
**EXPLORATION OF PERSONAL ETHICS: AN IN-CLASS
CASE EXERCISE FOR BUSINESS ETHICS STUDENTS
TO HELP THEM DEVELOP PERSONAL VALUES**

*EXPLORACIÓN DE LA ÉTICA PERSONAL: UN
EJERCICIO DE CASO EN CLASE PARA ESTUDIANTES
DE ÉTICA EMPRESARIAL PARA AYUDARLOS A
DESARROLLAR VALORES PERSONALES*

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ABSTRACT

The paper presents an in-class case exercise that aims to help students learn how to apply ethical values in their personal and professional lives. Development of ethical values are often stated in a very simple way and seem easy to apply to objective situations in an ethical course. However, when it comes to having students apply it in their lives, there seems to be a disconnect, due to a level of unawareness of one's own actions. The exercise is thus designed to help students gain self-awareness of personal practices in different contexts. The exercise will help students develop individual ethical values in each of those contexts especially if their personal practices seem inadequate in helping them achieve their desires. While the immediate audience includes undergraduate and graduate students, it would be a valuable self-exploratory tool to use in any workplace setting to train employees.

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KEYWORDS

self-awareness of personal ethical practices, individual values, in-class exercises, business ethics

RESUMEN

El artículo presenta un ejercicio de caso en clase que tiene como objetivo ayudar a los estudiantes a aprender cómo aplicar los valores éticos en su vida personal y profesional. El desarrollo de valores éticos a menudo se enuncia de una manera muy simple y parece fácil de aplicar a situaciones objetivas en un curso ético. Sin embargo, cuando se trata de que los estudiantes lo apliquen en sus vidas, parece haber una desconexión, debido a un nivel de desconocimiento de las propias acciones. Por tanto, el ejercicio está diseñado para ayudar a los estudiantes a adquirir conciencia de las prácticas personales en diferentes contextos. El ejercicio ayudará a los estudiantes a desarrollar valores éticos individuales en cada uno de esos contextos, especialmente si sus prácticas personales parecen inadecuadas para ayudarlos a lograr sus deseos. Si bien la audiencia inmediata incluye estudiantes de pregrado y posgrado, sería una valiosa herramienta de autoexploración para usar en cualquier entorno laboral para capacitar a los empleados.

PALABRAS CLAVE

autoconciencia de las prácticas éticas personales, valores individuales, ejercicios en clase, ética empresarial

INTRODUCTION

As we see depletion of resources and enhanced global competition, companies need to be mindful of creating environments that support ethical organizational citizenship behaviors (Bolino and Klotz, 2015). Even though, ethical behavior in and of itself is the reward, higher levels of ethical behavior are also seen to increase organizational citizenship behaviors (Baker, Hunt and Andrews, 2006). Yet the sustained ethical failures in businesses have resulted in questioning the efficacy of ethics training in business schools (Sheehan, and Schmidt, 2015).

Despite its ambiguous and amorphous nature, Ethics does have far-reaching consequences since it delves into the deepest parts of who we are, but the arena of operation where we are judged on our ethical perspectives is entirely outside ourselves (Beggs, Dean, Gillespie and Weiner, 2006). While business ethics teachers have a responsibility to nurture students' confidence in being able to evaluate ethical issues in a supportive and non-judgmental learning environment (McFarlane, 2004), teaching ethics itself is a processual pedagogy that involves an emergent discourse which entails successive ethical disclosures from both the teacher and students (Diannah Lowry, 2004).

In response to both the call for greater efficacy of business ethics education (Sheehan and Schmidt, 2015) and the question put forth by McFarlane (2004),

“How do we teach our students to recognize what bad behavior looks like and to deal with its temptations?” as one of the unique challenges of ethics instruction, this paper presents a case scenario for instructors, in the form of an in-class exercise as a possible answer.

The study describes in detail the process of carrying out a self-exploratory exercise entailing a series of questions, requiring responses from students about their ethical behaviors in different personal and professional contexts.

As we proceed, a review of the literature in the area of business ethics education and its importance in the real-world is presented. Next, a description of the in-class case exercise with step by step guidelines on how it can be implemented is provided. This is followed by a detailed discussion of the implications of the study, its limitations and a conclusion which highlights future research in this area.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Need for Developing Personal Ethical Values Exercises for Business Students

Early studies assessing student perceptions of the ethical climate in business showed that most believed they would face pressure to compromise their ethics in the business world leading to a warning sign that future students may find themselves in similar situations that will test their ethical standards (Golen, Power, and Titekemeyer, 1985). Decades later research found that if students themselves have weaker ethical values than business professionals, then they are likely to enter the workplace with lower ethical standards than existing employees, which may lead recent graduates to exhibit counterproductive behaviors in their organizations (Deshpande and Jacob, 2010).

