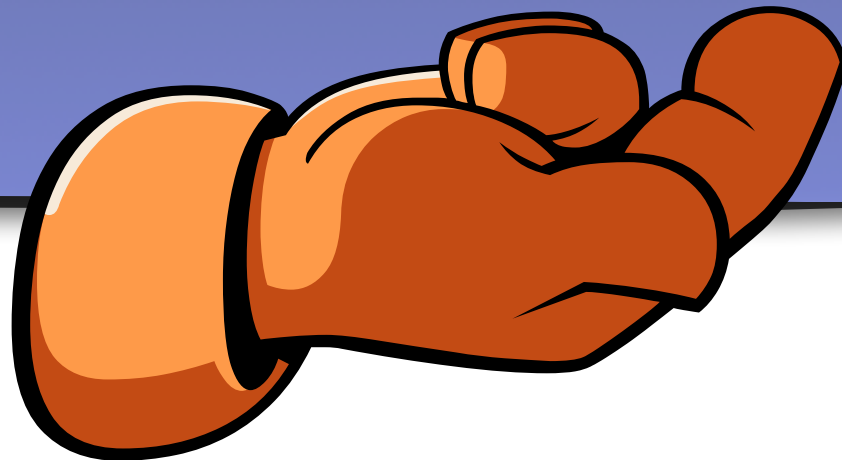


Nobel Choices Reference Cards

concepts and principles



Concept

Argument : claim based on facts or logic

An argument is claim that is true because of other assertions of fact or logic. In other words, the conclusion follows rationally from the premises. An argument is deductive if the premises guarantee that the conclusion is true or inductive if they support – but don't guarantee – that the conclusion is true. An argument fails if it contains false premises or a fallacy.

- ▶ All humans have genes; I am human; therefore, I have genes.
- ▶ It rained yesterday; it rained today; so it will likely rain tomorrow.
- ▶ Promises should be kept and you promised to babysit on Friday night, so – no – it is not OK that you just go to the movies with Carl.

NOBEL CHOICES

Concept

Syllogism : three line argument

A syllogism is a type of deductive argument that has a minor premise (A is B), major premise (B is C), and conclusion (therefore, A is C). For instance: Spot is a dog; a dog is a mammal; thus, Spot is a mammal. The conclusion consists of the subject from the minor premise and the predicate from the major premise. It leaves out the middle term connecting the two premises. An argument in ethics can take the form of a syllogism.

- ▶ You are patient; patience is a virtue; therefore, you are virtuous.
- ▶ The mower is running; running requires fuel; so, the mower has fuel.
- ▶ My cat is not male; cats are male or female; thus, my cat is female.

NOBEL CHOICES

Concept

Definition : meaning of a term

A proper definition is a description that identifies the closest category to which something belongs and the features that distinguish it from other members of that category. It is sufficient if the features identify all and only the members to be included. Also, a definition must not be circular (Hill: land lower than a mountain. Mountain: land higher than a hill). It should be stated in positive terms if possible. Sometimes negative terms are unavoidable, such as in defining “blind” or “bald”.

- ▶ A triangle is a type of figure [closest category] that is two-dimensional and has three straight sides [distinguish it from other figures].
- ▶ Engine: a type of machine that converts gasoline into motion is too exclusive. A truck might run on diesel fuel.
- ▶ Bachelor: a male who is unmarried is too inclusive. A baby boy is not really a bachelor.

NOBEL CHOICES

Concept

Fallacy : error in reasoning

A fallacy has the form of an argument, but there is a problem in the reasoning. Perhaps the premises are not relevant to the conclusion. Perhaps terms are not used in the same way throughout the argument.

- ▶ Our school is well known; you are a student at our school; so you are well known.
- ▶ Nothing is better than happiness; a tuna sandwich is better than nothing; therefore, a tuna sandwich is better than happiness.
- ▶ You should help your friends. I am your friend and want help on the math assignment. Therefore, you should give me the answers.

