

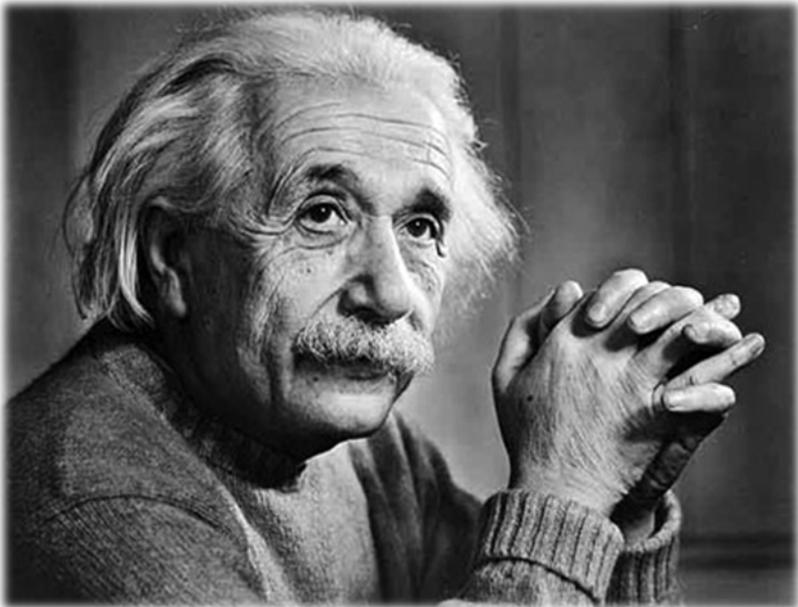
Four Myths of Morality

Nicholas Epley
University of Chicago
Booth School of Business

“The whole of science is nothing more than the refinement of everyday thinking.”

—Albert

Einstein



Four “Myths” About Morality

1. It's the people: There are good guys and bad guys.



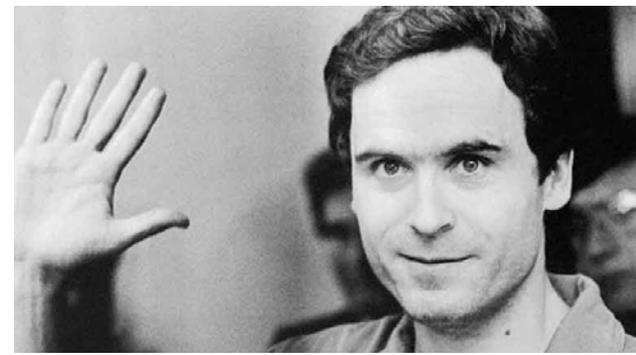
“A cat killer? Is that the face of a cat killer?
Cat chaser maybe. But hey—who isn’t?”



Norri Hall™







Characteristics of a Psychopath (Hare, 1998):

- Lack of remorse and empathy for others
- Impulsive and erratic behavior
- Average/above average intelligence but lack of focus
- Superficial charm
- Calm and at ease with deception and lying.
- Failure to learn from past mistakes
- A high sense of self-worth and narcissism
- Insincerity and unreliability
- Impersonal sex life and detachment

—Estimated at < 1 % of the general population

—Widely quoted myth: “10% of Wall Streeters are psychopaths”

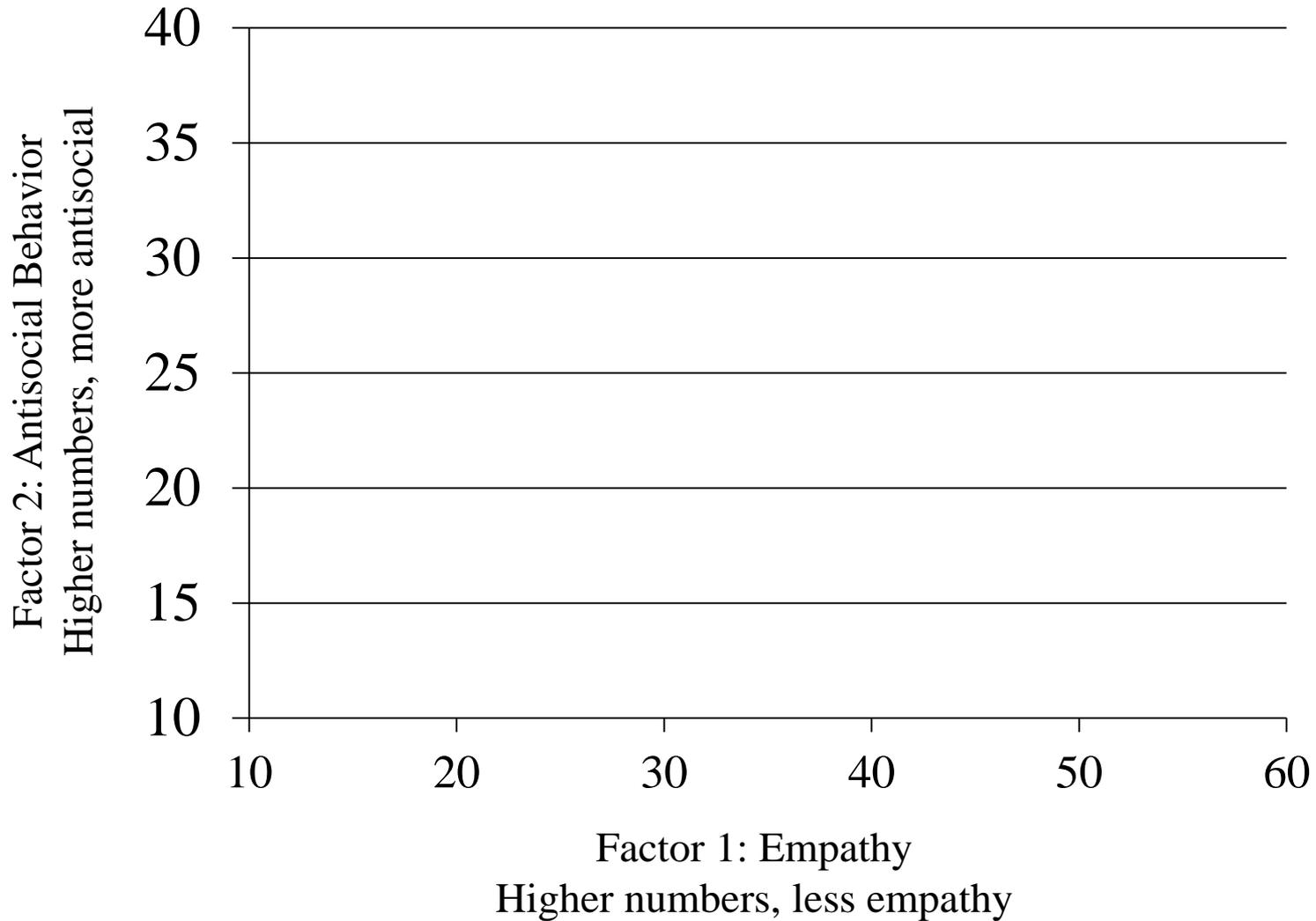
—Robert Hare’s correction:

www.hare.org/comments/comment2.html

—Probably not any of you, or the people working for you.

