

# Ethical Reasoning in Criminal Justice and Public Safety

**Fourth Edition**

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*David R. Evans & Craig S. MacMillan*





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**FOURTH EDITION**

David R. Evans, PhD  
Craig S. MacMillan, PhD



2014  
Emond Montgomery Publications  
Toronto, Canada

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Emond Montgomery Publications Limited  
60 Shaftesbury Avenue  
Toronto ON M4T 1A3  
<http://www.emp.ca/highered>

Printed in Canada.

We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Canada Book Fund for our publishing activities.

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Publisher, higher education: Mike Thompson  
Senior developmental editor, higher education: Sarah Gleadow  
Director, editorial and production: Jim Lyons  
Production and copy editor: Andrew Gordon  
Proofreader: David Handelsman  
Editorial assistant: Katy Littlejohn  
Indexer: Paula Pike  
Cover and text designer and typesetter: Tara Wells  
Cover image: Getty Images/Dan Brownsword

### **Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication**

Evans, David R. (David Richard), 1940-, author  
Ethical reasoning in criminal justice and public safety / David R. Evans,  
Craig S. MacMillan. — Fourth edition.

First edition published under title: Ethical reasoning in policing. Second  
edition published under title: Ethical reasoning in policing, corrections,  
and security. Third edition published under title: Ethical issues in  
law enforcement.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-55239-475-5 (pbk.)

1. Criminal justice, Administration of—Moral and ethical aspects—Textbooks.
  2. Criminal justice, Administration of—Moral and ethical aspects—Canada—Textbooks.
- I. MacMillan, Craig S. (Craig Steven), 1962-, author II. Evans, David R. (David Richard), 1940-. . Ethical issues in law enforcement. III. Title.

To those who matter most to us

Margaret, Andrea, Jonathan, David,  
Jonathan II, Brandon, Brittany, Matthew,  
Brett, David III, and Owen

—*DRE*

Joanne, Lindsey, Ewen, and  
my parents, Sheldon and Barbara

—*CSMM*



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# Preface

The goal of the first edition of *Ethical Reasoning in Policing* was to develop a working textbook for the ethics course in Ontario's newly introduced Police Foundations Program. The course's proposed curriculum addressed the principles of ethical reasoning and the applications of those principles to a range of ethical concerns in society and in policing. In the second edition, *Ethical Reasoning in Policing, Corrections, and Security*, recognizing that some colleges offer the ethics course not only to students in the Police Foundations Program, but also to students in the Law and Security Administration Program and the Correctional Program, we attempted to broaden the content to appeal to police, corrections, and security officers. The goals for the third edition, *Ethical Issues in Law Enforcement*, were to fine-tune the material and to update where required.

In this fourth edition, we have broadened the scope of the text to cover those professions in the area of "law and order" more generally—hence, the new title *Ethical Reasoning in Criminal Justice and Public Safety*. We observed that some instructors were using books on ethics and criminal justice, but that no Canadian text was available. Further, some programs were emerging that were jointly offered by colleges and universities. This edition retains our previous academic level and extends its coverage to include ethical issues in the legal profession and the judiciary.

The chapters on codes of ethics in the third edition have been reduced to a single chapter in this edition, devoted to the public safety and criminal justice professions. The chapters on contemporary issues in Canadian society have been reduced to one chapter that examines ethical reasoning with respect to the contemporary issues of euthanasia, safe injection sites, and terrorism from differing perspectives. Chapters on ethical issues for lawyers and judges have been written for this edition. The remaining chapters have been updated to incorporate material that has emerged since the third edition. All chapters have a range of exercises at the end with which students can evaluate their mastery of the chapter content.

We would like to thank Paul Tinsley, Ed D (former deputy chief constable, Abbotsford Police Department) for his support of our work. Tragically, Paul passed away shortly after retiring from public service to join the University College of Fraser Valley. Paul's contributions to ethics in policing in Canada are unparalleled, and it is fitting that we remember here his many contributions to the field of police ethics during his lifetime.