NOBEL CHOICES

Concept

Validity : reliable results

Validity is the extent to which an argument proves what it claims. An argument fails if it contains false premises or a fallacy. It also fails when premises, even if true and relevant, are not sufficient to believe the conclusion. For validity, an argument's premises need to be true, relevant, and sufficient to believe the claim.

- ▶ The lawn mower won't start, therefore it is out of gas.
[Is it missing a spark plug?]
- ▶ Many people saw the movie, so it must be good.
[Many saw it; but did most like it?]
- ▶ I can't find my iPod, so my sister must have taken it.
[Maybe it was stolen.]

NOBEL CHOICES

Concept

Enthymeme : abbreviated argument

A syllogism in which some part is understood, but unstated is called an enthymeme. Enthymemes are useful shorthand when the implied assertion is so obvious that stating it would be dull or mechanical. Unfortunately, enthymemes are common in situations attempting to persuade and may conceal false claims. To evaluate an enthymeme, first state the implied parts, then determine whether it has the proper structure of a syllogism.

- ▶ Boy applies body spray [minor premise]; boy gets adoring girls [conclusion].
This omits the false major premise: body spray gets adoring girls.
- ▶ I was hungry, so I took the food [unstated: hunger justifies stealing].
- ▶ I like you, so I will give you a discount on the subscription.

NOBEL CHOICES

Concept

Analogy : reasoning by similarity

An analogy is inductive reasoning that an object or situation has a certain property because it is like another object or situation which has the property and the two are alike ways relevant to that property. To judge the strength of an analogy, consider whether the number of ways in which the cases are said to be similar is sufficient and whether they are relevant to the property at issue.

- ▶ A hydraulic circuit and electrical circuit have a source (pump/battery), connections (pipe/wire), and controls (valve/switch). Just as the pipe resists the flow of water, the wire resists the flow of electricity.
- ▶ Puzzles and chores are both time-consuming and difficult. I like doing crossword puzzles. Does that mean I would like doing chores?
- ▶ Kicking a dog is just as bad as slapping a baby.

NOBEL CHOICES

Concept

Corresponding Cause : common source

Corresponding cause is inductive reasoning that the only circumstance which events have in common is the likely cause or essential part of the cause of those events. If A occurs, B occurs; if A is absent, B is absent; therefore, A is the likely cause of B.

- ▶ If I eat oysters, I get hives. I never get hives when I eat other food.
Therefore, oysters probably cause my hives.
- ▶ When you want something, you're polite; otherwise you are just rude. So acting nice is just your way of getting what you want.
- ▶ When Jones is on duty, the bank is robbed, but it isn't when he isn't, so we are beginning to suspect Jones.

NOBEL CHOICES

Concept

Agency : able to act right or wrong

A moral agent is a person (or a collective party, such as a city) with the ability to act or refrain from acting on ones own and without compulsion or coercion. The choice of a moral agent must be free (not forced) and informed (with sufficient competence and information). A moral agent is capable of being culpable; that is, of being at fault and responsible for performing a wrongful act, and thus deserving of blame or punishment. Culpability requires agency; to be culpable, one must be an agent.

- ▶ A drunk driver receives a fine and two days in jail.
- ▶ Igor was found not guilty of the crime by reason of insanity.
- ▶ The labor union decides not to go on strike against the company.

NOBEL CHOICES

Concept

Character : virtuous or vicious

A person's moral character is his or her distinctive combination of virtues (strengths, such as patience and persistence) and vices (weaknesses, such as cowardice and cruelty). The virtuous person reliably recognizes when it is reasonable to act or to forbear acting. In "virtue ethics" an action is right to the extent that it shows virtuous character and wrong to the extent that it shows vicious character. To evaluate whether an action is right or wrong, identify which character traits (virtues and vices) are expressed by the action.

- ▶ Waiting for your turn is right since it expresses the virtue of patience.
- ▶ It is right to return a friend's car keys, but not if he or she is intoxicated.
- ▶ The Service Department is poor indeed: rude, lazy, and ineffective.