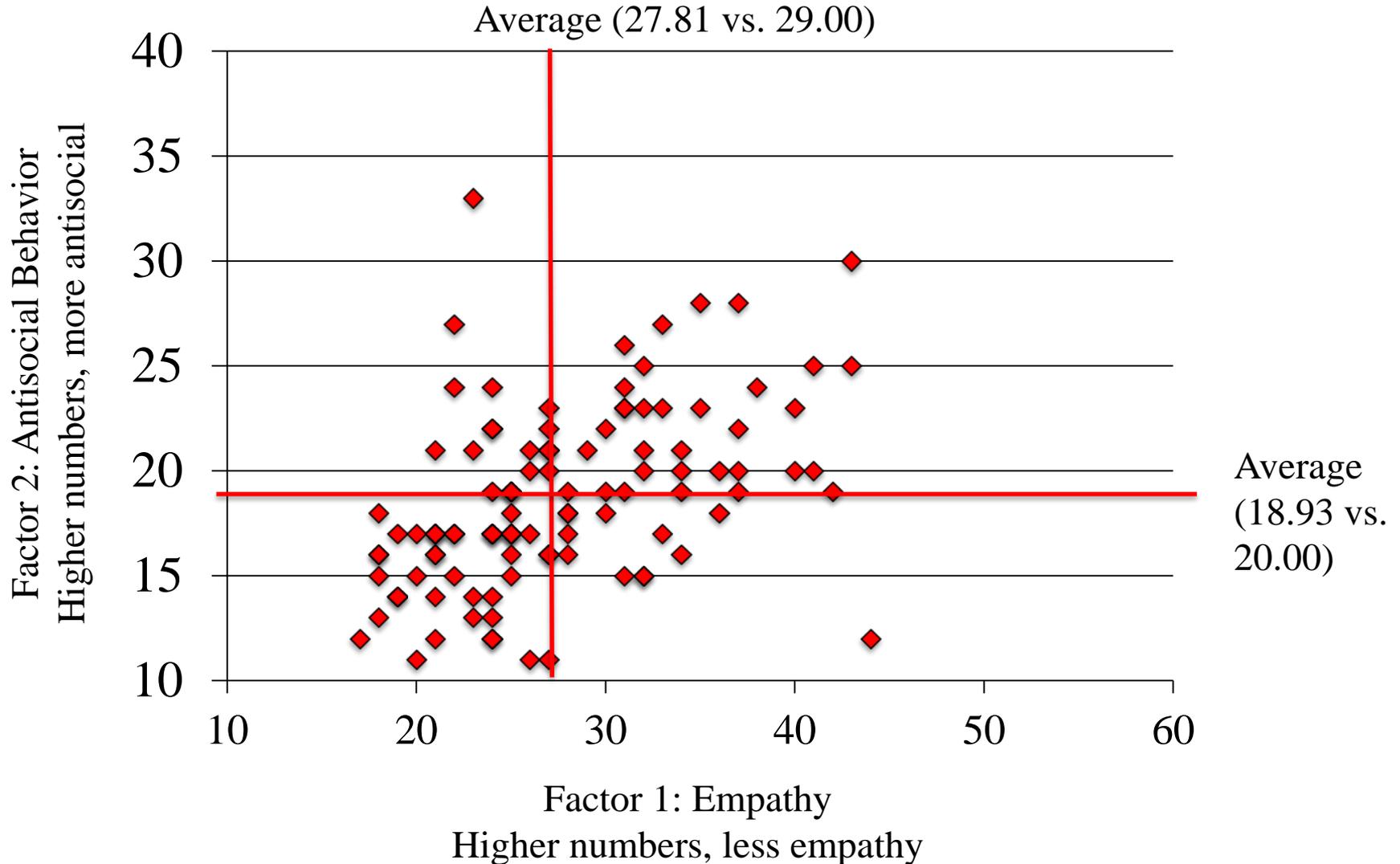
Background Survey :

Levenson's Psychopathy Scale (1996)