We would also like to thank the many police officers we have worked with over the years, who have been willing to participate in discussions about ethics, who have shared their ethical experiences, and, most important, who have actually put ethical theory into practice. For offering their feedback on the previous edition, thanks to Greg Connolley (Fleming), Lorne Landry (Sheridan), and Catherine Huth (Langara). Lastly, thanks to all the staff at Emond Montgomery who have made this book a reality in such an efficient, effective, and cheerful way.

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# About the Authors

**David R. Evans** is professor emeritus at Western University. For 30 years he was a professor in the Clinical Psychology program at Western, and prior to that he was a faculty member of the Department of Educational Psychology at the University of Calgary. Over the years he has been a consultant to numerous agencies, including psychiatric and general hospitals, adolescent and addictions facilities, and police services. He is a retired member of the College of Psychologists of Ontario. He has provided psychological services to the London Police Service, the Oxford Community Police Service, the Midland Police Service, the Ontario Provincial Police, and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. He holds an honours BA in psychology (University of Toronto), an MA in Clinical and Counselling Psychology (University of Ottawa), and a PhD in Applied Psychology (Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto), and he has twice been a visiting scholar at Wolfson College, Cambridge. He is a past president of the Canadian Psychological Association and a past president of the Ontario Psychological Association, and he has served as a member of the Council of Representatives of the American Psychological Association. He has also been a Canadian representative to the International Union of Psychological Science. He is the author of numerous books, chapters, journal articles, and tests. He has presented papers on quality of life in Canada, the United States, Europe, and Australia. His most recent books include *The Law, Standards, and Ethics in the Practice of Psychology* (3rd ed., Carswell, 2011); *Essential Interviewing* (8th ed., Brooks/Cole, 2010) with Margaret Hearn, Max Uhlemann, and Allen Ivey; and *Cultural Clinical Psychology* (Oxford University Press, 1998) and the *Handbook of Clinical Health Psychology* (Academic Press, 2001), both with Shahé Kazarian as co-editor. In 2007 he was awarded a lifetime achievement award by the Ontario Psychological Association in appreciation for his significant and sustained contribution to the life of professional psychology in Ontario.

**Craig S. MacMillan** has 30 years of experience in various areas of the Canadian legal system. He has experience as a police officer (in rural and urban policing) in Alberta, British Columbia, Ontario, and Nova Scotia. His postings as a federal police officer have included uniform patrol, Major Crime, Informatics, Operations Policy Unit, Hate Crime Team, Training Branch, Commercial Crime Section, Grievance Adjudications, Member Representative Directorate, Legislative Reform Initiative, Adjudicative Services Branch, and more recently as a Professional Integrity Officer. He has also worked with the Canadian Human Rights Commission (Atlantic Region), the Nova Scotia Police Commission (Investigative Branch), and the British Columbia Ministry of Attorney General Legal Services and Criminal Justice branches. He holds an honours Diploma in Law Enforcement (Lethbridge Community College), a BA with great distinction (University of Lethbridge), an MA in Judicial Administration (Brock University), an LLB (Dalhousie Law School), and a PhD in Law (University of British Columbia). His doctoral dissertation dealt with police accountability and compelled statements from police officers. He has been a practising lawyer of the British Columbia bar since 1994 and has represented police officers at the provincial and federal levels in various legal processes, including discipline proceedings, coroners' inquests, public hearings, public complaints, and other administrative processes.

He has published academic and professional articles on various legal issues concerning criminal justice, policing, and ethics, as well as course text on police accountability. He has spoken at numerous conferences, seminars, and courses for the Canadian Police College, the Justice Institute of British Columbia, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and the BC Office of the Police Complaint Commissioner, as well as various post-secondary institutions. In 2003, he received the International Association of Chiefs of Police Civil Rights Award in Law Enforcement for exceptional innovation, professionalism, and effectiveness in the areas of education and prevention in dealing with hate crime in British Columbia. He is a former faculty member at Kwantlen University College (Criminology Department) and the University of British Columbia Continuing Studies (Division of Applied Technology), and he is currently a faculty member at the Dalhousie University College of Continuing Education, where he teaches a course related to ethics. He is also a recipient of the Queen Elizabeth II Golden Jubilee Medal (2002) and the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal (2012) for significant and distinguished service to Canada, and he was invested in 2013 as a Member of the Order of Merit of the Police Forces in recognition of exceptional service.