NOBEL CHOICES

Concept

Conscience : intuitive guide

Conscience is a person's intuitive sense of what is right and wrong, urging him or her to do what seems right or resulting in regret for doing what seems wrong. Conscience is based on intuition and is not the result of reasoning. Just as taste gives immediate sense of whether a food is sweet or sour, conscience gives immediate sense of whether an action is right and wrong. Intuition is influenced by socialization; that is, something just feels right or wrong because it fits a pattern or is similar to situations previously evaluated as right or wrong.

- ▶ Conscience keep her from enjoying a binge of Halloween candy.
- ▶ Feeling guilty, a would-be shoplifter puts the item back on the shelf.
- ▶ Sports that emphasize fair play can help to develop conscience.

NOBEL CHOICES

Concept

Directive : authorized instruction

A directive is an instruction from an agent with authority. Authority is the ability to make decisions that are accepted as legitimate. Ordinarily a person is justified in carrying out a directive. However if a person with ordinary sense and understanding would consider a certain directive clearly and obviously wrong, then carrying out that directive is without justification.

- ▶ A patient follows the prescription of her family physician.
- ▶ The dictator orders the military to cross the border.
- ▶ A construction worker holding a flag signals for traffic to stop.

NOBEL CHOICES

Concept

Ethical Finitude : norms manage resources

Ethics is a means of managing resources, such as health and wealth. Many resources, from how much we know to the length of our lives, are limited. The norms of ethics are designed to make the most of limited resources. Thus, the basis of ethics is not absolute (for all times and places) or transcendent (based on other-worldly beliefs), but varies with the nature of human finitude. The types of norms reflect the ways in which we are limited (e.g.: we are mortal, so do not kill; knowledge is limited, so tell the truth).

- ▶ Mona fibs about the tooth fairy to make her daughter feel better.
- ▶ Due to the drought, the town restricts lawn-watering to once a week.
- ▶ Saul decides to not take a job offer overseas since it would mean much less time with his family.

NOBEL CHOICES

Concept

Evolutionary Ethics : selective advantage

Ethical conduct has an evolutionary advantage. Organisms that exhibit positive traits, such as cooperation and empathy, tend to survive and succeed better than those that exhibit negative traits, such as aggression and betrayal. Those with positive traits tend to do better in getting mates, establishing stable working relationships, and advancing their interests.

- ▶ The candidate's frank and folksy talk at town meetings shows the voters a person who cares and seems trustworthy.
- ▶ Offended by impulsive antics, she simply refuses to see him again.
- ▶ The trade agreement promotes economic development in the region, sharing resources and manufacturing.

NOBEL CHOICES

Concept

Morals : standards of right and wrong

Morality refers to social standards of behaviour incumbent on all autonomous, rational beings to do what is right and refrain from what is wrong. An action is *right* if deliberately chosen either out of respect or net gain [help, benefit] for some sentient being. It is *wrong* if chosen out of contempt or net loss [harm, detriment] for oneself or another sentient being.

- ▶ Donald jaywalks after checking both ways that no cars are coming.
- ▶ The dealer slips an ace from the bottom of the deck to win at poker.
- ▶ Wind topples a tree, killing a hiker [not willed, so no moral value].

NOBEL CHOICES

Concept

Respect : regard for intrinsic worth

To respect something is to see in it a certain property that is itself sufficient reason to yield to, work with, or act in the interests of that object. Such properties might include being: alive, beautiful, powerful, rational, familiar, or capable of suffering. In other words, one believes that the object has some intrinsic worth and shows deference, cooperation, or accommodation accordingly.

- ▶ Daisy tosses bread crumbs outside to feed the squirrels.
- ▶ Jill builds a ramp so Jack get up the porch in his wheelchair.
- ▶ The troop leader lets the scouts pick which merit badge they want to earn next.

NOBEL CHOICES

Concept

Expedience : convenient to obtain a result

An action is expedient if it serves some personal interest or practical purpose, especially in a particular situation (e.g., using a shoe to tap in a thumbtack). Expedience requires a gain of some sort, such as saving time by taking the stairs rather than waiting for an elevator. Since a course of action expedient for some may tend to exploit others, impediments can be imposed (e.g., speed bumps to discourage trucks from taking shortcuts through residential streets).