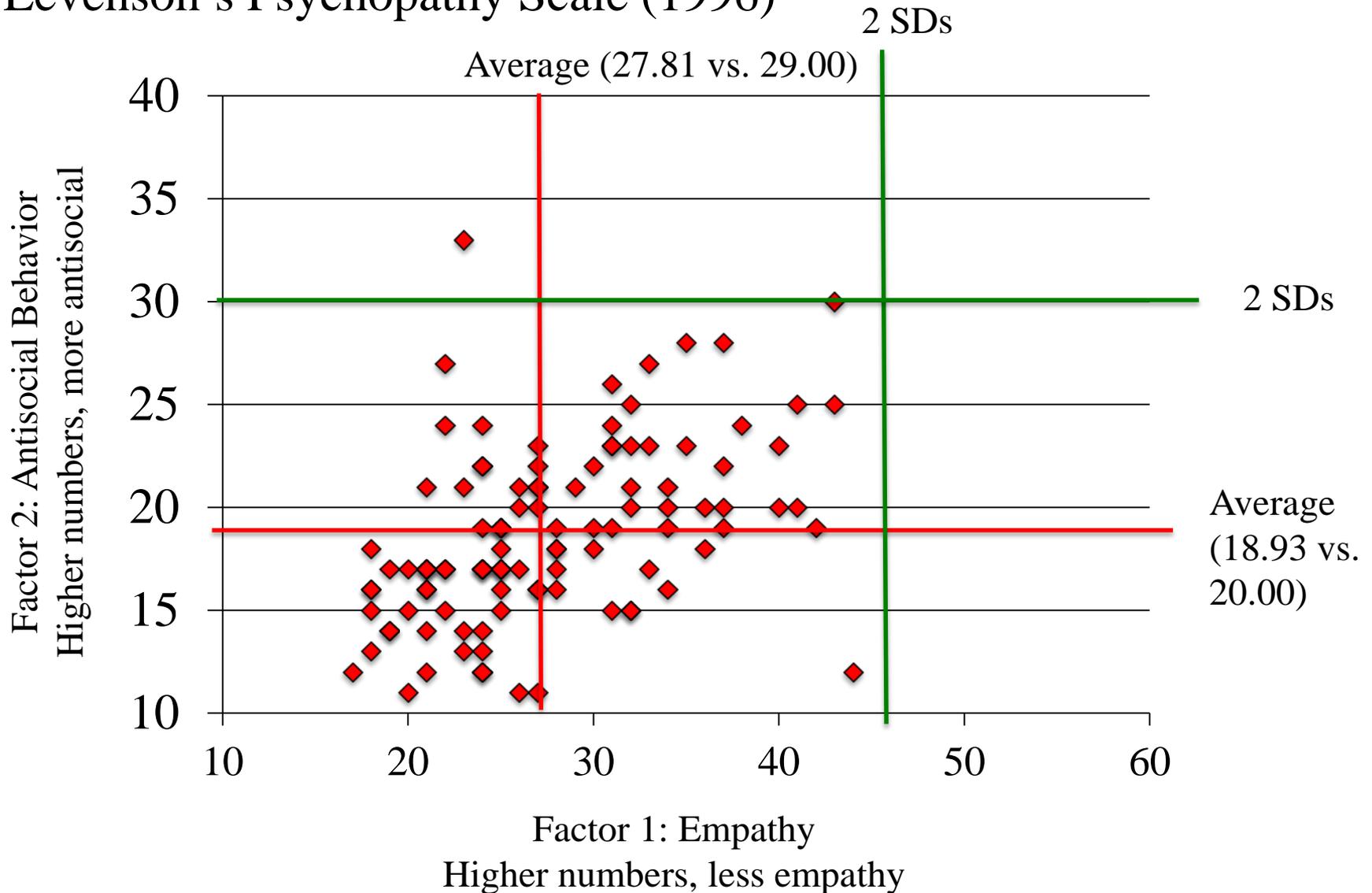
Background Survey :

Levenson's Psychopathy Scale (1996)



Background Survey :

Levenson's Psychopathy Scale (1996)



The Banality of Evil...

Stanley Milgram (1974)



Public Announcement

**WE WILL PAY YOU \$4.00 FOR
ONE HOUR OF YOUR TIME**

Persons Needed for a Study of Memory

**We will pay five hundred New Haven men to help us complete a scientific study of memory and learning. The study is being done at Yale University.
Each person who participates will be paid \$4.00 (plus 50c carfare) for approximately 1 hour's time. We need you for only one hour: there are no further obligations. You may choose the time you would like to come (evenings, weekdays, or weekends).

**No special training, education, or experience is needed. We want:*

Factory workers	Businessmen	Construction workers
City employees	Clerks	Salespeople
Laborers	Professional people	White-collar workers
Barbers	Telephone workers	Others

*All persons must be between the ages of 20 and 50. High school and college students cannot be used.
*If you meet these qualifications, fill out the coupon below and mail it now to Professor Stanley Milgram, Department of Psychology, Yale University, New Haven. You will be notified later of the specific time and place of the study. We reserve the right to decline any application.
You will be paid \$4.00 (plus 50c carfare) as soon as you arrive at the laboratory.

TO:
PROF. STANLEY MILGRAM, DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY,
YALE UNIVERSITY, NEW HAVEN, CONN. I want to take part in
this study of memory and learning. I am between the ages of 20 and
50. I will be paid \$4.00 (plus 50c carfare) if I participate.

NAME (Please Print).....

ADDRESS

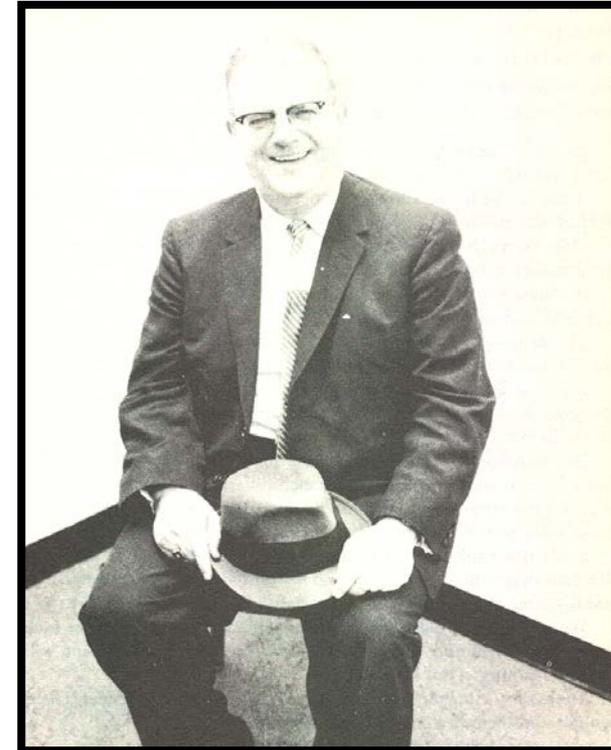
TELEPHONE NO. Best time to call you

AGE OCCUPATION SEX

CAN YOU COME:

WEEKDAYS EVENINGS WEEKENDS.....

