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Personal Ethics | Aparna Sharma | Senior HR Professional & Certified Corporate Director I Editor's Collection

Personal ethics refers to the ethics that a person identifies with in respect to people and situations that they deal with in everyday life. It is a category of philosophy that determines what an individual believes about morality and right and wrong. It can affect all areas of life, including family, finances and relationships.

Ethics answers the question, "What do I do? " It helps us decide between right and wrong action based on our value system. Do we pursue our own happiness, or do we sacrifice ourselves to a greater cause?

Words associated with Personal Ethics-
– Respect   – Courage
– Fairness   – Truth

- Honesty   – Justice
- Compassion   – Responsibility
- Accountability   – Strength of Character

Importance of Personal Ethics –

Ethics is not black and white. It is a process that involves many factors such as : values, morals, behaviors and the situation. What one individual considers the right action, another individual could consider the same action wrong. Thus, it is important to understand how we form our values, morals and beliefs. As we age, we develop our set of values based on the environment we grew up in, our personal experiences and our education. For example, it is commonly known that people from different cultures have different values.

– American Culture and French Culture

– Even within India, we have various sub-cultures, people living in South India or people living in Maharashtra may vary in certain values.

Ethics is a requirement for human life. It is our means of deciding a course of action. Without it, our actions would be random and aimless. There would be no way to work towards a goal because there would be no way to pick between a limitless number of goals. Even with an ethical standard, we may be unable to pursue our goals with the possibility of success. To the degree which a rational ethical standard is taken, we are able to correctly organize our goals and actions to accomplish our most important values. Any flaw in our ethics will reduce our ability to be successful in our endeavors.

Influencers of Personal Ethics –
External Factors –
– *Childhood Upbringing*
– *Reading Habits*
– *Family & Friends*
– *Religious belief & Cultural background*

Internal Factors –
– Internal Feelings
– Individual Life Experiences

External factors are difficult to control over. However, it does not mean that personal ethics cannot be developed. Personal ethics can be developed by improving the individuals' internal factors. Organisations are increasingly concerned & are helping their employees to develop their personal ethics.

Indian Examples of Success and failure-

This would include national personalities-

Examples- **Positive**

– In the epic Mahabharatha, Bheeshma is praised to have strong personal ethics; similarly in Ramayana, it is Lord Rama.
– King Ashoka post the Kalinga War developed compassion and is quoted for personal values of service and humility
– Swami Vivekananda
– Law abiding citizens paying taxes on time
– Soldiers fighting on the border under difficult situations

Examples – Negative
– Evasion by Vijay Mallya
– Harshad Mehta Scam
– Satyam Saga
– Nirav Modi Scam
– Rotomac Scam

Finally, as Potter Stewart says "Ethics is knowing the difference between what you have a right to do and what is right to do."

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