- ▶ Daisy doesn't pay the plumber until her new hot tub is installed.
- ▶ Donald gives gift cards so his nephews can choose what they want.
- ▶ Scrooge requires a doctor's note so Donald can't call in sick but go fishing.

NOBEL CHOICES

Concept

Deliberate Decision : informed and intended

To decide is to be aware of making a choice and to willfully do or forbear some action which the agent perceives himself or herself as capable of doing or refraining from doing; it is not accidental, unintentional, or compelled. However, choice includes routine practice or dispositions of behaviour, such as answering honestly and using a respectful tone in discussions. In any case, the decision or disposition is rational; that is, based on reasoned belief that it is the best option of those available or at least not the worst.

- ▶ Daisy decides to keep Donald's birthday party a surprise.
- ▶ "I had no choice," the bank teller sobs, "the robber said 'your money or your life!'"
- ▶ Picking the fastest taxi turns out to be a "lucky guess" for the hurried traveller.

NOBEL CHOICES

Concept

Duty : debt owed

A duty is an obligation to fulfill a debt owed; that is, a requirement to do or refrain from doing. Moral duties often include: non-maleficence [avoid or prevent needless harm], reparation [fix your injuries to others], beneficence [enhance the well-being of others], justice [help people receive what they merit], gratitude [repay others for favours received], fidelity [keep promises], honesty [tell the truth], and self-improvement [enhance my well-being].

- ▶ Abe returns the amount too much that the cashier gave in change.
- ▶ Donald decided to tip the waiter and everybody else added a gratuity.
- ▶ Killing ants with a magnifying glass is wrong not because the ants suffer, but because it breaches the duty to not harm others needlessly.

NOBEL CHOICES

Concept

Ethical Egoism : seeking self-interests

The right action is the option that is overall most helpful [whether or not most desirable] to the person making that choice. It is the act that has (or rule of action that tends to have) the greatest net benefit to the initiating agent. People living in society have to compromise in order to maximize net personal benefit (e.g., trade leisure time for a salary), so the social practice of ethical egoism is similar to utilitarianism. Egoism is not egotism (expecting everyone to serve my self-interests).

- ▶ Daisy's Bakery makes her wealthy and is a pleasant place for her employees to work as well.
- ▶ In applying for a job, Donald emphasizes his experience and training.
- ▶ The medicine is disgusting, but it works so he tolerates taking it.

NOBEL CHOICES

Principle

Aesthetics : beauty is good

We ought to do that which improves or preserves aesthetic experience, or at least reduces negative experience. Generally, an experience is said to be aesthetic if it has pleasing significance, such as beauty or meaning. A person might recognize and appreciate beauty or meaning in artwork or nature. Disgust is a negative aesthetic experience.

- ▶ A museum refuses to take down its display of person-size swastika's made from barbed wire fencing.
- ▶ City planners decide that it is better to have a modern mall than a swamp with snakes.
- ▶ Protesters chain themselves to an old monument to prevent a developer from demolishing it.

NOBEL CHOICES

Principle

Autonomy : respect self rule

People who have the capacity to make their own decisions and set their own standards should be free to do so; other people ought not to interfere with these choices and wishes. Adults of sound mind have the capacity to determine what is best for themselves and for those in their care.

- ▶ A nation makes laws governing its internal affairs without interference from other countries.
- ▶ A patient has the right to not receive a treatment unless he or she gives informed consent to that treatment.
- ▶ Children, prisoners, mentally challenged, and others who lack the capacity for self-rule are cared for by a surrogate, such as a parent or warden, acting on their behalf.

NOBEL CHOICES

Principle

Benefice : duty to help others

One ought to prevent harm, remove harm, or help improve the situation of others. In general, each person a duty to advance the good of others in so far as this good is in keeping with the fundamental values of the person being helped.

- ▶ A lifeguard rushes to resuscitate a drowning victim.
- ▶ Emily encourages her friend Edna to quit smoking.
- ▶ The town provides flu vaccinations to all of its residents.