# PART I

# Principles of Ethical Reasoning

- CHAPTER 1** Critical Thinking and Ethical Reasoning
- CHAPTER 2** Approaches to Ethical Decision-Making
- CHAPTER 3** Professional Codes of Ethics
- CHAPTER 4** A Framework for Ethical Decision-Making





# Critical Thinking and Ethical Reasoning

# 1

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

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- After completing this chapter, you should be able to:
- Understand the importance of ethics in your own life.
  - Define values and explain the significance of values as they relate to ethics.
  - Define integrity and explain its application to ethics.
  - Distinguish between moral philosophy and ethics.
  - Describe the importance of reasoning and critical thinking in ethics.
  - Describe the importance of motivation in ethics.
  - Recognize that religion is not the sole source of morality or ethical obligations.
  - Grasp how loyalty should be understood in public safety roles.
  - Understand how personal morality may conflict with professional ethical obligations.
  - Identify the existence of a professional ethical dilemma.

# Introduction

## Getting a Sense of Ethics

You may be reading this book because you are studying for a career in policing, corrections, or security, and you want to understand the role of ethics in the criminal justice and public safety field. Alternatively, you may have already started a career as a police, correctional, or security officer and you are reading this book to improve your understanding of ethics and its application to your profession.

In the past, law enforcement officers (for example, police, border services, customs, commercial transportation, conservation, wildlife officers), correctional officers (for example, federal, provincial, court services officers), and security officers (private or public) were seen as having separate occupations. But the Law Commission of Canada (2006, p. xiii) observed that policing around the world is transforming into an integrated task undertaken by a variety of public and private groups that are increasingly “overlapping, complementary and mutually supportive,” making it “difficult to distinguish between public and private responsibilities.” These interrelated professions—policing, corrections, and security—have public safety as their common goal and thus share many ethical considerations. Such considerations are the concern of this text.

However, before providing an understanding of ethics in the criminal justice and public safety professions, Chapter 1 requires you to consider and critically examine a number of matters that are fundamental to society and life in general. You will also need to become familiar with some of the basic terms and concepts that arise in the discussion of ethics (on both the personal and professional levels) and to apply the kind of reasoning relevant to ethical issues. Once the conceptual and critical reasoning foundations have been established, Chapter 2 will introduce you to some of the dominant theories that are encountered in ethics and demonstrate how these theories can assist you in understanding, resolving, and responding to ethical issues in the criminal justice and public safety field. Knowing and understanding some theory is essential to any ethics education. If you think about it, having to learn theory about ethics is no different from being required to know theory as it relates to using force, driving a patrol vehicle, using equipment (such as firearms, pepper spray, handcuffs, radios, and computers), and performing other operational functions (for example, establishing legal grounds for an arrest, conducting a search, or drafting documents to obtain judicial authorization to undertake an activity).

With the theoretical foundation established, Chapter 3 provides an important component of ethical decision-making by examining past and current ethical obligations, codes, or statements in relation to police, corrections, and security. The codes of ethics and obligations applicable to lawyers and judges are also examined. It is important not only to be generally knowledgeable about ethics and ethical codes in policing, corrections, and security, but also to be able to identify similarities and distinctions in how certain ethical issues, such as confidentiality, are treated within other criminal justice professions connected to the public safety realm. Being aware of other ethical codes and professional obligations helps public safety officers perform better.