Recent studies indicate that millennials nevertheless have an inclination towards values connected to personal growth, being benevolent and open, with a desire for freedom from anxiety, while simultaneously striving for power and achievement, which highlights their aspiration for self-transcendence and openness to change (Črešnar, and Jevšenak, 2019).

Based on their expectations and disappointments, millennials, however, are not prepared for the changing dynamics in the future of business, although their appreciation is foremost for corporations that are adapting and developing their employees to succeed, especially by supporting through soft skills training (Deloitte, 2018). A most recent survey indicates that despite the individual challenges and personal sources of anxiety that millennials and Gen Zs are facing, they have remained focused on larger societal issues, both before and after the onset of the pandemic, choosing to put people ahead of profits as well as supporting environmental sustainability¹. This current trend shows that the new generation is willing to learn and already has an inclination for better personal values. The question is how can we then make business ethics education more efficacious?

¹ The Deloitte Global Millennial Survey 2020 (<https://www2.deloitte.com/nz/en/pages/human-capital/articles/millennial-survey-2020.html>)

If personal values are viewed as a cognitive filter, through which an individual judges, specific real-world situations, (Črešnar, and Jevšenak, 2019) it forms a foundational basis for teaching ethics in business schools through exercises that allow students to explore their values in an objective manner.

Taking into consideration the importance laid by McFarlane and colleagues (2004) to teaching ethics objectively in a classroom, the exercise is designed keeping in mind his study's key aspects. These aspects include respect for student autonomy, tolerance for diverse opinions without imposing normative ethics, and providing freedom in the form of ethical relativism (McFarlane, 2004). Keeping in line with this approach, the purpose of the exercise is to introduce students to important ethical philosophies. Students are encouraged to utilize the set of ethical principles laid out by any of the key ethical philosophers, in this case, Bhartṛhari's, to explore their personal ethical values and think about how they would like to develop it. This method provides both personal reasoning and choice.

While any ethical philosopher's principles can be used for this exercise, as explained further in the section about variations of this exercise, there were two reasons for selecting Bhartṛhari's ethical principles. First, due to the aptness of Bhartṛhari's definition which matches the learning objectives related to the identity of the individual. The definition states that Ethics is a combination of rituals (influenced by the place, time, and group you identify with) along with values and attitudes towards others. Secondly, his entire book outlines three distinct areas, providing an in-depth exploration of how one is with oneself, how one is with others and how one is, in different situations.

A variation could be the use of different ethical philosophers' principles. For instance, instructors can pick Aristotle's ethics and base the exercise on his definition, wherein being ethical means building a good virtuous character (Mintz, 1996). Instructors may also be interested in Machiavelli's principles from the Prince², Kantian ethics of duty (Bowie, 2002), or Bertrand Russell's³ principles from his essays on Ethics.

PROPOSED METHODOLOGY

Structure of the proposed methodology

The below methodology will describe what the learning objectives and the purpose of the exercise is, overview of how it can be presented to students, what materials should be used, how much time needs to be allocated, what type of preparation is required ahead of the exercise and a step-by-step guide about the implementation of the exercise.

Learning Objectives

1. Increase self-awareness of personal actions, values, attitudes, and behaviors.

² <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/1232/1232-h/1232-h.htm>

³ <http://fair-use.org/bertrand-russell/the-elements-of-ethics>

2. Evaluate the forces that have shaped conceptions of identity and values in the past and present and reflect on what changes need to be brought about in one's personal actions, values, attitudes, and behaviors with respect to oneself, others, and in different situations that require ethical conduct.

The Exercise

The objective of the exercise is to help students (or individuals) explore how they are as a person, how they are with different people and in different situations in their lives from their own perspective. Then, the students will review what Bhartṛhari's Ethics says about how one should be. Finally, they will reflect on the changes they would like to make as well as those aspects they would like to retain in each of the areas. Two additional sections before and after the above exploration is also added to the exercise to enable them to personalize the exercise beyond the classroom both at their workplace and in their personal lives. The additional sections, require students to state their terminal and instrumental values before the start of the exploration and repeat this, following the exploration, to see if they would change either, or both, their terminal and instrumental values based on the exploration of their personal ethics. The exercise can be given to students at the start of an Ethics class, as it will set the stage for exploring other ethical philosophies and continuing to compare it with their own ethical world view.

Materials

- Copy of the Exploration of Personal Ethics Table (soft excel/sheets copy is better, as it will not limit the space to enter the information)- (please refer appendix I)
- Copy of document explaining terminal and instrumental values with examples (please refer appendix II)
- Copy of Bhartṛhari's Ethics (preferably in slides format, else as a document)- (please refer appendix III)
- Copy of debriefing document (please refer appendix IV)

Time Allocated

Approximately two-hours for an in-class exercise. It can also be given as a take home exercise.