NOBEL CHOICES

Principle

Paternalism : father knows best

A person should treat people according to what he or she believes is good for them, whether or not the recipient agrees.

- ▶ A firefighter tells an accident victim that she is OK in order to not add upset to injury.
- ▶ The government makes cigarettes expensive to discourage smoking and requires passengers to wear seat-belts to encourage safety.
- ▶ The University requires all students to take basic skills courses.

NOBEL CHOICES

Principle

Care Ethics : compassionate partiality

The right thing for someone to do depends on how much he or she cares about others in a particular context and, as such, varies with how close their relationship is and how vulnerable others are perceived to be under the circumstances. We should be partial to those we care about and show them compassion that we do not extend to others.

- ▶ A police officer does not try to stop people looting a grocery store in the aftermath of a hurricane and flood.
- ▶ Elvira gives her granddaughter a large sum of money with the condition that it is used for etiquette lessons and dancing classes.
- ▶ Rocco lets his son skateboard without safety equipment on the belief that building self-esteem outweighs the likelihood of physical injury.

NOBEL CHOICES

Principle

Virtue Ethics : good habits of character

Something is right or good if it is virtuous. A virtue is a trait or quality that lets something to succeed at its purpose. The purpose of a knife is to cut, so sharpness is a virtue of the knife and honing the blade is good because it promotes sharpness. Patience and courage are often considered human virtues, but the list of virtues varies with what counts as the purpose of a human being. If the purpose of a person is to flourish (*eudaimonia*), then honesty is a virtue and telling the truth is good because truth-telling promotes honesty. Develop virtues through practice. As a habit, they guide in making right decisions.

- ▶ Donating old clothing is right because it is charitable or benevolent.
- ▶ The fragrance of a flower is good if it attracts pollen-bearing insects.
- ▶ Pride is considered as virtue by some people, but a vice by others.

NOBEL CHOICES

Principle

Non-Maleficence : duty to do no harm

A caregiver should not intentionally create a needless harm or injury. More generally, all people have a duty to prevent harm to others as far as they are able to do so without undue harm to themselves.

- ▶ A manufacturer tests toys designed for toddler to ensure that no parts can be pulled off and pose a choking hazard.
- ▶ Despite the patient's request, her physician refuses to use blood-letting to treat a headaches as it has not been proven to be effective.
- ▶ A pharmacy dispenses arthritis medications for adults in bottles with easy-open lids.

NOBEL CHOICES

Principle

Merit : benefits distributed as deserved

M4 Happiness should be distributed according to merit or need. People should be as happy as they deserve to be, with the benefit based on merit (recognition or reward for achievement; e.g., a private dressing room for a movie star) or need (appropriate accommodation; e.g., a ramp for wheelchair access).

- ▶ Each month the waiter with the most tips also gets a \$100 bonus from the restaurant.
- ▶ Sally receives a scholarship based on her high test scores and community involvement.
- ▶ The police officer is awarded a badge for bravery in the hostage crisis.

NOBEL CHOICES

Principle

Equity : fairness based on basic needs

To be fair, resources should be allocated based on basic needs – such as survival, security, identity, opportunity, and recognition – and not mainly on equality. In other words, fairness means that everyone gets what he or she needs, not necessarily that everyone gets the same. All customers can park in the lot, but the handicapped have designated parking spaces closer to the door.

- ▶ A company awards more scholarships to students in a low-income areas than to those in wealthy neighbourhoods.
- ▶ At a hospital emergency department, the triage nurse decides which patients are taken care of before others.
- ▶ Dad does a lot of manual labor as a construction worker; junior is in elementary school. Dad's slice of the lunch pie is larger than junior's.

NOBEL CHOICES

Principle

Natural Rights : rights by nature

People have certain rights by nature. Since these rights are discovered in human nature, they apply to all people, take priority over created rights (e.g., laws), and exist even when not enforced by a government. Natural rights are based on the need for people to survive and so include freedom, self-defence, and property.