Chapter 4 begins the transition from the theoretical to the practical by providing you with a framework in which to resolve ethical dilemmas. It is important to have a theoretical understanding of ethical theories and codes. But most educational initiatives in the area of criminal justice and public safety ethics have provided only rudimentary frameworks for making and evaluating an ethical decision. This text provides a more robust framework for such decisions.

Part II of the text will then move to a broader consideration and application of ethics in the context of contemporary issues, commencing with a consideration of several controversial social issues in Chapter 5. Contemporary issues in the public safety professions will then be considered in Chapter 6, followed by Chapter 7, which more directly considers several ethical issues relating to the officer's role in the public safety context. Chapter 8 will focus on ethical issues confronted by lawyers and Chapter 9 will consider ethical issues faced by judges.

Let us turn, then, to the conceptual quest. You might expect a book on ethical reasoning in criminal justice and public safety to start with a definition of ethics. But at this preliminary stage any definition we might provide would be either so broad as to be unhelpful or so specific as to be highly contestable. At this point, it is sufficient to recognize that ethical questions are central to many situations facing us in both our personal and professional lives. These questions address the value and meaning of our lives and are at the core of being a good person and officer.<sup>1</sup>

## The Meaning of Life

One of the broadest definitions of ethics comes from the Greek philosopher Socrates (469–399 BCE), the person many consider to be one of the founders of philosophy, who said that ethics deals with “no small matter, but how we ought to live.” In general, ethics is about determining right and wrong, good and bad. From its beginnings, close to 2500 years ago with the pre-eminent Greek philosophers Socrates, Plato (429–347 BCE), and Aristotle (384–322 BCE), ethics has been concerned with the great questions of human life. For these ancient philosophers, the central ethical question was: what is the well-lived and flourishing human life? In other words, what makes life worth living and what is the meaning of life?

The thrust of the Greek philosophers' answer was that human lives are worthwhile when they are thoughtful and reflective, when people choose activities on the basis of good reasons, and when people care about their friends, families, and communities.

For those of us raised with more contemporary ethics and morality, the broad scope of early philosophical inquiries into the meaning of ethics may come as a surprise, or seem vague and impractical. You may expect that a book on ethics should simply contain a list of rules and regulations prescribing the conduct we expect every criminal justice and public safety officer to follow. Indeed, we will examine a variety of codes of ethics, and we will also spend some time looking at the basic expectations we have of officers. However, the first task is to put all of that into context by developing a better conceptual sense of what ethics is about and by considering various ways of understanding ethics.

## The Importance of Values

As a starting point in our examination of ethics, it is important to consider that individuals, groups, and communities all have **values**. What are values? Generally, they are beliefs and opinions about matters that we, individually or collectively, decide are beneficial, desirable, and important to an individual, group, or community. Values, in general, are not necessarily related to distinguishing good and bad in an ethical sense: it may be that an

### values

beliefs and opinions about matters that we, individually or collectively, decide are beneficial, desirable, and important

<sup>1</sup> Throughout this book, when we use the term “officer” without any qualification, it should be taken to mean a police officer, a correctional officer, an investigative or security officer, and an officer of the court (i.e., lawyer or judge). In short, the term “officer” stands for all criminal justice and public safety officers.

**ethical values**

important values based on a moral perspective that are related to determining what is right or good; that will shape a person's life and career; and that influence how decisions are made

individual's values are premised purely on self-interest or doing what is best for that individual and not what is ethically right or good.

**Ethical values** are values that are related to determining what is right or good, and they will shape a person's life and career and influence how one makes decisions. If you are considering, or already have, a career in criminal justice or public safety, this probably indicates that you have formed a set of ethical values. For example, you are sufficiently concerned about your community and the safety and well-being of others that you are prepared to devote your career to achieving those goals. And you are also prepared to risk your own safety and well-being in doing so. Ethical values are distinguished from values in general in that *ethical values are based on a moral standard* that is concerned with distinguishing right from wrong or good from bad. If you properly consider and apply ethical values when making decisions, at the end of your career you will be able to look back with pride on your accomplishments.