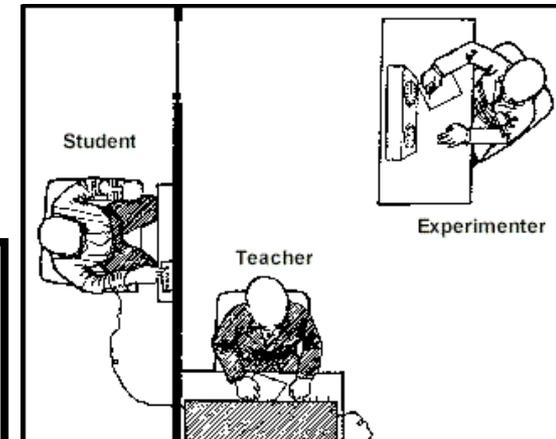
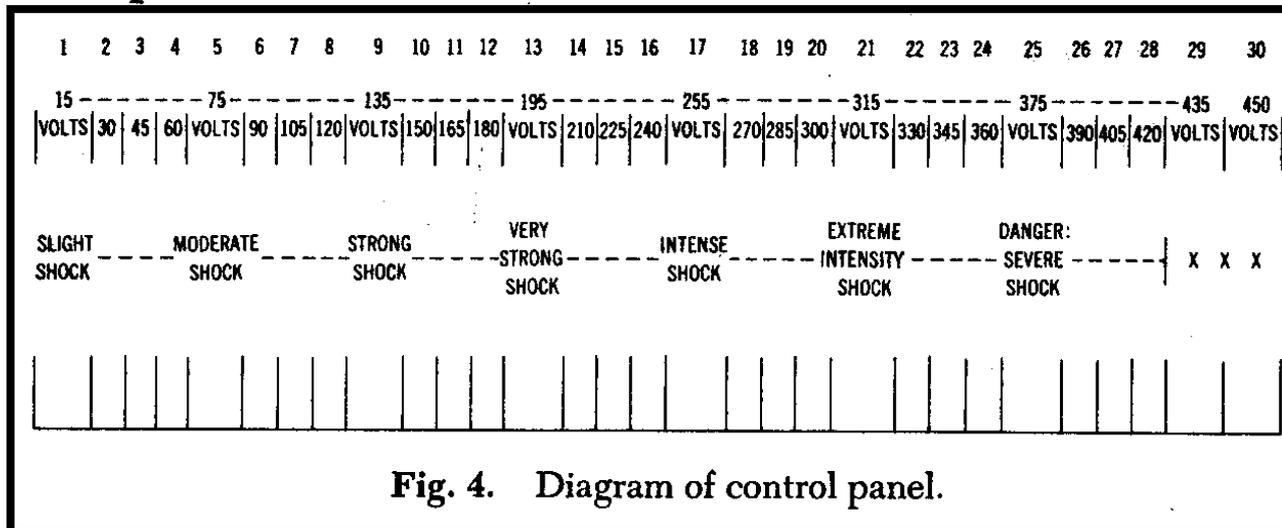
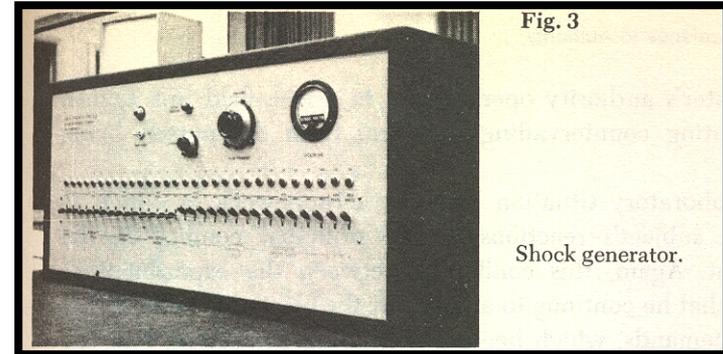
Fig. 1. Announcement placed in local newspaper to recruit subjects.



The "Learner"
47 year-old Accountant

The Banality of Evil...

Stanley Milgram (1974)



The Banality of Evil...

Stanley Milgram (1974)

Recent replication w/ ABC News (Burger, 2009)

—70% obedience with voice feedback

—No gender difference.

—modestly predicted by empathic concern ($r = .26$)

% choosing highest shock level:

Exp. #1 (Baseline): 65%

Exp. #3 (Touch victim): 30%

Exp. #14 (Authority as victim): 0%

Exp. #15 (Contradictory Authority): 0%

Exp. #17 (Peer Rebels): 10%

Exp. #18 (Peer Obeys): 93%

Table 1. Individuals Predict Their Own Breakoff Points

Shock level	Verbal designation and voltage level	Psychiatrists (n = 39)*	College students (n = 31)	Middle-class adults (n = 40)	
1	Slight Shock 15	2† 1		3†	
2	30				
3	45			1	
4	60	1		1	
5	Moderate Shock 75	6		4	7
6	90	1		3	1
7	105	4		1	1
8	120	4		1	3
9	Strong Shock 135	1		3	2
10	150 Actual%	14		12	9
11	165			1	2
12	180	2		6	3
13	Very Strong Shock 195	2			1
14	210			1	
15	225				1
16	240				1
17	Intense Shock 255				1
18	270				
19	285				
20	300	1		12.5%	3
21	Extreme Intensity Shock 315		10%		
22	330		5%		
23	345		2.5%		
24	360		2.5%		
25	Danger: Severe Shock 375		2.5%		
26	390				
27	405				
28	420				
29	XXX 435		65%		
30	450				
Mean maximum shock level		8.20	9.35	9.15	
Percentage predicting defiance		100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	

The Banality of Evil...

Bystander nonintervention—e.g., Walter Vance on Black Friday

Black Friday: Target Shoppers Step Over Walter Vance As He Collapses, Dies

The Huffington Post | Tara Kelly 

First Posted: 11/27/11 08:15 PM ET | Updated: 11/30/11 04:27 PM ET



Vance's co-worker: "Where is the good Samaritan side of people? How could you not notice someone was in trouble? I just don't understand if people didn't help what their reason was, other than greed because of a sale."

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Rogue Traders

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

This article is about the Australian band Rogue Traders. For the BBC television programme, see [Rogue Traders](#).

Rogue Traders were an Australian electronic, pop rock band formed in 2002 by mainstay James



Rogue Traders

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Rogue trader

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

For other uses, see [Rogue trader \(disambiguation\)](#).

A **rogue trader** is an [employee](#) authorized to make trades on behalf of their [employer](#) (subject to certain conditions) who makes unauthorized trades. It is most often applied to financial trading, when rogue professional [traders](#) make unapproved financial transactions.^[1]

MONEY STUFF

Odd Hedge Funds and Rogue Traders

[learn more](#)

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BANKING | LEGAL/REGULATORY

Stanley Pays \$4 Million Fine in Rogue Trader

ANIEL POPPER DECEMBER 10, 2014 4:55 PM [Comment](#)

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The Banality of Evil...

In my book, ... I angered some people by suggesting that [the] Wall Street C.E.O.s involved in the run-up to the financial crisis were “neither sociopaths nor idiots nor felons. For the most part, they are bright, industrious, not particularly imaginative Americans who worked their way up, cultivated the right people, performed a bit better than their colleagues, and found themselves occupying a corner office during one of the great credit booms of all time.”

—John Cassidy, *The New Yorker*, 2013

Four “Myths” About Morality

1. It’s the people: There are good guys and bad guys.

Truth: *Mythical* figures are evil or good, black or white. Most people are gray. Good people can do bad things under predictable circumstances.