- ▶ A hospital is fined for failing to hire qualified men as nurses.
- ▶ Erica invents a new kind of hopscotch, but during a dispute Aaron insists some rules are wrong and she should play fair.
- ▶ Janice blows an air horn in the face of a burglar who has burst into her home.

NOBEL CHOICES

Principle

Pleasure : degrees of happiness

An action is right to the extent that it produces pleasure. Pleasures vary by quantity; some are more intense, longer lasting, or benefit more people than others. Pleasures also vary in quality; some are more natural, healthful, or aesthetic than others. Thus, which action is better (more right or good) depends on which action produces the greatest quantity or quality of pleasure.

- ▶ Boris likes to beat the computer at chess, but feels it is more satisfying to play other people in a tournament.
- ▶ Despite the hard work, or maybe because of it, Daisy takes delight in making pies from apples in her own orchard.
- ▶ The athlete used to feel good winning a race and receiving praise in the newspaper, but now takes drugs to feel good.

NOBEL CHOICES

Principle

Sentiment : approval by empathy

Your action is right if, imagining myself in your place, I would likely feel much the same way and view the action as appropriate to that feeling. My action is right if an informed, impartial person would likely feel much as I do if in my place and view my action as appropriate to that feeling.

- ▶ Everyone likes Larry; when he won the lottery Larry bought us each 100 tickets for the next draw.
- ▶ Mom grounds Sally for letting Tom's hamster escape into the snow after Tom threw a snowball at Sally.
- ▶ Tom throws a snowball; I throw one back, knocking the snow out of his hands, and we both laugh.

NOBEL CHOICES

Principle

Deontological Ethics : right by duty

Ethical norms are duties that result from the recognition of intrinsic worth. An action is right if it corresponds to a duty. For instance: rationality is intrinsically valuable; people are rational beings; thus I have a duty of honesty to all people; so an act of me telling to you a lie is wrong. In any case, whether an action is right or good depends on whether it is based on a duty, and not on the action's consequences.

- ▶ Daisy stays in bed to get over influenza, unable to go hiking as she had promised.
- ▶ Donald cuts down a couple old pine trees so they won't fall on Gyro's garage.
- ▶ Jack thanked Jill for making dinner by washing and drying the dishes afterward.

NOBEL CHOICES

Principle

Teleological Ethics : right by results

Ethical norms are if-then conditionals with desirable consequences. Whether an action is good or right depends on the consequences of that action. If the end-result is beneficial, then an action that is means to that end is good or appropriate. Assess the likely helpful and harmful effects of each option. The right choice is the one that is most helpful overall; the one with the greatest net benefit.

- ▶ Donald tells the boys that if they don't eat their vegetables, then they get no dessert.
- ▶ Microchipping children makes medical information and ID available if they are lost.
- ▶ The helicopter crew tosses out heavy cargo in an effort to gain altitude in the storm.

NOBEL CHOICES

Principle

Consequentialism : progress justifies process

M2 A good result can justify the means of achieving it. If the result is an improvement [such as increasing overall pleasure, beauty, knowledge, or freedom], then the act is good. Altruism, egoism, and utilitarianism are forms of consequentialism that differ mainly on whether the consequences are favourable to just you, to just me, or to all of those concerned.

- ▶ A flu-shot stings, but helps prevent influenza which feels a lot worse.
- ▶ An announcement interrupts the pageant as the winner was about to be announced, but warns about the fire so everyone can leave safely.
- ▶ When a boy guesses his birthday present, his mother tells him that isn't it; lying a little so her son can enjoy the gift as a surprise.

NOBEL CHOICES

Principle

Utilitarianism : most happiness for most

M1 Do whatever produces the most happiness for the most people. In general, an action is right to the extent that it produces pleasure. Pleasures vary by quantity; some are more intense, longer lasting, or benefit more people than others. Pleasures also vary in quality; some are more natural, healthful, or aesthetic than others. Thus, which action is better (more right or good) depends on which action produces the greatest net quantity or quality of pleasure.

