



Academic Integrity and Student Ethical Development: Selected Readings

1. From Derek Bok, *Ethics, the University, and Society* (May-June 1998 Harvard Magazine, p. 39-50, 43-44):

The current controversy over the teaching of ethics echoes a debate going back at least to ancient Greece. In fifth century Athens, two schools of thought emerged on how to carry out the critical task of teaching ethics and civic responsibility. The traditional view relied on exhorting the young to do the proper thing and punishing them when they failed. The newer way, urged by Socrates, sought to teach people to know the good by provoking them to think about fundamental moral aims and dilemmas . . . Yet Socrates sometimes talked as if knowledge alone would suffice to insure virtuous action. He did not stress the value of early habituation, positive example, and obedience to rules in giving students the desire and self-discipline to live up to their beliefs and to respect the basic norms of behavior essential to civilized communities. . . It fell to Aristotle to see the wisdom of combining both traditions to help young people acquire not merely an ability to think clearly about ethical problems but the desire and will to put their conclusions into practice.

In the contemporary university, as ancient Greece, the key question is how to combine education in moral reasoning with a broader effort to teach by habit, example, and exhortation. The ability to reason is essential to make our way through all the confusing dilemmas and conflicting arguments that abound in an era when society's consensus on issues of value has disintegrated under the weight of cultural diversity, self-serving rationalization, technological change, and other complexities of modern life. But moral reasoning alone may not be enough to cause us to behave morally. How, then, can a university go further and help students to develop the desire and the will to adhere to moral precepts without resorting to forms of indoctrination inimical to the academy?"

2. From Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* Martin Ostwald, trans. (Macmillan, New York), pp. 34-35, 1962:

For the things which we have to learn before we can do them, we learn by doing: men become builders by building houses, and harpists by playing the harp. Similarly, we become just by the practice of just actions, self-controlled by exercising self-control, and courageous by performing acts of courage . . . [W]e must see to it that our activities are of a certain kind . . . Hence it is no small matter whether one habit or another is inculcated in us from early



Academic Integrity Seminar

A Student Development Resource

childhood; on the contrary, it makes a considerable difference, or rather, all the difference.

3. In *The Descent of Man* (Norton Critical Edition, 1979, pp. 200-201) Charles Darwin wrote:

The development of moral qualities [in man] is a[n] . . . interesting problem. The foundation lies in the social instincts, including under this term family ties. These instincts are highly complex, and in the case of the lower animals give special tendencies towards certain definite actions; but the most important elements are love, and the distinct emotion of sympathy . . .

A moral being is one who is capable of reflecting on his past actions and their motives--of approving some and disapproving of others; and the fact that man is the one being who certainly deserves this designation, is the greatest of all distinctions between him and the lower animals. . . Owing to this condition of mind, man cannot avoid looking both backwards and forwards, and comparing past impressions. Hence, after some temporary desire or passion has mastered his social instincts, he reflects and compares the now weakened expression of such past impulses with the ever-present social instincts; and he then feels that sense of dissatisfaction which all unsatisfied instincts leave behind them, he therefore resolves to act differently for the future,--and this is conscience. . .

The appreciation and the bestowal of praise and blame both rest on sympathy; and this emotion, as we have seen, is one of the most important elements of the social instincts. Sympathy, though gained as an instinct, is also much strengthened by exercise or habit . . .

The moral nature of man has reached its present standard, partly through the advancement of his reasoning powers and consequently of a just public opinion, but especially from his sympathies having been rendered more tender and widely diffused through the effects of habit, example, instruction, and reflection."

4. Edward O. Wilson (University Research Professor at Harvard University) wrote in *Consilience*, (Knopf, 1998, pp. 297-8) that:

We are learning the fundamental principle that ethics is everything. Human social existence . . . is based on the genetic propensity to form long-term contracts that evolve by culture and moral precepts and law. The rules of contract formation were not given to humanity from above, nor did they emerge randomly from the mechanics of the brain. They evolved over tens or hundreds of millennia because they conferred upon the genes prescribing them



Academic Integrity Seminar

A Student Development Resource

survival . . . We are not errant children who occasionally sin by disobeying instructions from outside our species. We are adults who have discovered which covenants are necessary for survival, and we have accepted the necessity of securing them by sacred oath

5. While educators are busy designing pertinent programs or classroom presentations, they may forget that the greatest impact they can have is in the realm of the personal, as friends and mentors to students. This was a point made in one of Thomas Jefferson's reminiscences about his youth, cited in Fawn Brodie's 1975 book: *Thomas Jefferson: An Intimate History* (Bantam), p. 27:

When I recollect that at 14 years of age the whole care and direction of myself was thrown on myself entirely, without a relative or friend qualified to advise or guide me, and recollect the various sorts of bad company with which I was associated from time to time, I am astonished I did not turn off with some of them, and become as worthless to society as they were. I had the good fortune to become acquainted very early with some characters of very high standing, and to feel the incessant wish that I could even become what they were. Under temptations and difficulties I could ask myself what would Dr. Small, Mr. Wythe, Peyton Randolph do in this situation? What course in it will assure me their approbation? I am certain that *this mode of deciding on my conduct tended more to its correctness than any reasoning power I possessed . . .* [emphasis supplied].

6. From an interview with Elizabeth Kiss, Director of the Kenan Institute for Ethics at Duke University: <http://www.jpo.umd.edu/ethical/elizkiss.html>

Pavela: How do we raise the subject of ethics without seeming hopelessly "preachy" or self-righteous? Would it be better to talk about ethics as a process in character-building--a process that will have many failures? Might we suggest that it is not the failures we should lament the most--but the failure to learn from them?

Kiss: I was talking recently about this issue with Robert Coles, author of *The Moral Intelligence of Children*. He suggested that the confessional was an important form of moral education with college students -- that teachers needed to be willing to share their own struggles and failures with students, to present themselves not as moral authorities but as fellow strugglers. I realize that many faculty will not feel comfortable taking this role. But it seems to me to be one important way in which we can bring moral education alive. Students also, in my experience, respond very positively to faculty who have strong moral beliefs so long as -- and this is an important proviso -- they treat those who disagree with them with respect.



Academic Integrity Seminar

A Student Development Resource

7. From a May 8, 1997 talk "The Virtues of a Liberal Arts Undergraduate Education at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill" by Ruel W. Tyson, Jr., Director, Institute for the Arts and Humanities, Professor of Religious Studies, UNC-CH:

We reduce the social duties of life to only one of its important roles, namely work. We have made knowledge entirely subservient to employment. We have confined happiness to job related success and the life styles resulting from such success.

Now hear three voices which run counter to these views:

Aristotle: Not to live, but to live well is our end.

The next one echoes a familiar saying: Man cannot live by bread alone.

And someone whispers under his breath: but you cannot live without bread.

Both are right, both views say getting bread is one of the social duties of life, but getting bread is not all there is to living well.

Now fast forward eighteen hundred years or so and hear Montaigne:

Have you been able to think out and manage your life? You have done the greatest task of all. . . To compose our character is our duty, not to compose books, and to win, not battles, and provinces, but order and tranquility in our conduct. Our great and glorious masterpiece is to live appropriately.

<http://www.unc.edu/curriculumrevision/documents/tyson.htm>

See also Tom Wolfe's novel *A Man in Full* (Farrar, 1998). Speaking through his hero (who is addressing "Charlie Croker," a fictional real estate developer on the verge of financial ruin) Wolfe writes:

I'm not the final word on this Mr. Croker but what [the Stoic philosopher Epictetus is saying is] that the only real possession you'll ever have is your character and your 'scheme of life,' he calls it. Zeus has given every person a spark from his own divinity, and no one can take that away from you, not even Zeus, and from that spark comes your character. Everything else is temporary and worthless in the long run, your body included (p. 683).



Academic Integrity Seminar

A Student Development Resource

8. Charles Peirce in "Discovering the American Aristotle" by Edward T. Oakes 1997 *First Things* 38 (December 1993): 24-33:

If I had a son, I should instill into him this view of morality (that is that Ethics is the science of the method of bringing Self-Control to bear to gain satisfaction) and force him to see that there is but one thing that raises one individual above another—Self-Mastery; and [I] should teach him that the Will is Free only in the sense that, by employing the proper appliances, he can make himself behave in the way he really desires to behave. As to what one ought to desire, it is, I should show him, what he will desire if he sufficiently considers it, and that will be to make his life beautiful, admirable. Now the science of the Admirable is true Esthetics.

9. The March-April 2001 issue of *Harvard Magazine* reported on the latest installment of George E. Vaillant's six decade longitudinal study of the lives of 268 Harvard men ("The Talent for Aging Well," by Craig Lambert). Lambert stated that: "[t]hough trained as a psychoanalyst, Vaillant bluntly declares that 'Freud vastly overestimated the importance of childhood.' Indeed, the personality is not fully formed by age 5, nor even by 45." According to Lambert, Vaillant found that the men who had been most successful "in their human relationships, physical health, and psychological maturation" seemed to subscribe to the following "rule of thumb": "Don't try to think less of yourself, but try to think of yourself less."

