



# Making Ethics Personal: Character and Your Personal Vision

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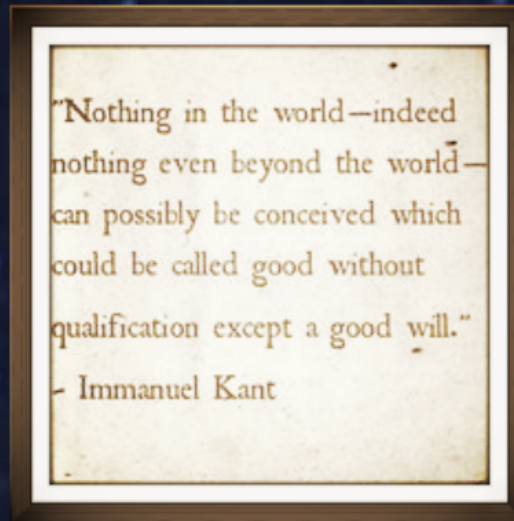
# Who was Immanuel Kant?



- Father of Kantianism or Kantian Ethics (1724-1804)
- German philosophy professor
- Taught at the University of Königsberg in Königsberg, Prussia. (Germany & then Russia)
- Considered to be a central figure in the history of modern philosophy.
- Modern philosophy is usually divided into pre-Kantian and post-Kantian.
- He was most interested in the study of epistemology, metaphysics, ethics, and cosmology.

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## The Good Will: It's Your Duty



- To simplify this belief, he's saying the only one universal, good thing, that we have going for us that doesn't require any qualification, is a good will.
- Strongly believes that the good will is the heart of morality.
- "One who owns the good will acts from no motive other than the motive of doing what is right. Acts out of respect for the moral law and sake of duty" (TPJ, 481).
- Kant came up with three categories of traits and attributes that society also believes to be good, they are the:
  - Talents of the Mind: intelligence, wits, and judgement
  - Qualities of Temperament: courage, resoluteness, and perserverance
  - Gifts of Fortune: power, wealth, health, honor, and even happiness.

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## The Good Will: Digging Deeper into Kant's Mind



- Kant makes a point that even though all those traits are desirable and good, without a good will, many of these traits could be use for EVIL!!!
- a) i.e. (TotM) Intelligence can be used to build bright futures or tear down humanity as we know it. E.g. FDR vs. Hitler
- b) i.e. (QoT) The courage and fear shared between a firefighter and a bank robber is ultimately the same but what is it that differs between the two? That's right, the good will!
- c) i.e. (GoF) Without the good will, the gifts that we may be fortunate to have, can spoil us and consequently mold us into negative characters.

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# Like a Jewel

- A good will is not simply good for its effects or accomplishments. It has full value within itself.
- External circumstances cannot add or subtract from its worth.
- No matter the consequences or outcome, even if the good will fails, it will still "sparkle like a jewel in its own right" (TPJ, 483).

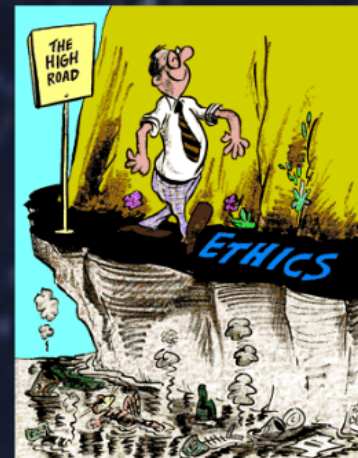
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### Thought Experiment: The Drowning Boy!



Imagine this, you're frolicking through the woods coming home from granny's house, when all of a sudden, you hear frantic splashing and screams of death. You run towards the sounds of distress only to find Bruce Wayne, son of Thomas Wayne, founder/CEO of Wayne Enterprises, drowning in the middle of the lake. You look around and notice that no one else is around. You have as much experience swimming as a pig does flying. So, what do you do?

- Selflessly jump in with haste in fear of the child losing his life because that's the right thing to do.
- Jump in because there is a handsome reward in saving the son of a billionaire.
- Jump in because it's the good thing to do and the guilt will surely eat at you later if you don't.
- Walk away.



*1st Proposition of Morality: To  
Have Moral Worth, an Action  
Must Be Done from a Sense of  
Duty*

1. *From Duty*

2. *Accordance with Duty*

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# *From Duty*

- The motive for acting is simply the desire to perform the action because it is right  
or  
from respect for moral law
- Then and only then, action has moral worth because it is from a good will

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# *With Duty*

- Our external behavior conforms with what we ought to do.
- What if consequences were different?

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