

STEPS IN MORAL DEVELOPMENT

from Lawrence Kohlberg

Kohlberg postulates six stages of moral development in children. They are:

1. **PUNISHMENT AND OBEDIENCE ORIENTATION** Authority and overt use of power define right/wrong, good/bad, moral/immoral. Response is to avoid punishment and to be obedient to authority, generally without much or real questioning.

REACTIVE do-as-told one-way

2. **INSTRUMENTAL RELATIVIST ORIENTATION** Right action is seen as that which meets the individuals own needs usually with a fairness and reciprocal view. "You hurt me so it is FAIR that I will hurt you." "I want your toy so I will give you one of mine."

CONCRETE tit-for-tat apples for apples

3. **INTERPERSONAL CONCORDANCE ORIENTATION (GOOD BOY - NICE GIRL)** As the idea of reciprocity and fairness grow, the individual thinks more in terms of acquiring "points" in exchange for favor. "I will be good so that you will take me to the zoo on Saturday."

ABSTRACT tit-for-tat oranges for apples

The first three states are all "I-THOU" -- strictly interpersonal in context. The concepts of society and social order have not yet appeared. As the person becomes aware of society as an "entity", he begins to make moral decisions with society in the equation along with "I" and "THOU".

4. **LAW AND ORDER ORIENTATION** At this stage the orientation begins to include the MAINTENANCE of social order by law. "Laws exist to protect society and we should do our duty to obey the law to preserve established order."

CONCRETE Obey the social law - don't question

5. **UTILITARIAN SOCIAL CONTRACT ORIENTATION** Here, moral action is based upon the PRINCIPLES of the social order. Social Justice is defined by a set of principles which have evolved through history and which have been tacitly agreed upon by the whole society. "Laws were made for the benefit of all men. Where laws no longer fit our needs we may change them, but we should work within the system for change."

ABSTRACT Obey the social law - question and change - within the system

6. **UNIVERSAL ETHICAL PRINCIPAL ORIENTATION** Moral Justice is now seen by the individual as an obligation to his conscience based upon self-chosen ethical principles which are logical, universal, and consistent. These principles are based on a respect for the dignity of human beings as individual persons -- as ends in themselves, rather than as means to ends.

ABSTRACT Blend of Individual/Social Universal Truths



**OPINIONS AND FEELINGS ARE FREQUENTLY A PERSONAL TRIUMPH OVER GOOD THINKING
YOU DEFINE REALITY BY WHAT YOU KNOW, WHAT YOU BELIEVE, AND WHAT YOU DO ABOUT IT.**