Preparation

1. Since it will be a softcopy, the three documents (the table, slides, and debriefing document (made available after the exercise)) can be uploaded on the Learning Management System used by the college.
 2. Consider engaging in a brief review of definitions of Ethics from different ethical philosophers and prepare a brief presentation about Bhartṛhari's Ethics prior to the implementation of the exercise, so students are aware of the content beforehand. This presentation need not review the content in full. However, this is optional. An alternative is to have a brief recording available to students to review it on their own.
-

3. A short document explaining terminal and instrumental values with examples will be shared with the students.

Implementation of the Exercise-Guidelines: (steps)

Step 1: Students are provided access to the online version of the main table (appendix I), document 9(appendix II), and the slides (appendix III).

Step 2: The instructor then explains the layout and sections of the table and the content of the slides.

Step 3: It is described to the students that the exercise is divided into three main sections. Here, the students are asked to answer section 1 on their own, wherein they enter their name, and identify the “one thing” that they value the most and want to achieve in their life (terminal values). Next, they are asked to describe how they plan to achieve it (instrumental values). Students can be provided a short document on examples of terminal and instrumental values to help with this section. If conducted in class, students are provided about ten minutes to complete this section.

Step 4: Students are briefed about section 2 in the table, which requires them to answer column one on their own. Students are provided twenty minutes to complete this section.

Step 5: The students are then asked to refer to Bhartṛhari’s Ethics and complete column three. They are provided with twenty minutes to complete this section.

Step 8: Students are next asked to compare the two columns, and list aspects of what actions or behaviors they will retain and what aspects of Bhartṛhari’s Ethics they will add to their way of doing those things to ensure it is ethical. They are given twenty minutes to complete this section.

Step 9: Finally, students are asked to review their terminal and instrumental values and see if after exploring their personal ethics, their desires (terminal values) and actions (instrumental values) have changed. If so, to state the revised ones, else restate the same. They are given ten minutes to complete this section.

Step 10: Once they have completed the exercise, students are asked to volunteer to share highlights of their exploration. (For instance, they can select one of the areas they felt was most relevant to them, what their actions were, what Bhartṛhari’s Ethics says it should be and what aspects they intend to change or retain; alternatively, students can share if their original terminal and instrumental values changed and how they changed). Instructors can vary what they choose to have the students share. Following student presentations, instructors can review the debriefing document (please refer appendix IV) that details what the benefits of being ethical are and how they can know they are becoming more ethical.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The paper presents a case exercise for instructors in the form of an in-class self-exploratory exercise. The exercise intends to help students explore how they are as a person, how they are with others and how they are in specific situations. The primary reason for this case exercise is the emphasis placed on business schools to provide the appropriate learning ground to support the development of personal values that can be translated into ethical workplace behaviors. The most helpful insight that students would have would be through the use of their personal terminal and instrumental desires as a foundation. Based on that foundation students learn to develop their personal ethical values in each area and following that exploration, they choose to revise the way they will achieve their terminal desires in the most ethical ways.

Providing students with exercises that enable them to increase their self-awareness can provide great value for life-long success, especially in ethics and values. Following earlier studies that approached personal values as cognitive filters (Črešnar, and Jevšenak, 2019), this study proposed a detailed methodology that will allow students to explore and develop their personal ethical values in an objective manner.

This in-class case exercise also aims to be a possible answer to McFarlane's (2004) question about the best way to help students recognize what bad behavior looks like and learn how to deal with its temptations. The exercise further keeps in mind the need to provide autonomy without any imposition of normative ethics but rather allows students to explore on their own and reach well-reasoned conclusions. It also provides the much-needed arena where one's ethical behaviors can be judged in a safe manner (Beggs, Dean, Gillespie and Weiner, 2006) and then developed into more effective ethical values.

Implications of the case exercise

The most significant implication of this exercise is in business ethics education in the form of an objective, self-exploratory tool to develop a detailed personal ethical value portfolio of behaviors. The exercise in its current form can be used either in class during class hours or given to students as a take-home exercise. It provides a way for Ethics educators to prepare their students for situations in their workplace that may test their ethical grounding. A significant contribution to business practitioners is the availability of a ready-made ethical measure which can be used to assess their new graduate hires. This exercise can also easily be used in workplace training programs to instill ethical values among employees.

Limitations of the case exercise

It requires a level of preparation that some students may not be willing to do. However, if instructors could dedicate an additional class or recorded videos explaining the concepts beforehand and highlight the value to the students, it would be more motivating for students.

In future research, in addition to the current proposed methodology, the exercise can be customized in several ways using multiple ethical perspectives and principles. As a case exercise it can be used in different empirical studies among a variety of audiences in addition to undergraduate and graduate students to measure self-awareness of ethical behaviors along with a reference manual of what ethical behaviors look like. This exercise thus can become extremely valuable as a tool for both students and management practitioners to improve

their ethical conduct which will be further reflected at their workplace in the form of organizational citizenship behaviors.