SLIDESHOW | Lance Armstrong: Cyclist, Survivor, Liar, Hero



Why Wall Street & Co. Will Do Anything to Stop Eliot Spitzer from Championing the Public Interest

Spitzer as comptroller: Good for New York, good for women, terrifying for Wall Street abusers.

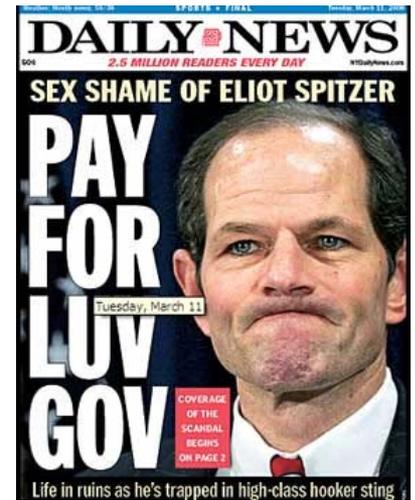
DAILY NEWS NEW YORK NEWS POLITICS SPORTS ENTERTAINMENT

Hooker says ex-NY Gov. Eliot Spitzer tried to choke her, was 'beyond scary'

Rebecca Woodard tells of how she went from working for two of New York City's most notorious madams to helping the Manhattan district attorney's office bring down one of them, and alleges she had a violent role-playing encounter with Spitzer, which his spokeswoman denies.

BY RICH SCHAPIRO / NEW YORK DAILY NEWS / Published: Sunday, December 29, 2013, 1:51 PM
/ Updated: Monday, December 30, 2013, 10:41 AM

SHARE THIS URL nydn.us/1ct2PTu COPY



Four “Myths” About Morality

1. It’s the people: There are good guys and bad guys.

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Good people can do bad things under predictable circumstances.

2. It’s all about motives: Bad acts are guided by bad intentions, Good acts act guided by good intentions.

—The myth of pure evil (Baumeister, 1997). Evil actions caused by evil intent.



“Well, you know what happens is, it starts out with you taking a little bit, maybe a few hundred, a few thousand. You get comfortable with that, and before you know it, it snowballs into something big.”

Vanity Fair (2009)

“Everybody on the outside kept claiming I was a sociopath.”

About Ruth. “She feels sorry for me, because she knows I’m not a horrible person.”

New York Magazine (2011)

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Perspective of perpetrator vs. victim. Baumeister's airplane story.

—The fundamental attribution error (Ross, 1977)

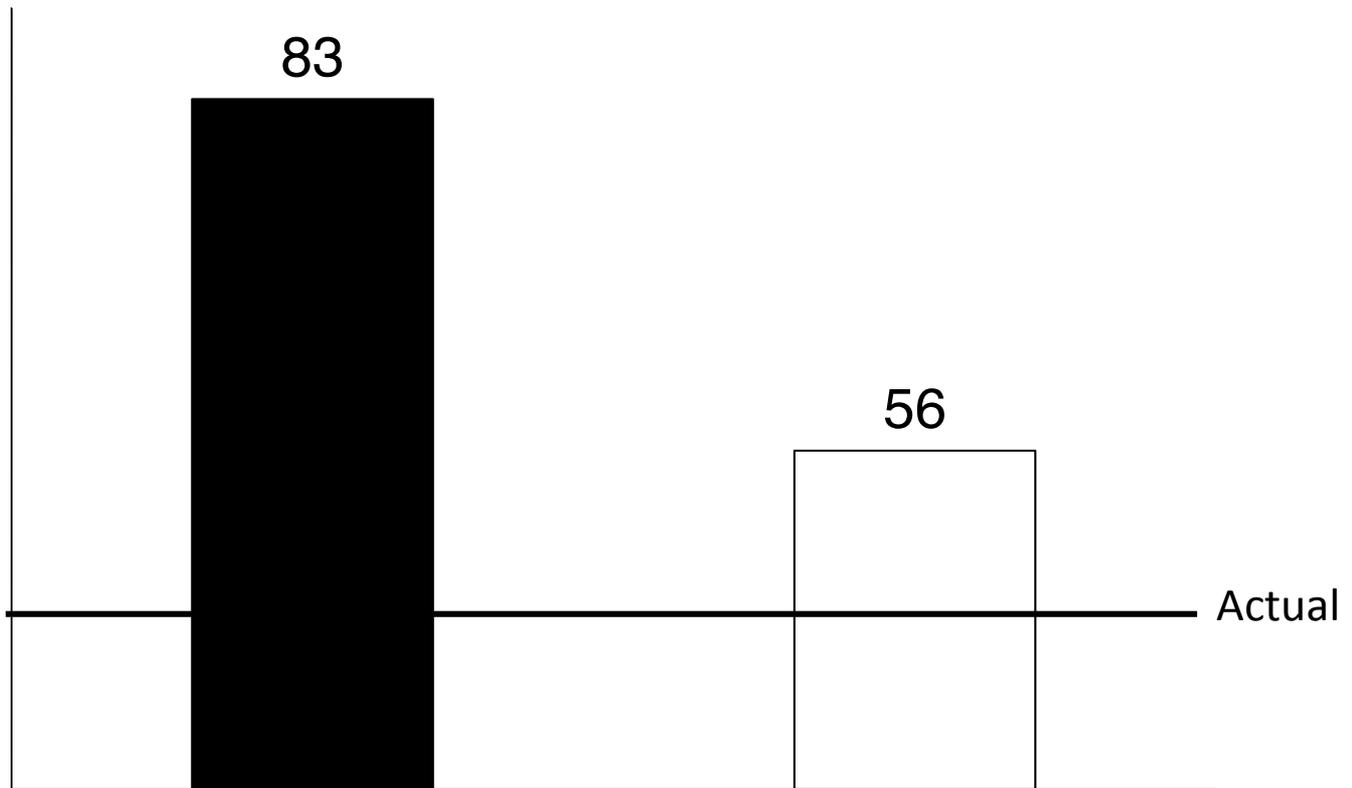
Overestimating the degree to which behavior is caused by consistent intentions, abilities, or dispositions, and underestimating the power of the context to weaken the relationship between actions and intentions.

—Bad Apples and Rogue Traders instead of Bad Barrels and Rogue Culture

—Overestimate the extent to which our own actions are guided by our good intentions. Think we are more ethical than we actually are.