10. The elder in Fyodor Dostoyevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov* (Penguin Classics, p. 46):

The main thing is that you stop telling lies to yourself. The one who lies to himself and believes his own lies comes to a point where he can distinguish no truth either within himself or around him, and thus enters into a state of disrespect towards himself and others. Respecting no one, he loves no one, and to amuse and divert himself in the absence of love, he gives himself up to his passions and to vulgar delights and becomes a complete animal in his vices, and all of it from perpetual lying to other people and to himself.

11. From the New York Times obituary for Sir Bernard Williams, professor of philosophy at Oxford University (published June 14, 2003, p. A28 "Sir Bernard Williams, 73, Oxford Philosopher, Dies):

Sir Bernard tried to show in his book (*Truth and Truthfulness*, 2002) that in any human society truth would be valued, and the twin virtues of truth, sincerity, and accuracy hold dear. As he said in a *San Francisco Chronicle* interview last year when asked about the philosophical value of psychoanalysis, there was a level of self-deception more subconscious than unconscious that can be dealt with by the virtues of accuracy and sincerity.



Academic Integrity Seminar

A Student Development Resource

12. From an essay by professor Michael Bishop at Florida State University (revised and published in the Spring 1993 issue of *Synthesis: Law and Policy in Higher Education*):

An education is much more than just learning facts. And it's more than mastering the ability to solve problems, to understand complicated issues, to detect bullshit (sophistry), and to articulate your views. A quality education requires a commitment to an ever deeper understanding of self and of one's place in the social and natural world; and when successful, it leads to a critical examination of the assumptions that guide one's life.

13. From a student interviewed about high school cheating by CNN:

What's important is getting ahead . . . The better grades you have, the better school you get into, the better you're going to do in life. And if you learn to cut corners to do that, you're going to be saving yourself time and energy. In the real world, that's what's going to be going on. The better you do, that's what shows. It's not how moral you were in getting there.

14. On August 26, 2002 the *Wall Street Journal* published a front page story titled "How Enron Bosses Created a Culture of Pushing Limits." The lead paragraph focused on Chief Financial Officer Andrew Fastow:

When Enron Corp. was riding high . . . Andrew Fastow had a Lucite cube on his desk supposedly laying out the company's values. One of those was communication, and the cube's inscription explained what that meant: 'When Enron says it's going to rip your face off,' it said, it will 'rip your face off.'

15. The Columbine Commission described Harris and Klebold as "above average, if not gifted, students." Is it possible they had thought about a philosophical perspective that could be used to justify and channel their feelings? The answer is yes, and it can be found in footnote 51 of the Commission report:

They noted that they had evolved above 'you humans.' The two seemed fascinated with the notion of natural selection: 'whatever happened to natural selection?'"Klebold asked on the tapes as he spoke of his hatred of the human race. On his web page Harris called natural selection ' . . . the best thing that has ever happened to the Earth. Getting rid of all the stupid and weak organisms. . . .' Harris also inscribed in a female friend's 1998 yearbook that 'natural selection needs a boost, like me with a shotgun.' At the time of his death, Harris was wearing a T-shirt with the words "Natural Selection" printed across the front.'

Every aspect of Klebold's and Harris' last day seems to have been carefully choreographed. They had



Academic Integrity Seminar

A Student Development Resource

many messages to send, at many levels. What's remarkable is how little attention has been paid to the words "Natural Selection" displayed across Harris' chest.

16. From Edward Rothstein "A Farewell to Visiting Relics of Genius" (Leonardo da Vinci exhibition at the Met) in the March 3, 2003 *New York Times*. p. A19.

"[da Vinci's] idealism remains unflinchingly intact even when faced with brutality . . ."

But in contemporary life:

"Instead of hearing harmony underlying horror we hear horror hidden by harmony; instead of seeing beauty latent in the grotesque we see the grotesque protruding through beauty."

17. Even successful predators inevitably become prey, because always there will be someone stronger, or smarter, or just younger and more ruthless. Even for those individuals who seem to thrive in the social Darwinist world, the end result of life isn't pretty, as described by Michael Maccoby in his book *The Gamesman* (Bantam Books: N.Y., 1978, p. 111):

An old and tiring gamesman is a pathetic figure, especially after he has lost a few contests, and with them, his confidence. Once his youth, vigor, and even the thrill of winning are lost, he becomes depressed and goalless, questioning the purpose of his life. No longer energized by the . . . struggle and unable to dedicate himself to something he believes in beyond himself . . . he finds himself starkly alone. His attitude has kept him from deep friendship and intimacy. Nor has he sufficiently developed abilities that would strengthen the self, so that he might gain satisfaction from understanding (science) or creating (invention, art).