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DECLARATION OF CONFLICTING INTERESTS

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APPENDICES- Appendix I- Table 1: Copy of Exploration of Personal Ethics Table

| Exploration of Personal Ethics based on on Bhartphari's Ethics | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| Kindly follow the guidelines provided in the Documents about values and Bhartphari's Ethics to complete the below table | | | |
| Objective of Assignment: To explore how you are, as a person, with different people and in different instances in your life. Then, explore what Bhartphari's Ethics says about how you should be. Finally, reflect on the changes you would like to make as well as those aspects you would like to retain in each of the areas. | | | |
| SECTION 1 | | | |
| Your Name: | | | |
| The "one thing" that I value the most that I want to achieve in my life is: | | | |
| The way I plan to achieve what I value most is: | | | |
| SECTION 2 | | | |
| According to me, this is how I am (or how one should be) with myself, the following people, and in different circumstances: | | | |
| | Complete the following sentences in your own words in the adjacent column | In this column note what Bhartphari's Ethics says about how you should be | In this column, compare your way of doing things with that of Bhartphari's, and list what actions and behaviors you will continue to retain and what aspects of Bhartphari's Ethics you will add to your way of doing those things to ensure it is ethical by reflecting on what is important to you. |
| A. | How I am as a person | | |
| | When I speak, I make sure my speech includes the following 1 aspects: | | |
| | When I am angry, this is 2 what I do: | | |
| | When I feel arrogant, this is what I do: 3 | | |
| | When I feel like criticizing people this is 4 what do: | | |
| | To feel confident, this is what I do: 5 | | |
| B. | How I am with others | | |
| | How I am with others in 1 general | | |
| | How I am with relatives 2 | | |
| | How I am with friends 3 | | |
| | How I am with 4 assistants, help, workers | | |
| | How I am with wicked 5 people who use deceit | | |
| | How I am with noble 6 people | | |
| | How I am as a student 7 when I meet learned people | | |
| | How I am with enemies 8 | | |
| | How I am with elders 9 and teachers | | |
| C. | How I am in different situations | | |
| | How I am with finances 1 | | |
| | How I am in adversity 2 | | |
| | How I am in prosperity 3 | | |
| | How I am when someone visits my 4 home/place | | |
| | How I am when I do 5 charity and when others do charity | | |
| | How I am when someone harms me or is 6 mean to me | | |
| | How I am when I 7 become a leader | | |
| | How I am when I know I 8 am intelligent and have scholarship | | |
| | How I am when I 9 address large gatherings | | |
| SECTION 3 | | | |
| Finally, after reflecting on the various aspects above answer the below questions again and see if you revised your desires and the manner in which you want to achieve them. It is fine if you have not changed anything and in that case, just restate what you had originally written down. | | | |
| The "one thing" that I value the most that I want to achieve in my life is: | | | |
| The way I plan to achieve what I value most is: | | | |

Appendix II- Table 2-Document with Examples of Terminal and Instrumental Values

| Terminal Values (can be any desire or need you have that you value the most and want to achieve in this life) | Instrumental Values (How will you achieve it- it can be a combination of any of the following or similar methods based on your values) |
|---|--|
| Make Money | Always being honest |
| Be Happy | At any cost |
| Have a Great Career | Working hard (Diligence) |
| Learn Rocket Science | Perseverance |
| Become and Astronomer | Being ambitious |
| Go to Mars | Learning continuously |
| Join a Fortune 500 company | By respecting everyone |
| Have a happy family | Through kindness and sharing |
| Become famous | Researching, observing, learning |
| Learn about consciousness | By joining circles of learned people |
| Remove Poverty | Reading, reviewing, applying and using feedback |
| Become a good and ethical person | Never quitting |
| Be physically, mentally and emotionally fit | With the help of my family and friends |

Appendix III- Document Detailing Bhartrhari's Ethics

(usually provided in slide format for ease of use)

Exploration of Personal Ethics based on Bhartrhari's Ethics⁴

Defining Bhartrhari's Ethics: It is a combination of rituals (influenced by the place, time, and group you identify with) + values + attitudes towards others.

We are primarily going to learn about values and a little about attitudes as well.

Identifying these values is easy, For instance,

- What I consider to be unfavorable, or uncomfortable, is uncomfortable to others as well. So, I do not do those things.
- These become Universal values- such as:
 - Not to hurt
 - Not to lie
 - Not to cheat
 - Not to disrespect
- But, what about our personal values (individual values)?
- How do we believe we should be with ourselves (when we speak, when we get angry or sad or happy)?
- How do we believe we should be with others?
- How do we believe we should be in different circumstances?
- This exercise is thus a way for us to become aware of our own values related to the above three areas and then, based on Barhtrhari's Ethics, reflect on

⁴ Helpful insights were also adapted from S. Paramarthananda Saraswati's explanation of Barhtrhari's Ethics

what aspects we want to change and which we want to retain as we go forward to fulfill our most valued desires.