In order to broaden our understanding of values and their intersection with ethics, imagine that we are writing our individual life stories. The choices or decisions we each make reflect our own character and form the plot of our personal story. Each of us is different and we will each make different choices and consequently take different paths. Our general and ethical values form the background to those choices. Ethical values are concerned with what is good, right, just, and virtuous. Ethical values govern how a person determines right and wrong and interacts with others in society.

Any contemplation of ethics requires you to consider a number of questions in order to better understand the importance of values and what is good in life. For example, what would a good career look like? What would a good relationship or family look like? What are the values we need to possess, and the actions we need to perform, in order to lead good lives and have rewarding careers? This is the essence of ethics.

Let us look at an example. The movie *L.A. Confidential* (1997) contains a scene where two police officers witness a group of their colleagues assaulting some suspects in the police station's holding cells. The events take place after a rumour has gone around the station that the suspects seriously injured an officer. The movie's two "heroes" try to prevent the assault, although one uses excessive force in trying to stop the beating. Naturally, there is an investigation into the assault and both men are faced with a dilemma. On the one hand, there is the terrible injustice and breach of duty that arises when a police officer assaults anyone, especially when the person is already safely in custody. On the other hand, there is a strong bond of loyalty and mutual support among officers who risk their lives daily working alongside each other. The two men choose different paths when responding to the investigation. One officer tells everything he knows and, as a result, some of the officers involved in the assault are fired or disciplined. The other officer remains silent, choosing to remain loyal to his colleagues, even though he believes they did something wrong.

We will not discuss which of these two actions is ethically correct (although you should begin to think about whether there is ever a time when an officer should unquestioningly defend a colleague who is in the wrong). Rather, we will note the different values each officer's action represents. For one officer, loyalty to colleagues is the value he chooses to govern his action. In his life story, loyalty, perhaps coupled with a profound desire to catch and imprison people he believes are the "bad guys," predominates in his decision-making (as we will see in later chapters, loyalty is a concept that can be misunderstood and misapplied by officers). For the other officer, there is no hesitation in reporting what he knows and in allowing his colleagues to suffer the consequences of their actions (although in the movie this officer's motivation may also be coupled with his desire to get promoted, which, as we shall see, also raises ethical questions). His values place preventing wrongdoing by anyone, even by colleagues, ahead of loyalty.

From this example,<sup>2</sup> you can see how individual values can shape a life and career. You can also see how values can create the criteria for the good and bad elements in a person's personal life or career. Doing good means acting in accordance with accepted ethical values (which, as we shall see, may come from a number of sources). The greatest failures in our lives and careers can occur when we fail to live up to ethical values or, perhaps, when we choose to uphold general values that are not related to doing what is right or good.

## Application to Relationships

Another way of approaching ethics is to identify the areas of human life that ethics is typically understood to cover. Ethics certainly covers our interpersonal relations and the principles that govern those relationships. **Ethical principles** are precepts or concepts that inform or underlie what is considered to be good, bad, right, or wrong conduct. They are the principles that underpin how individuals determine what is good conduct in society, such as treating everyone fairly. Limiting ethics to interpersonal or social relationships, however, is probably too restrictive, because we now accept that we have ethical obligations toward animals and, in some cases, toward the physical environment. In other words, it is no longer possible to limit ethics to the interactions or relationships between humans, since many believe there are broad ethical considerations that apply equally to the interaction of humans with any other creature, plant, or environment.

### ethical principles

concepts that underlie what is considered to be good, bad, right, or wrong conduct and that help individuals determine what is good conduct in society

## Structure Versus Content

Yet another approach to understanding ethics, and one that is perhaps more useful, is to think about the structure or form of ethical obligations, statements, or values rather than their content. For example, it can be stated that ethical judgments, statements, values, and obligations have the following three essential qualities:

- *universal/impartial* An ethical judgment, statement, value, or obligation applies impartially to any relevantly similar person in any relevantly similar situation.
- *motivating* An ethical judgment, statement, value, or obligation provides a reason or motivation for acting.
- *overriding* An ethical judgment, statement, value, or obligation supersedes other reasons for acting.