18. Darwin never subscribed to the harsher forms of "social Darwinism." See his letter to a colleague at Harvard University, cited by the late Stephen J. Gould in his 1999 book *Rock of Ages: Science and Religion in the Fullness of Life*, (Ballantine), pp. 35-35.

I own that I cannot see as plainly as others do, and as I should wish to do, evidence of design and beneficence on all sides of us. There seems to me too much misery in the world. . . On the other hand, I cannot somehow be contented to view this wonderful universe and especially the nature of man, and to conclude that everything is the result of brute force . . . I feel most deeply that the whole subject is too profound for the human intellect. A dog might as well speculate on the mind of Newton.

19. Aristotle on the proper function of man. See *Nicomachean Ethics* (Macmillan, 1962, Ostwald, trans.), p. 17:



Academic Integrity Seminar

A Student Development Resource

[T]he function of the harpist is to play the harp; the function of the harpist who has high standards is to play it well. On these assumptions, if we take the proper function of man to be a certain kind of life, and if this kind of life is an activity of the soul and consists in actions performed in conjunction with the rational element, and if a man of high standards is he who performs these actions well and properly, and if a function is well performed when it is performed in accordance with the excellence accorded to it ; we reach the conclusion that the good man is an activity of the soul in conformity with excellence or virtue, and if there are several virtues, in conformity with the best and most complete.

20. Alan Greenspan in his February 27, 2002 "semi-annual monetary policy report to Congress" said:

As the recent events surrounding Enron have highlighted, a firm is inherently fragile if its value added emanates more from conceptual as distinct from physical assets. A physical asset, whether an office building or an automotive assembly plant, has the capability of producing goods even if the reputation of the managers of such facilities falls under a cloud. The rapidity of Enron's decline is an effective illustration of the vulnerability of a firm whose market value largely rests on capitalized reputation. The physical assets of such a firm comprise a small proportion of its asset base. Trust and reputation can vanish overnight. A factory cannot.

21. Effective organizations and successful economies depend upon trust. Francis Fukuyama explored that connection in his book *Trust: The Social Virtues and the Creation of Prosperity* (Free Press. 1995, pp. 27-28).

Trust is the expectation that arises within a community of regular, honest, and cooperative behavior, based on commonly shared norms, on the part of other members of that community . . . [P]eople who do not trust one another will end up cooperating only under a system of formal rules and regulations, which have to be negotiated, agreed to, litigated, and enforced, sometimes by coercive means. This legal apparatus, serving as a substitute for trust, entails what economists call "transaction costs." Widespread distrust on a society, in other words, imposes a kind of tax on all forms of economic activity, a tax that high-trust societies do not have to pay.

22. Sometimes, when students are in a classroom, they should be invited to glance at the ceiling. Chances are they'll see tiles, masking a structure of heavy beams--balanced directly above their heads. It might be pointed out that at that moment their lives are dependent upon the honesty and integrity of the architects who designed the building, and the engineers and workers who built it. Many comparable examples will come to mind, related to the nature and quality of the food we eat; the water we drink; the machines we



Academic Integrity Seminar

A Student Development Resource

use; and the professionals (like doctors, dentists, nurses, and lawyers) we employ.

A simple exercise involving looking at the ceiling (and thinking about what's above it) highlights the fact that ethics and truth-telling are not esoteric topics. We swim in a sea of ethical obligation, but--like fish in water--we sometimes fail to understand the medium that gives us life.

23. Sissela Bok emphasized the social importance of truth-telling in her book *Lying* and in an August 23, 1998 *Washington Post* article ("Lies: They Come With Consequences", p. C1). Bok isn't a moral absolutist. She understands that lying may be necessary in extreme situations--usually if survival is at stake, and silence impossible. Her point is that the justifications for lying are often weak and self-interested. Those justifications also contribute to a contagion of lying that can undermine social trust. In her *Post* article, Bok wrote that:

Lies invite imitation, preventive duplicity, and retaliation after the fact. As they spread, trust is damaged . . . [W]hen distrust becomes too overpowering within a family, a community, or a nation, it becomes impossible to meet joint needs. Increasingly, social scientists are viewing such trust as a fragile good, necessary to human cooperation and effective government, yet as vulnerable as our natural environment to being cumulatively polluted. Liars function as free riders in this social setting, relying on a modicum of trust to dissemble, even as their actions wear it down.