- **Benefits of completing the exercise.**
 - This is a good time to start becoming aware of how we treat ourselves and others and how ethical we are in different circumstances
 - This will help us change any habit that is not working
 - It will help us take the right steps to achieve our goals/desires

Sections to refer to while completing the exercise

Section I. How to be with myself? - According to Bhartṛhari's Ethics

1. How to speak? - Being Ethical begins with one's Speech

It must be refined speech. Why? Because one's attitude is expressed through their speech, which is seen in their tone, form, and decibel level. Hence, "Ethical Speech" takes the following four factors into consideration (here, all four are equally important). The speech must be:

Truthful

Not hurtful

Respectful, with compassion and kindness, keeping in mind the well-being of the other

Beneficial to the other person

Point to note: Many say they are brutally honest and think they are being truthful and ethical. But that is not true. **Keep in mind**, "whatever I speak should be in keeping with my feelings and thoughts (so yes, you should be honest) but speaking whatever is in my thoughts is not honesty, especially, if it is hurtful to others. So, blind, uncontrolled, and uncensored speech can become hurtful to others which comes under unethical behaviors. When you speak, try to keep in mind the four factors listed above. Truth can be conveyed at the right time and with proper padding without hurting a person.

2. How to be when you are angry?

- When you are angry you must learn to be patient and accommodating. It is the greatest armor of protection for you.
- You must thus understand that to be ethically angry, you must develop patience, then channel the anger so that it is expended fully, then spend time understanding and contemplating on why you were angry and resolve that issue.

Once again, as you develop this patience it will take place in two stages.

- First stage -manage anger that has already arisen. Second stage try not allowing anger to arise at all.
- Once anger has arisen, it must destroy something, but problem is if you express it, it will affect the victim of your anger. Often the verbal or physical punishment you hand out will be way more than required since your ability to discern will not function when you are angry. By expressing anger, you harm the other person. But if you swallow your anger it becomes suppressed anger which is harmful to you.
- **First method-** So you express anger in a proper way, at a proper time, and express in a place where no one is there. Use a punching bag, go for a walk/run, listen to good music, change the topic, tell the person, sorry I am feeling a little angry now, but I do not want to hurt anyone, so please excuse

me and walk away, or write it out and tear it up. Pray or express to a higher power, if you believe, else talk it out in a separate place. Use judicious expression of anger which involves retention of the ability to discern correctly.

- **Second method-** try to raise your ability to discern during that time, and begin appreciation of the other person, his/her/their situation, and the pressure on the other person that may have led them to act this way. Then you develop sympathy for the other person. Look at their behavior from their own background. This is known as raising the level of thinking. This is the method of neutralization of anger through discernment.
- **Third method** is forgiveness- but remember you forgive the person because you understand the pressure the person is facing to act that way, but it is not an approval of their action. Dealing with action is different, dealing with person is different. Accept and love and include person be his/her/their well-wisher and slowly at a later point, speak about good ethical practices. It is good to forgive so we can release the burden of hating the other person. A wrong action does not justify hatred.

3. How to be when you feel arrogant?

You have to destroy your arrogance and your superiority complex, but how?

You must first understand that arrogance exists because of some aspects like intelligence, past successes, looks, or what material objects we possess. For instance, we may have a house, a job, a car, and some similar possessions.

- First method- When there is such arrogance, you have to remember whatever u possess is only temporary. You are making use of it for some time. It does not define you.
- Second method - Whatever u possess, there will always be people who have got better things than you.
- Third- Neutralize your arrogance by humility- Do not talk about what you have, what you have done, or how great or intelligent or skillful you are all the time. With practice, it will become your inherent nature to not show off.

4. How to be a person who does not criticize? The talking tongue is unique to humans. Talk and mind influence each other. So, by correcting one, the other can be corrected. While criticizing, you are unilaterally judging the other person. When u make a conclusion about the other person, you are not giving that person an opportunity to defend himself. If mind is not refined, it will look for something to do, like laugh, imitate, or criticize, and that is a sign of an uncultured and unrefined person. You must understand that gossip and criticism are the worst and a sign of shallow, inferior, and mean thinking.

Try to understand what drives people to criticize as shown in the instance below:

- One who believes in religious discipline. He is a showy man. Will criticize those who do not do those things.
- A person who follows religious cleanliness. They are stubborn, fastidious, will criticize those who do not do this.
- If a courageous person who is ethical and he wants to take appropriate action, it is misinterpreted as cruelty. Where punishment is required it must be given.
- One who uses soft words people will interpret it as he is helpless, is dependent on me, and needs me.
- A silent or reserved person is seen as ignorant.

- A brilliant person with a magnetic personality who wants to help others through leadership, is seen again as arrogant and proud.
- A sociable, eloquent person is criticized for their talkativeness.
- A steady person is seen as incapable
- Which virtue of a noble person is not criticized by people? It appears everyone has a proof-reader mind.
- Tendency to criticize people in their absence, laughing, and imitating is also prevalent.

Why must one not criticize?