- ▶ Children at the daycare found to have head lice are sent home with a shampoo suggestion so the lice don't jump to other people.
- ▶ Designating a highway lane for emergency vehicles only gives them faster response time, but that one-less-lane slows commuter traffic.
- ▶ The cottage campground is worth the long dull drive to get there.

NOBEL CHOICES

Principle

Retributive Justice : punish wrongdoing

K6 Punish the guilty because they are guilty (eye for an eye). Justice is a matter of restoring moral balance. If injury lowers a person, then punishment lowers the offender to restore balance. If an offender gains unfair advantage, then punishment removes this gain to restore balance. The punishment should be impartial and proportional to the amount of harm.

- ▶ After reviewing a video recording of the game, the referee decides there was a penalty on the play so the goal will not count.
- ▶ Tom gives Tim a time-out in another room so the family can finish their lunch in peace.
- ▶ Vandals who put graffiti on the wall had to repaint the wall.

NOBEL CHOICES

Principle

Restorative Justice : punish to prevent or fix

M6 Punish the guilty to reform them and deter others. Justice is righting a wrong. Punishment is useful to a community in so far as it discourages wrongdoing before it occurs, removes the wrongdoer from society if necessary for security, restores or compensates for what was lost in the wrongdoing, or rehabilitates the wrongdoer to prevent reoccurrence.

- ▶ Both boys broke the wall, but mom has the youngest watch rather than help re-plaster lest more harm than good result.
- ▶ Sheila didn't want the lava lamp, but paid full price when she accidentally broke it in the antiques store.
- ▶ The drill sergeant shouts at a new recruit, but the intended audience is the rest of the platoon.

NOBEL CHOICES

Principle

Human Worth : respect all people as people

K1 Do not use people or be used yourself as a mere means to an end. To treat other people as mere means contradicts the fact that all people are ends in themselves; that is, they have intrinsic worth. For instance, a barber is a means of getting a haircut, but the barber is also a rational being and not a mere means or instrument of the customer's objective.

- ▶ Dave's parents ask why they should loan him money for tuition when Dave spent the summer with friends rather than working.
- ▶ Saul sees self-cutting as not only dangerous, but disrespectful.
- ▶ The boys asked Erin to play baseball because she is a good pitcher, and not simply because she has a bat and glove.

NOBEL CHOICES

Principle

Good Will : duty for duty's sake

K2 Do your duty, be honest, and keep promises. People are duty-bound; that is, motivated to honour obligations that exists by their status (e.g., as a parent, as a citizen, as a rational being). However, one duty can outweigh another. For example, driver's are to obey posted parking rules unless an emergency, such as building fire, requires otherwise. A duty is owed to others as sentient beings. It indicates the type of action we expect everyone to do; e.g.: we expect everyone to be honest and to keep their promises.

- ▶ Alice walks her puppy outside each morning so it can pee.
- ▶ Earl takes time after work on election day to vote.
- ▶ Emily pays a membership fee to belong to the sports club.

NOBEL CHOICES

Principle

Equality : treat equals alike

K4 Always treat others equally and fairly. Treat people alike in ways that they are alike (e.g., let all citizens vote); deal with people differently according to their differences (e.g., adults can marry, but children may not). Treatment is fair if resources or opportunity are distributed without regard for personal differences or preferences (e.g., men and women get the same pay for the same job).

- ▶ Anybody can try out for the musical, but only those who perform best will be selected.
- ▶ Each tourist on the cruise is given a T-shirt with the ship's logo.
- ▶ Wealthier people pay more taxes than those with less income.

NOBEL CHOICES

Principle

Precious Life : human life has intrinsic value

K3 Human life is valuable regardless of quality. To be a person is to be a rational being (e.g.: able to understand; make judgements; be logical and practical). As rational beings, all people are ends, not means. That is, a person's life is valued and important in itself and not merely as it is useful in achieving some goal or result sought.

- ▶ A wife consents to remove artificial life support after all tests show no brain activity in her husband after the accident.
- ▶ Calvin drops his laptop computer, rushing to aid a choking passenger.
- ▶ Soldiers fight to liberate prisoners from the enemy camp, though some lives are lost in the process.