24. Broader social issues aside, falling into the habit of lying is dangerous for students preparing for careers in a changing economy. Management philosopher Charles Handy, writing in the October 31, 1994 issue of *Fortune* ("Charles Handy Sees The Future," p. 106) stated that:

Organizations today have to be based on trust. How many people can you know well enough to trust? Probably 50 people at most. So, increasingly, organizations will be made up of groups of 50 that will bond together for different projects and needs.

25. The importance of mental discipline. Walter Lippman, *A Preface to Morals*, Macmillan 1929, p. 156:

[I]n all the great moral philosophies...it is taught that one of the conditions of happiness is to renounce some of the satisfactions which men normally crave...With minor variations it is a common theme in the teaching of an Athenian aristocrat like Plato, and Indian nobleman like Buddha, and a humble Jew like Spinoza.

26. Socrates' summary in *Gorgias*, (Plato's *Gorgias*. Penguin Classics , New York: 1982, pp. 117-118).



Academic Integrity Seminar

A Student Development Resource

This seems to me the goal that one should have in view throughout one's life: we can win happiness only by bending our own efforts and those of the state to the realization of uprightness and self-discipline, not allowing our appetites to go unchecked, and, in an attempt to satisfy their endless importunity, leading the life of a brigand. The man who adopts the latter course will win the love neither of God nor of his fellow men; he is incapable of social life, and without social life there can be no love. We are told on good authority Callicles, that heaven and earth and their respective inhabitants are held together by the bonds of society and love and order and discipline and righteousness, and this is why the universe is called an ordered whole or cosmos and not a state of disorder or license. You, I think, for all your cleverness, have failed to grasp the truth; you have not observed how great a part geometric equality plays in heaven and earth, and because you neglect the study of geometry you preach the doctrine of unfair shares.

27. The importance of "flow" by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (*Flow*, Harper, 1990). Csikszentmihalyi, a professor of psychology at the University of Chicago, wrote that:

One of our respondents, a well-known West Coast rock climber, explains concisely the tie between the avocation that gives him a profound sense of flow and the rest of his life. "It's exhilarating to come closer and closer to self-discipline. You make your body go and everything hurts, then you look back in awe at the self, and what you've done, it just blows your mind. It leads to ecstasy, to self-fulfillment. If you win these battles often enough, that battle against yourself, at least for a moment, it becomes easier to win the battles in the world."

The "battle" is not really against the self, but against the entropy that brings disorder to consciousness. It is really a battle for the self; it is a struggle for control over attention . . . [A]nyone who has experienced flow knows the deep enjoyment it provides requires an equal degree of disciplined concentration (pp. 40-41).

28. "Old bureaucrat" from Antoine De Saint Exupery, *Wind, Sand, and Stars* p. 12 (Cornwall Press, Cornwall, N.Y. 1942).

Old bureaucrat, my comrade, it is not you who are to blame. No one ever helped you to escape. You like a termite, built your peace by blocking up with cement every chink and cranny through which the light might pierce. You rolled yourself up into a ball in your genteel security, in routine, in the stifling conventions of provincial life, raising a modest rampart against the winds and the tides and the stars. You have chosen not to be perturbed by great problems,



Academic Integrity Seminar

A Student Development Resource

having trouble enough to forget your own fate as man. You are not a dweller upon an errant planet and do not ask yourself questions to which there are no answers. You are a petty bourgeois of Toulouse. Nobody grasped you by the shoulder while there was still time. Now the clay of which you were shaped has dried and hardened, and naught in you will ever awaken the sleeping musician, the poet, the astronomer that possibly inhabited you in the beginning.

29. The role of the "observer self."

I believe the will is the Cinderella of modern psychology, It has been relegated to the kitchen. The Victorian notion that will power could overcome all obstacles was destroyed by Freud's discovery of unconscious motivation. But, unfortunately, this led modern psychology into a deterministic view of man as a bundle of competing forces with no centre. This is contrary to every human being's direct experience of himself. At some point, perhaps in a crisis when danger threatens, an awakening occurs in which the individual discovers his will. . . With the certainty that one has a will comes the realization of the intimate connection between the will and the self . . . It is self-consciousness that sets man apart from animals. *Human beings are aware but also know that they are aware.*" [emphasis added]

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I have emotions, but I am not my emotions.

(December 1974 interview by Sam Keen with Roberto Assagioli M.D. See:

<http://two.not2.org/psychosynthesis/articles/GoldenMean.pdf>