- Direct criticism in front of the person is very common. It is nothing but psychological poisoning of the psychology of the victim. It results in self-degradation and self-diffidence. A slow poisoning. If it continues for a long time, the person loses all confidence, whenever a high goal is presented, he will not take it up and says it is meant only for great people. **Continuous criticism will psychologically stunt a person.** Ask yourself, do you want to be a honeybee or a fly? That is, do you want to dwell on the goodness nectar of people like the honeybee or be like a fly dwelling on wounds and puss of people?

How to correct this trait?

- Critiquing must be used only very sparingly but neutralize with appropriate kind and supportive words of praise.
- First aim is reduction in criticism. Especially for minor things, there is no need if it will not be repeated. If it is only a different way of doing things, then no need for criticism, 75 % of criticism is misplaced. 25 % will only be a minor mistake. So, only if it is a very serious mistake then you need to reign in to control. However, even then instead of saying the action is wrong, say what is right, glorify the good works and lightly mention if something could be done another way. Always use a positive approach. Criticism may rarely be required.
- For self-respect to develop there must be an absence of inferiority complex. Complementing will result in confidence and growth.
- **Every single criticism, it must be preceded by, and followed by two compliments.**

5. How to be a confident person? (original is about following your free will)

- For many, failure is a confirmation of lack of free will. They withdraw as soon as the smallest obstacle comes. But the most successful people also have obstacles again and again, they also face failure after failure, their analysis is that their effort is not enough. They say I will take help of the Lord's Grace, or believe in higher powers, but I will never change the basic philosophy that the success in life is in my hands alone. Once they have started something, they will never give up. Lower level accomplishments are pleasant obstacles. One can be easily distracted by smaller achievements. So, one must remind oneself that they are working for a higher goal and not be distracted from that goal. Do not be satisfied with small accomplishments. Tell yourself, I have freedom to decide and choose what happens in my life. Do not move from your goal till it is accomplished. All this needs patience, perseverance, and will power. Successful people learn from any failure and chew on the failure, work for the next step. Therefore, being tough is necessary. Learn valuable lessons

and forget the event. Brooding over the past is an obstacle for the present but learning from your past, becomes a booster for the present. Men and Women of enthusiasm, dynamism, want to accomplish any goal. Obstacles are molehills when u remember the goal. Do not be carried away by comforts that come in between, because if you forget the goal, obstacles become huge mountains. Hold on to freewill, but if arrogance seeps in, remember how to overcome arrogance as indicated earlier. Presence of conflict indicates choice and choice indicates free will. Courageous people are those who plan and decide, and thereafter will not waver at all. Once you take the decision do not keep asking other persons for their opinions or suggestions. Take pros and cons with data available, pray and seek courage to face the consequences.

- For ordinary people end alone is important, but **for mature people end goal and means of achieving become extremely important.**
- Conflicts will always arise between being ethical or unethical and you only need to always choose the ethical way. Never have a rigid dos and don'ts system as things keep changing. Consult how a mature person acts. And ultimately come back to the universal common-sense norm, do not do unto others what you do not want others to do to you. Take one decision, then do not look back. Do not worry about what others say, whether they praise or criticize, and know that advice is cheap, and everyone will comment. Just ignore. Give sufficient thought, plunge into action, and let wealth come or go. The, righteous will not change and will not stray from the ethical path. Accept all as contributory factors but primary factor is your free will, with God's Grace (if you believe), else the support of your own good deeds from the past. Choose only those examples where efforts have worked. Show up and keep coming again and again. Constantly analyze the nature and life of achievers. They are not depressed when failures come, they will say this will also pass. Even when tormented by negative destiny, they do not give up. During tough times they will lie low waiting for the opportunity to come up again. Down but not out is their attitude. In prosperity and austerity great people have the same attitude and mentality. One of equanimity. Be slow in taking decisions, let it not be impulsive and do not hold on to an impulsive decision. Greater the decision, give it more time. There is no such thing, like a perfect decision. Infinite factors impact a situation and one can never be sure how many factors are favorable or not in any given situation. Your undertaking may be a major or minor one. You have to study its short term and long-term consequences, conduct painstaking research, collect data and engage with scholars and intelligent people. One who can take responsibility for his/ her decision and can discriminate correctly will be a confident person. Always maintain integrity and wisdom. Never make promises. If you wind up making wrong decisions do not go on regretting, let it go, learn from it and move on. Don't be fatalistic, do not study examples of fatalism, take responsibility of your future, Tell yourself the grace of good deeds are with me and I am courageous and therefore with the blessing of goodness, I will succeed in all my undertakings. Be courageous! Steady victory and success are assured where both Action and Ethics are present (Quote from the thousand names of the pure consciousness)

Section II. How I am with others- According to Bhartṛhari's Ethics

How to be with different people in your life?