We will examine these qualities in more detail later, but, taken together, these three points are obviously concerned with an extremely important element of human life. We typically think of **ethical obligations** as obligations applying to everyone that provide reasons for acting that supersede or override other reasons. By focusing on structure or form, rather than content, we receive some guidance in understanding ethical obligations in contrast to other, more general obligations.

### ethical obligations

important obligations applying to everyone that provide reasons for acting that supersede or defeat other reasons

## Personal Integrity

Personal integrity is another element that must be given some consideration when discussing ethics. On one level, personal **integrity** may be seen as the quality of acting in accordance with values. If either of the officers in the *L.A. Confidential* example had acted other than

### integrity

the quality of acting in accordance with ethical values; a person with integrity is prepared to stand up for what he or she believes in

<sup>2</sup> Some other examples of movies that highlight clashes of ethical values and theories are *Serpico* (1973), *Dirty Harry* (1971), *Colors* (1988), *Point Break* (1991), *Cop Land* (1997), *Training Day* (2001), *Internal Affairs* (1990), *The Departed* (2006), and *End of Watch* (2012).

he did, he would have failed to act with personal integrity. This highlights a potential problem with integrity. Acting with integrity can mean acting in accordance with your own personal values, but this definition does not say anything about the content of those values. If the values are bad (such as loyalty to police officers who use excessive force), then actions in accordance with those values will turn out to be bad. Thus, as an officer, it is essential to link integrity to acting in accordance with accepted professional or ethical values—that is, doing what is right, just, good, or virtuous, not just upholding general or personal values that may not relate to or result in correct ethical conduct in a professional context.<sup>3</sup>

A person with integrity is also a person who is prepared to stand up for what he or she believes in and defend those beliefs. Acting with ethical integrity means speaking out when you see things that are wrong; it means critically reflecting on your own actions and the actions of others and also being able and willing to act appropriately and explain why you acted in a certain way.<sup>4</sup> People, particularly officers, are constantly faced with tests of integrity. Sometimes those tests are significant events (as in *L.A. Confidential*), but more often they are the little events that arise every day. When we decide how much of the truth we will tell our partners, or whether we will return the incorrect change given to us by a cashier, we are choosing just how important our ethical values are in our lives—are ethical values important enough to make a difference in your everyday life, or do you just pay them lip service?

## The Essence of Ethics

As you will have no doubt concluded, ethics is no small matter, for it concerns how we should conduct our lives. **Ethics** is about understanding the difference between good and bad, and being ethical is about living good and worthwhile lives. As such, ethics warrants our most careful attention to both the personal and the professional aspects of our lives.

The terms “moral philosophy” and “ethics” are often used interchangeably by philosophers. However, in order to clarify the conceptual discussion, we think it is useful to distinguish between these two terms. **Moral philosophy** (or morality) is broadly concerned with the *idea* of what is good or right (for example, the injunction *do no harm* reflects a moral philosophy). Moral philosophy contemplates what we mean when we speak about the *idea* of good versus bad motives and intentions; right versus wrong actions, behaviours, and omissions; virtuous versus evil character traits; and just versus unjust decisions. Moral philosophy is generally concerned with *theories about ethics*. Ethics, on the other hand, is concerned with providing a coherent *theory of morality*. Therefore, ethics is best understood as a subject matter of moral philosophy and generally directs itself to constructing a theoretical framework in which morality, or goodness, rightness, virtuousness, and justice, may be understood and determined. As we shall see in Chapter 2, Immanuel Kant’s duty-based ethics, John Stuart Mill’s utilitarianism, and Aristotle’s virtue ethics provide theoretical ethical frameworks that explain what is considered to be good, right, and just, and, from a practical standpoint, may help you make the correct decision in a particular ethical circumstance. Accordingly, as a matter of practice, a theory of ethics is essential to determining what is good, right, virtuous, and just. Morality or moral philosophy is generally