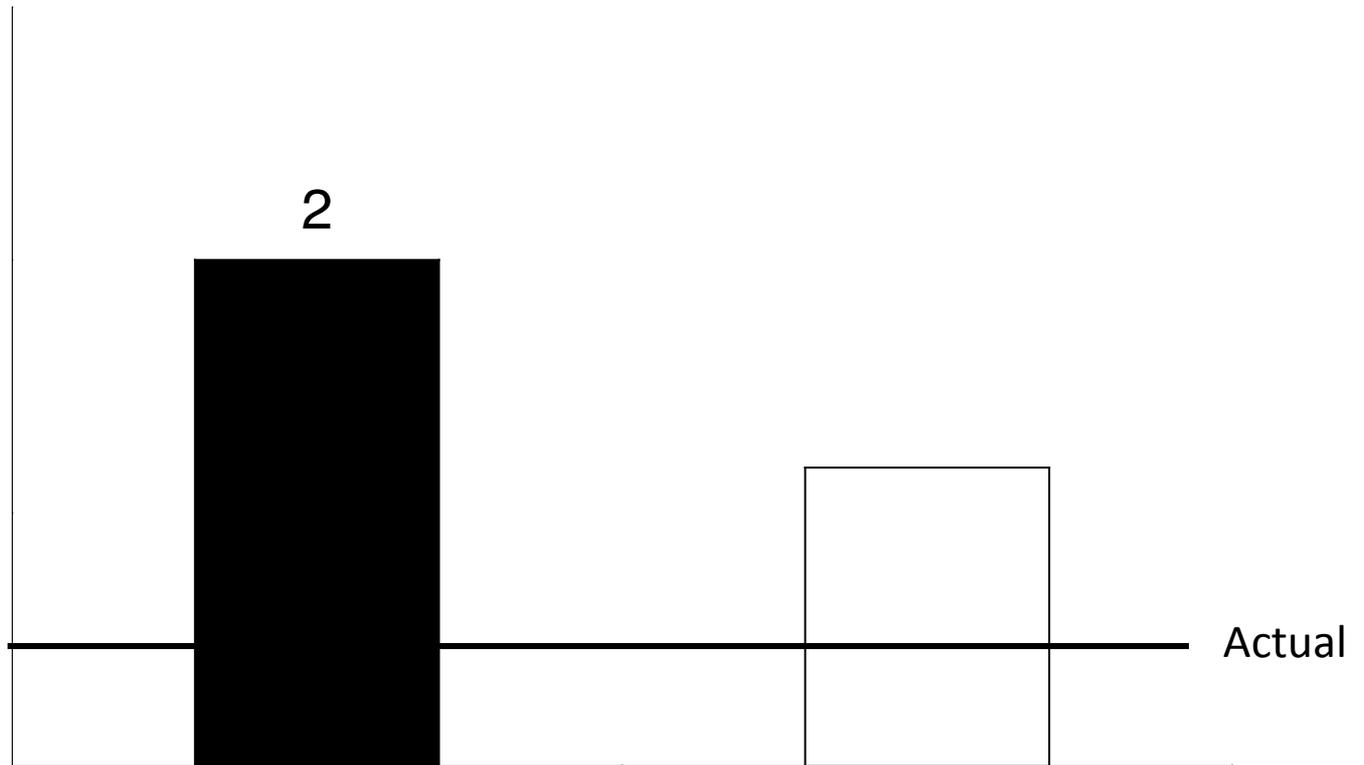
e.g., Daffodil Days... (Epley & Dunning, 2000)

Daffodil Days:



Epley & Dunning, 2000

Daffodil Days:



Epley & Dunning, 2000

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—Truth: Context is *surprisingly* powerful. Bad can be done with good intentions, or when failing to consider ethical implications of action (Ethical Blindness).



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3. It's about ethical principles: Ethical actions are guided by ethical reasoning.

Analogy of the mind as a Rider on an Elephant (Haidt)

Elephant is emotional, impatient, myopic, social, and fast

Rider is rational, analytical, reasonable, rule-based, and slow



Ethics without reasoning...

—Moral Dumbfounding (Haidt, Bjorklund, & Murphy, 2000)

—Jennifer the Cannibal: “Anything wrong with what she did?”

—Haidt’s method: ask why?, remove reason, still wrong?

Participants would report it was still wrong even when reasons were removed: moral dumbfounding.



Ethics without reasoning...



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—Truth: Context is surprisingly powerful. “The road to hell is paved with good intentions.”

3. It's about ethical principles: Ethical actions are guided by ethical reasoning.

—Truth: Reasoning often follows action to justify, explain, or rationalize it.

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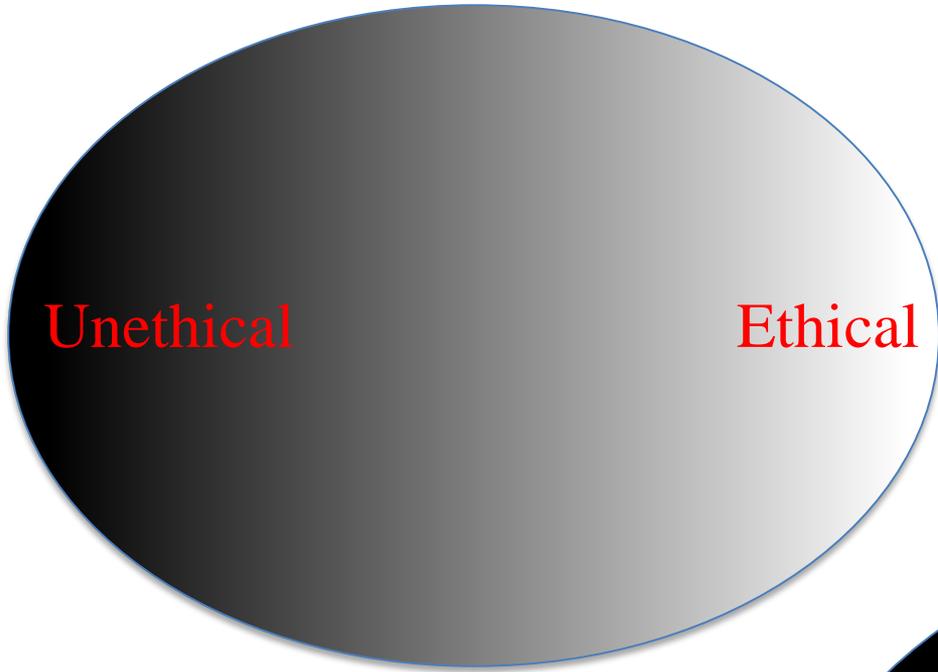
3. It's about ethical principles: Ethical actions are guided by ethical reasoning.