- **How to be with womenfolk or menfolk in general-** Show alertness in the capacity to transact with them without a weakness and attachment to them else you will be enslaved, and there will be a loss of discrimination. Please note, this does not mean you should hate or disrespect or look down on another person. You only have to understand that it is an art to have the capacity to effortlessly change the manner of dealing with different people and therefore building this capacity (without manipulating others) shows a strong, ethical person. Such people know the right way of interacting with people, which is the most important characteristic to build.
 - **How to be with relatives?** (other than your immediate family)- cannot treat as third person show a little more consideration, be a little bit charitable to family members. Even though you are not bound by law based on your capacity, try to be helpful.
 - **How to be with friends?** - Love and affection must be expressed appropriately else it will end the friendship. Similarly, regular habit of staying in touch must be there, else the relationship will go away. A true friend is one who pulls the other out of doing bad actions and puts them on the track of being ethical as well as keeps the friend's innermost secrets and feelings to themselves. Never renounces, leaves, or deserts the other when they are in danger.
 - **How to be with assistants, help, workers?** - Kindness towards assistants, help and workers must be shown for all those under our care. Do not treat them in a totally indifferent manner
 - **How to be with wicked people who use deceit?** - We must be able to get out of their influence and from around them. So, you can be a little crafty but only as defense and not offence. This is mostly for soldiers not for lay civilians (although, occasionally, if the situation permits, without harming the other person you can get away from them).
 - **How to be with noble people?** - Have liking, love and regard for them. Seek their companionship, seek their association. (So set up groups, where you can get together and discuss good ideas, thoughts, and work constructively to help one another and the society)
 - **How to be a student when you meet learned people?** - Straightforwardness is the key. Show your sincerity in wanting to learn when you meet learned people. Show humility and effort in gaining knowledge. Knowledge will never come through casual effort. Knowledge requires effort, repetition, listening sincerely, reflecting on it comparing what is said before, and later and then clearing contradictions and doubts. It must be a studious effort. Initiative must come from you to acquire knowledge. Ask what efforts you are putting in.
 - **How to be with enemies?** Always show courage when dealing with enemies.
 - **How to be with elders and teachers?** – Show a lot of patience as they share their life experiences and knowledge with you. Ask questions and bask in their wisdom.
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- **How to be a teacher?** – Must have both knowledge and communication skills. Teach those students who are eager to learn and not just casual students. Teach students who have developed faith (upon verification- not blind faith) in the process of acquiring knowledge and respect learning and knowledge.
- **How to be with the government?** - Always follow the law, do not be deceitful.
- **How to be with children?** - Too much pampering will lead to downfall and destruction of a child. So, less pampering and firm rules of how to be must be provided to them so that they develop a good set of values.

Section III. How I am in different situations- According to Bhartṛhari's Ethics **How to be, to ensure good financial condition?**

Money is of great regard as it is very useful for different transactions in life. Understand that money determines how difficult, or easy your tasks can be. It is only the economic condition that determines the task's difficulty or lightness.

- Proper budgeting and management of wealth is essential.
- Careless expenditures must be curbed.
- Careful spending for the right causes, starting from charity onwards will result in proper spending habits, which in turn will help multiply your finances.
- Develop good habits and good associations which will not let you waste money.
- Refrain from consumption of intoxicants, as it can deplete one's sense of modesty, decency, decorum and drive away one's sense of shame and self-respect. Which in turn makes it hard to engage in ethical way of managing one's finances.
- For all of mankind (especially after times like what we are facing today), agricultural farming must be supervised properly and regularly to keep the economy and world moving, else all of farming will be destroyed.

How to be, in different situations?

- **When in adversity-** Courage is needed. Read (listen to, or watch) stories of heroes and the morals they applied to develop their character, faith and courage. Be prepared, then nothing comes as a shock. Let the mind be strong enough, so keep working on building a strong mind. The heart must be strong to withstand problems, so develop emotional maturity.
- If you choose to **address in an assembly**, better to have mastery over speech, language, and communication.
- **When one has prosperity** one should have patience, tolerance, forbearance, and accommodation for others. You should be kind and tolerant and accommodating. A rich person should be kind to the poor. In prosperity, ensure you have freedom from arrogance. never have vanity. Be humble. When someone asks how to be that way so they too can be prosperous or successful- don't talk about how you became so good or prosperous. Talk about others and their stories. Never include yourself as an example. Never put another person down. Do not create an unfavorable opinion about anyone.
- Immediately attend to a person **when he/she visits your home**.
- **Do nobilities, and service to humanity**, silently. without trumpeting your own glory. But **when someone else does service** to you or others, you must tell everyone.

- Scholarship (and knowing you are intelligent) of all disciplines must be accompanied by humility.
- Power, position, control, when you are a leader, it must be accompanied by patience and accommodation.
- In a situation when someone **harms you**, forget the hundreds of harms and remember only the good the other person has done. (refer to the next slide on how to be **with people who are mean to you**)

How to be with people who are mean to you?