NOBEL CHOICES

Principle

Quality of Life : life has instrumental value

M3 Life is valuable only if it is of good quality with happiness outweighing unhappiness. Being alive is necessary, but not sufficient for being happy. As such, it is a means to happiness, although a vital means. When pain or misery prevail, however, the quality of life is lost.

- ▶ A veterinarian puts a cat to sleep, ending its misery after the automobile accident.
- ▶ Town officials add sodium fluoride to the reservoir in order to reduce tooth decay among residents.
- ▶ Widespread poverty and poor education give the people of one nation a lower quality of life than their industrialized neighbour.

NOBEL CHOICES

Principle

Dignity : reasonable, responsible, respectful

K7 Only humans have intrinsic value, but animals and the environment are not to be exploited. Being an autonomous rational person is sufficient reason in itself to not treat that person as a mere means to some purpose. Being rational gives people the duty to respect one another through reasoning and by refraining from force or deception. Animals and the environment are not rational and so can be used for human purposes. They are not to be exploited, however, since needless use is demeaning to the dignity of rational beings.

- ▶ As Pluto gets older, Mickey takes him on shorter walks.
- ▶ Donald asks Louie to explain, in private, how the window broke.
- ▶ Daisy turns off the TV to hear how the boys earned their merit badge.

NOBEL CHOICES

Principle

Harm : don't harm others

M5 Do as you please as long as you do not harm others. An action is morally right or at least permissible as long as it does not directly harm others by infringing upon their rights. Society should limit the liberty of an individual only if needed to prevent harm to others; even permitting potential harm to oneself.

- ▶ Gyro feels riding a motorcycle expresses freedom and not just transportation, so he dislikes the mandatory helmet law.
- ▶ Jaywalking is so common in a certain city that jaywalkers don't even get fines.
- ▶ Lucy BASE jumps (parachutes) from city buildings even though she has been caught a couple times.

NOBEL CHOICES

Principle

Equal Interests : all animals count equally

M7 Animals and nature also have value and rights that people must protect. Take into account the interests of all affected and consider their interests equally, including the interests that animals have in surviving and not suffering. All beings capable of suffering are worthy of equal consideration; failing to do so discriminates on the basis of species (speciesism). Nature, by extension, is beneficial to humans and other animals and so it has indirect value that people must preserve. So, if an action will cause animals or nature to lose more than people stand to gain, then it is wrong to do that act.

- ▶ Don drains engine oil onto his driveway; the runoff kills his grass.
- ▶ Lillian puts alfalfa pellets in the woods to feed the deer during winter.
- ▶ Logging a forest results in the death of migrating Monarch butterflies.

NOBEL CHOICES

Principle

Libertarianism : don't interfere

K5 Do as you please as long as it does not prevent others from doing the same. Every individual is entitled to life, liberty, and the pursuit of property. Thus, an action is morally right as long as it does not interfere with other people or it is taken to defend against the forcible interference of others. Some people believe that liberty may be restricted to prevent offence to others, to prevent harming oneself or others, or to promote social goals such as equality and order.

- ▶ A sports team is ordered to pay a songwriter for using her song without permission.
- ▶ Our town passes a noise curfew so citizens don't run lawnmowers or operate other noisy machinery during traditional sleeping hours.
- ▶ The theatre bans Carl for falsely shouting "fire!" – causing a stampede.

NOBEL CHOICES

Principle

Painism : prevent pain regardless of its host

The right action is the one that reduces the pain of the individual suffering the most. Pain pertains to individuals; it is not aggregated (e.g., ten units of pain in one person is more suffering than one unit of pain in a hundred individuals). All animals, not just people, are "painient" (pain-feeling). Anyone who could reduce the distress of a painient being should do so.

- ▶ A large pet store chain refuses to sell dogs in order to discourage puppy mills.
- ▶ Huey weaves felt onto his hamster's running wheel so its feet won't slip through.
- ▶ The pleasure bullies get in tormenting does not justify the suffering of their victim.

NOBEL CHOICES