—Truth: Reasoning often follows action to justify, explain, or rationalize it.

4. Everyone is different: Everything is relative.

—Have to teach people your view of right and wrong.

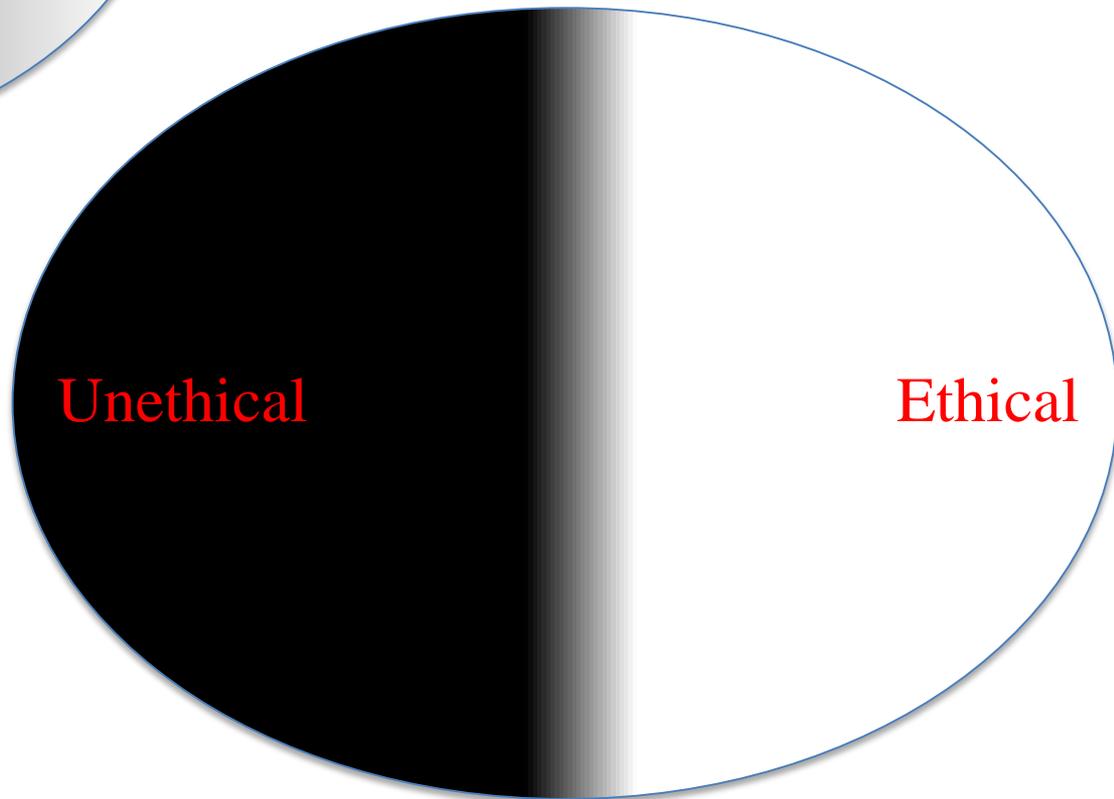
Perception



Unethical

Ethical

Reality



Unethical

Ethical

The Moral Instinct: The Golden Rule, again and again...

“You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

Judaism, Leviticus 19:18

“Whatever you wish that men would do to you, do so to them.”

Christianity, Matthew 7:12

“Not one of you is a believer until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself.

Islam, Forty Hadith of an-Nawawi, 13

“A man should wander about treating all creatures as he himself would be treated.”

Jainism, Sutrakritanga, 1:11.33

“Try your best to treat others as you would wish to be treated yourself.”

Confucianism, Mencius VII:A.4

“One should not behave towards others in a way which is disagreeable to oneself. This is the essence of morality.”

Hinduism, Mahabharata, Anusasana Parva 113:8

“Act only in accordance with that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it become a universal law.”