### ethics

a subject matter of moral philosophy that is generally concerned with constructing a theoretical framework in which one may understand morality, or goodness, and by which one may live a “good and worthwhile life”

### moral philosophy

the contemplation of what is meant by good intentions, right behaviour, virtuous character, just decisions, and the like

3 Having personal ethical values that coincide with professional obligations is a central feature of most episodes in the TV series *Blue Bloods*. Other TV series have also dealt with recurring ethical issues in policing, notably *Hill Street Blues* (1981–1987), *NYPD Blue* (1993–2005), and *The Shield* (2002–2008). The *Law & Order* series deal with ethical issues in criminal justice and public safety.

4 This is the central conflict in the movie *Serpico*, based on the real-life experience of a New York City police officer who confronts corruption that exists in the police department.

concerned about such matters as goodness, fairness, and justice, while ethics provides the means by which judgments or decisions on such matters are made (for example, the greatest good for the greatest number); in other words, ethics tells you how to make a decision. Although moral philosophy is distinguished from ethics in a theoretical sense, in discussions and writings you will frequently find the terms “moral” and “ethical” used as synonyms for “good.” For example, if you were to describe Mother Teresa as a moral woman, an ethical woman, or a good woman, you would essentially be saying the same thing.

Where do our ethical values come from—our *moralness*? The easy answer is to say from religion, from the law, or from our families, but that is too simple. While many people gain their first ethical insights from religion, and while ethics is frequently discussed and presented in religion, ethics and religion are not the same thing. If ethics and religion were the same, no non-religious person would have any ethical concerns or values. But, of course, those without religious beliefs usually do have very strongly held ethical values and principles.

Morals or ethics also cannot necessarily be equated with laws. First, we can always ask, even of a legal act, whether we *should* do it or not, since not all *legally* permissible acts are *ethically* permissible. For example, at one time, owning slaves was legally permissible in certain parts of Canada and the United States, but that did not make it permissible in ethical terms. Second, we can always ask whether a legal prohibition against an act is ethically justified. As we shall see, current debates around euthanasia, safe injection facilities, and management of terrorism rest on moral or ethical arguments about personal freedom and autonomy. So, conversely, while an act may be illegal, that does not mean that it is unethical or that the law should prohibit the act. Engaging in a civil rights march against slavery or discrimination without the necessary municipal permit may be illegal, for example, but it is not unethical.

## Ethical Reasoning

While we acquire values from many sources—including religion, our families, the law, our work experience, sports activities, school, friends, television shows, and so on—each value we hold is itself subject to critical reflection and evaluation. For example, we can all think of cases where our values differ from those of our parents. We may be brought up in a family that is prejudiced against a certain ethnic group or that firmly believes that a woman’s place is in the home. However, our experiences with men and women or with members of other ethnic groups may bring us to understand that the elements of humanity that unite us are far greater than the elements that divide us. Accordingly, this should lead us to start asking some critical questions. For example, is it justified to exclude some people from access to opportunities based on their sexual orientation? How is it fair to treat certain people differently from others because of such characteristics? The process of asking and answering questions about our moral beliefs and judgments is the essence of ethical reasoning. **Ethical reasoning** is the application of formal logic to questions of right and wrong, good and bad, justice and injustice. In effect, you are engaging in the process of thinking critically about what the right thing to do is and questioning assumptions about the way things are done. When examining ethics, we are always entitled or even obliged to ask “why?”

It has been our experience that officers and students traditionally have not made enough effort to think critically, reflectively, and systematically about the ideological (political or social), personal, or professional biases they rely on; their conclusions are often not premised on disciplined reasoning. As noted by Paul and Elder (2012, pp. 350–351),

As a [critical] reasoner, you should come to your own conclusions. At the same time, you must be prepared to state your reasoning in detail, explaining what

**ethical reasoning**  
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