

Ima
Rossian



Ross's view says
that the basic moral
principles are about
prima facie duties.

Nonconsequentialism: Some kinds of action
(like killing the innocent or breaking your
word) are wrong in themselves, and not just
wrong because of their consequences.

We have a strong, but not exceptionless, prima facie duty to keep our promises. I reject these alternative norms about promise keeping:

“It’s always wrong to break your promises.”



I promised to go hiking with my boyfriend.

“It’s right to break your promises whenever this has better consequences.”



This couple promised to pay me for baby sitting.



Ross's view has
seven basic prima
facie duties.

1. Fidelity: Keep your promises.
2. Reparation: Make up for harm you do to others.
3. Gratitude: Return good for good.
4. Justice: Upset distributions of pleasure or happiness that don't accord with people's merit.
5. Self-improvement: Grow in virtue and knowledge.

6. Beneficence: Do good to others.
7. Nonmaleficence: Don't harm others.

Ima accepts a pluralistic view of value. Virtue, knowledge, pleasure, life, and freedom (and perhaps further things) are good in themselves – and ought to be promoted for their own sake.

Are there exceptionless duties?



“Never burn a child in gasoline just for fun.”

“Judges ought never to knowingly sentence an innocent person to death.”



People object to exceptionless duties on the basis of consistency, inhumane cases, and Dr. Evil cases.

A right is what can be justifiably demanded of others.



A **negative right** is a right not to be interfered with in certain ways. Examples: the right to life, liberty, and property; to follow a religion of our choice; to express our views; to vote for the officials who govern us; and to have a fair trial.

A **positive right** is a right to certain goods that society should help provide. Examples: the right to universal health care, to a decent standard of living, to education, and to adequate housing.



Libertarians deny positive rights (like the right to universal health care), on the grounds that society can pay for these goods only by violating the property rights of others; libertarians favor minimal government, free markets, private property, and unregulated capitalism.

Socialists support positive rights, community ownership of organizations that provide goods and services, a more equal distribution of wealth, and a government that's actively involved in providing for everyone's needs.



A mixed view (which is more common) tries to combine the best elements of capitalism and socialism.

Distributive justice: How ought wealth to be distributed in a society?



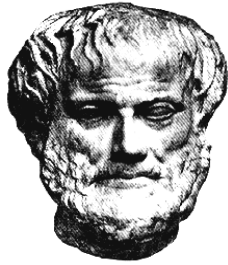
Egalitarianism:
equally.



Rawls: equally,
except for incentives
that benefit everyone.

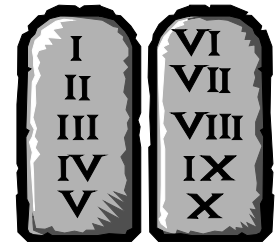


Nozick: you keep
whatever you
justly acquire.



Moral philosophy tries to give a comprehensive but general account of all duties. It speaks of principles of duty, intrinsic goods, rights, virtues, and so forth.

The **ten commandments** try to give the most important specific duties – toward God, family, anyone, and yourself. For example, they condemn adultery, killing, stealing, and lying.



Both fit together nicely and can be based in a general way on the golden rule.