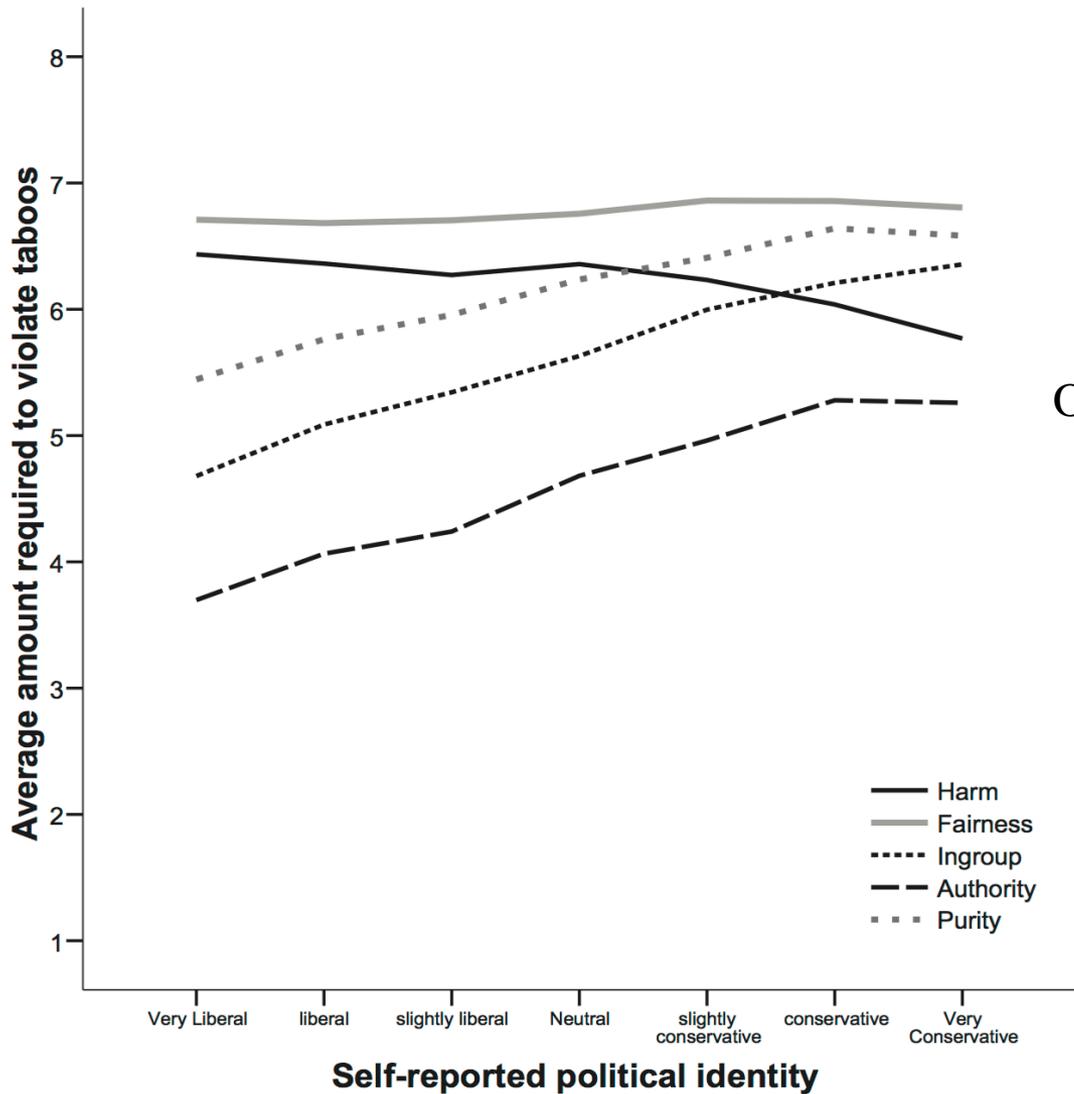
Immanuel Kant, Categorical Imperative

Graham, Haidt, & Nosek (2009):

<u>Moral Principle</u>	How much would you need to be paid to:	<u>\$ (0-4 scale)</u>
Care	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Stick a sterile needle into your arm.2. Stick a sterile needle into a child's arm.	
Fairness	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Accept an errant TV from a friend.2. Accept a stolen TV from a friend.	
Community	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Say something bad about your nation that you don't believe on a radio station in your own country.2. Say something bad about your nation that you don't believe on a radio station a foreign country.	
Authority	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Slap a male friend in the face for a comedy sketch.2. Slap your father in the face for a comedy sketch.	
Sanctity	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Attend avant-garde play where actors act like fools.2. ... actors act like animals for 30 minutes, crawling naked on the floor and grunting like chimpanzees.	

Graham, Haidt, & Nosek (2009):

<u>Moral Principle</u>	How much would you need to be paid to:	<u>\$ (0-4 scale)</u>
Care	1. Stick a sterile needle into your arm.	1.55
	2. Stick a sterile needle into a child's arm.	3.14
Fairness	1. Accept an errant TV from a friend.	.64
	2. Accept a stolen TV from a friend.	2.93
Community	1. Say something bad about your nation that you don't believe on a radio station in your own country.	.71
	2. Say something bad about your nation that you don't believe on a radio station a foreign country.	1.39
Authority	1. Slap a male friend in the face for a comedy sketch.	.26
	2. Slap your father in the face for a comedy sketch.	1.23
Sanctity	1. Attend avant-garde play where actors act like fools.	.92
	2. ... actors act like animals for 30 minutes, crawling naked on the floor and grunting like chimpanzees.	1.45



Graham, Haidt, & Nosek, 2009

Observe **Fairness** in:
Rhesus monkeys
(Brosnan & DeWall, 2004)

Prelinguistic infants
(Hamlin, 2013)

Observe **Ingroup Loyalty** in:
Capuchin monkeys
(DeWall et al., 2008)

Prelinguistic infants
(Kanngiesser & Warneken, 2012)

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—Truth: Context is surprisingly powerful. “The road to hell is paved with good intentions.”

3. It's about ethical principles: Ethical actions are guided by ethical reasoning.

—Truth: Reasoning often follows action to justify, explain, or rationalize it.

4. Everyone is different: Everything is relative.

—Basic moral foundations to build on, even amid differences generated by individual experiences, background, and immediate context.

So what?

These four “myths”...

1. It's the people.
2. It's all about motives.
3. It's about ethical principles.
4. Everyone is different.

...create misperception:

Unethical behavior is
mainly a BELIEF
problem.

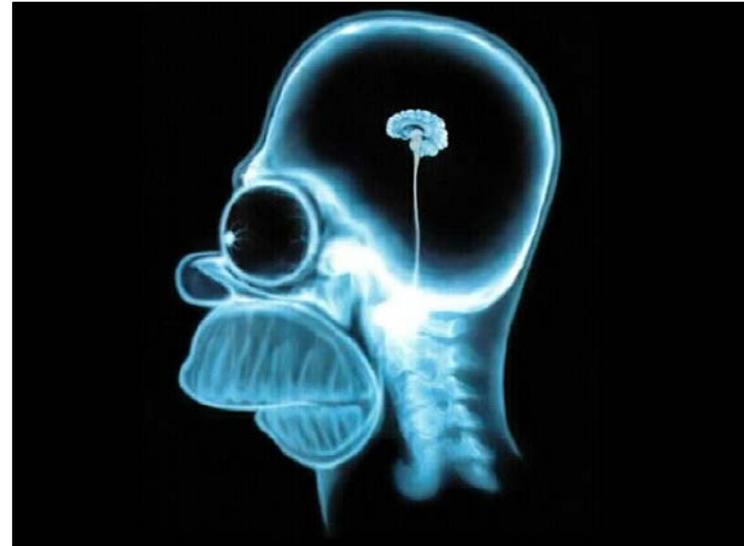
This conference:

Ethics as a DESIGN
problem.

Ethics by Design

Design to match constraints. Humans:

1. Have limited memory.
2. Have limited attention.
3. Pursue goals myopically.
4. Are highly social.



Ethics by Design

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A framework for designing ETHICS:

1. **E**xplicit beliefs: Design missions that are clear, memorable, and actionable.
2. **T**houghts during judgment: Design policies and heuristics that keep ethics top of mind.
“Is it right,” rather than “Is it legal?”
3. **I**ncentives: Design with multiple incentives in mind, aligned with ethics.
Money and penalties, but also purpose, meaning, and reputation.
Reward ethical behavior in addition to punishing unethical behavior.
4. **C**ultural Norms: Infuse everyday activity with ethical considerations.
Include ethics in key drivers of organizational behavior: hiring, promotion, evaluation, rewarding.
Highlight Beacons, not just Black Holes.