- Your first weapon is silence. Do not respond to bad, cheap comments, instead inwardly be happy that you have given happiness to the critics- ☺
- There are generally four kinds of people in this world:
 1. Those who always do things that are beneficial for others
 2. Those who on their way will help and do good for all only if it is not detrimental to their own goals.
 3. Those who destroy the needs of others to get their own benefit.
 4. Those who destroy the interests of others without any benefit for even themselves.
 5. When you come across the latter three, avoid calling such people wicked or evil. Just say there are various levels of growth, some are currently less evolved, and some people are less mature. With time and support they will also evolve.
- To develop sensitivity, some of the suggestions are to learn to appreciate art, music and literature. The head and heart must be equally developed. Some entertainment is also necessary as an outlet. It is a natural requirement. Helps rest the mind. These provide ideal scope for healthy entertainment and relaxation. Tired minds will seek cheaper, basal level of outputs so learn to make your mind sensitive and calm. If a human is only rational and intellectual, he is as good as an animal. Therefore, fertilization of the mind through values and attitudes will enable it to be ready to support the seeds of knowledge, that you will plant. So first we cultivate the mind and then sow the seeds of knowledge.

Additional points to reflect upon: How to be when you already have some virtues?

- Virtues that are in pairs which are mutually complementary pairs of virtues are therefore given below. This is because, sometimes we have a few virtues, but we wind up becoming too self-righteous and proud of being a good person. Hence, to counter pride, the below primary virtues are paired with other virtues.
 1. Prosperity (we have seen this before, so use it as reinforcement)- Paired with simplicity, kindheartedness, and the capacity to mingle with all levels of people, i.e. ensuring you are accessible to everyone.
 2. Bravery is paired with restraint in speech or silence.
 - 3. Wisdom (Self-knowledge) must be accompanied by quietude. That is, a sense of withdrawal born out of fulfillment.
 - 4. Scholarship (and knowing you are intelligent) of all disciplines must be accompanied by humility.
 - 5. Richness must be accompanied by “Giving” (measured, thoughtful giving) to deserving persons. That is charity to good causes.
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- 6. Any austerities or vows that you practice must be accompanied by control of anger i.e. general external discipline, must be with paired with internal discipline. For instance, If you practice meditation, it has to be accompanied by a kind and peaceful mind. If you pray, you must also be devoid of anger.
- 7. Power, position, control, when you are a leader, it must be accompanied by patience and accommodation.
- 8. Noble deeds must be accompanied by the absence of advertisement, absence of proclamation, pomp, and show. All noble deeds should be done silently. Publicize others' good deeds.

Appendix IV- Content Provided for Debriefing

Following your exercise, it is helpful to understand two key áreas:

I. Benefits of Being Ethical

- Ethics helps you become a refined, cultured, and mature person.
- What you find unfavorable to you, do not do to others is basic common sense that you begin to apply in your day to day life.
- Values make life harmonious and healthy.
 - Like how we have the laws of nature (Physics, Biology, Chemistry, and so on) so you have the laws of Ethics, which when followed provide the right results. Similarly, practicing ethical laws helps you follow the order that leads to a harmonious life.
 - Only by practicing the laws of Ethics can an individual enjoy external harmony and internal peace

II. How to know you are becoming more and more ethical?

- Physical action is an expression of inner values. Hence, we develop better practices by engaging in ethical actions.
- Practice every day. Begin with these five actions to the best of your ability- 1) Allot time for your parents and thank them for all that they do. 2) Study topics related to self-knowledge, ethics, self-growth, understanding what consciousness is, and understanding yourself. 3) Allot time or money or energy for service to fellow humans, 4) Allot time, or money or energy to care for nature (from keeping your environment clean, feeding animals, watering plants, supporting environmental causes, and 5) Have a good positive routine that gives you peace- for instance, some people will pray, some will meditate, some people will spend a few minutes thanking everyone they know, thanking the universe, a moment to reflect and seeking to be a positive person, anything that helps you stay positive.
- Try to cut down on desires
- Try to develop forbearance and cheerfully accept both pleasure and sorrow, growth and failure, and honor and dishonor. You have to slowly but surely toughen your body and mind without judging yourself and giving yourself the freedom to fail and then get up again and restart.

Developing a practice of ethical values:

Understand that your ears do not really become attractive due to earrings. The real ornament is, listening to noble things, helping the mind become more refined and charming.

Hands do not shine due to bangles. The true ornament of your hand is giving charity or gifts, which adds charm to your inner personality.

The Body is not attractive by smearing perfumes. Its true ornament is dedicating yourself to helping others, soaked in compassion.

In a similar manner, use your body, mind, and senses for noble acts and with practice it will become your inherent nature.

Most critical points to remember-

-Great minds talk of ideas and ideals. -Average minds discuss events but not their morals. and -Mean minds discuss people. The worst--A gossiping mind will never grow

Your worst enemy is Laziness, and Your best friend is Hard work

Sharp intellect is not enough, a good heart is necessary
