



Ethical Lens Inventory

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Your preferred ethical lens is: Relationship Lens

Considered Rationality and Considered Equality (CRCE)

Members of the community use their reasoning skills (rationality) to determine what processes and systems should be put into place to assure fairness and justice for all in the community (equality).

Your Primary Values show how you prioritize the tension between rationality and sensibility as well as autonomy and equality.

Your primary values are Rationality and Equality

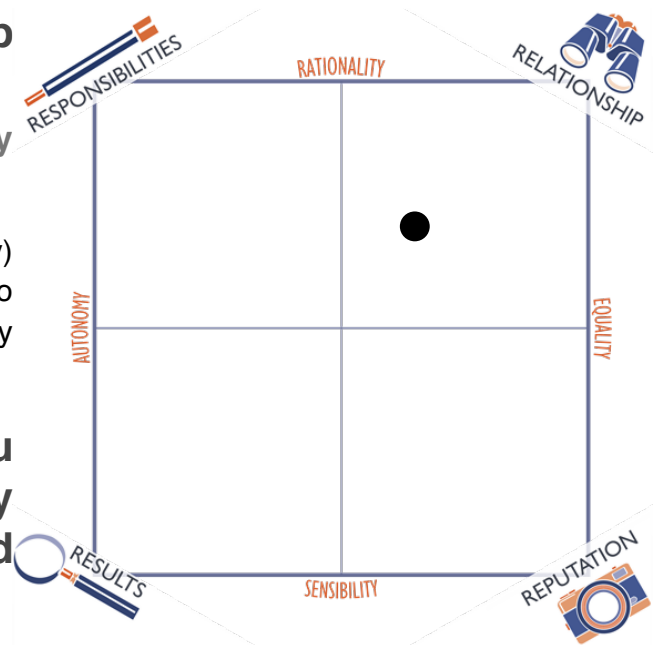
You have a *considered* preference for the value of rationality (CR)—following your head—over sensibility—following your heart. As a CR, your commitment to careful thinking provides considerable guidance as you seek the truth. and continuously striving to apply universal principles that result in justice and fairness to every facet of your personal and community life.

You have a *considered* preference for the value of equality (CE)—respecting the community—over autonomy—giving priority to the individual. As a CE, you are committed to supporting the institutions of your community to make sure that those in authority do not abuse their power and those who are on the margins are not forgotten. You expect others to be accountable for living into their roles for the betterment of the whole community.

Know Yourself

Pay attention to your beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors.

The first step to ethical agility and maturity is to carefully read the description of your own ethical lens. While you may resonate with elements of other lenses, when you are under stress or pressure, you'll begin your ethical



analysis from your home lens. So, becoming familiar with both the gifts and the blind spots of your lens is useful. For more information about how to think about ethics as well as hints for interpreting your results, look at the information under the *ELI Essentials* and *Exploring the ELI* on the menu bar.

Understanding Your Ethical Lens

Over the course of history, four different ethical perspectives, which we call the *Four Ethical Lenses*, have guided people in making ethical decisions. Each of us has an inherited bias towards community that intersects with our earliest socialization. As we make sense of our world, we develop an approach to ethics that becomes our ethical instinct—our gut reaction to value conflicts. The questions you answered were designed to determine your instinctual approach to your values preferences. These preferences determine your placement on the *Ethical Lens Inventory* grid, seen on the right side of this page.

The dot on the grid shows which ethical lens you prefer and how strong that preference is. Those who land on or close to the center point do not have a strong preference for any ethical lens and may instead resonate with an approach to ethics that is concerned with living authentically in the world rather than one that privileges one set of values over another.

Each of the paragraphs below describes an ethical trait—a personal characteristic or quality that defines how you begin to approach ethical problems. For each of the categories, the trait describes the values you believe are the most important as well as the reasons you give for why you make particular ethical decisions.

To see how other people might look at the world differently, read the descriptions of the different ethical lenses under the tab *Ethical Lenses* on the menu bar. The “Overview of the Four Ethical Lenses” can be printed to give you a quick reference document. Finally, you can compare and contrast each ethical trait by reading the description of the trait found under the *Traits* menu. Comparing the traits of your perspective to others helps you understand how people might emphasize different values and approach ethical dilemmas differently.

As you read your ethical profile and study the different approaches, you’ll have a better sense of what we mean when we use the word “ethics.” You’ll also have some insight into how human beings determine what actions are—or are not—ethical.

The Snapshot gives you a quick overview of your ethical lens.

Your snapshot shows you building a fair community.

This ethical lens is called the Relationship Lens because people with this focus value having strong relationships within their community and working to help those without resources or power. They care primarily about creating and living in a healthy and supportive community.

The Relationship Lens represents the family of ethical theories known as justice theories, where to determine what actions are ethical, you consider how the various community structures—such as businesses, schools, health care systems, and the various levels of government—ensure that citizens are treated fairly and have access to needed resources.

Your Ethical Path is the method you use to become ethically aware and mature.

Your ethical path is the Path of the Citizen.

On the ethical Path of the Citizen, you work with others and use collective reason to promote strong community structures and strive to treat people fairly. The first element of justice is procedural justice: How do you make sure that people are treated fairly in the community's formal and informal institutional structures? The second side of justice is more problematic—distributive justice. These conversations focus on who has access to stuff—health care, jobs, food, clean air and water, housing, and education—and who is going to pay for it.

As you walk the Path of the Citizen, you pursue your quest for fairness and justice for all. Your quest is to find the ideal organizational and community structures that provide the needed knowledge, power, and resources for all people to have a chance to thrive.

In the process, you expect that the world will make sense as you ground your principles in the human dignity of every person that entitles each to the support and protection of strong community structures.

Your Vantage Point describes the overall perspective you take to determine what behaviors best reflect your values.

The icon that represents your preferred vantage point is a set of binoculars.

Just as binoculars help you survey your surroundings, the Relationship Lens helps you focus on the playing field of your own community as you seek justice for the people who live and work there, especially those without power.

Your Ethical Self is the persona the theorists invite you to take on as you resolve the ethical problem.

Your ethical self is a person with knowledge of the situation but with no defined role.

Using the binoculars of the Relationship Lens, you think of your ethical self as someone who has information about the particular circumstances of the situation but you don't know which person or stakeholder you are. Relying on your imagination and a shared vision with others in the community, you consider what systems and preferred distribution of resources are needed for everyone to be treated fairly and have equality of opportunity to succeed.

You strongly believe that members of the community should work together to make sure that as many people as possible are equipped to make wise life choices. To that end, you work to make sure that those with power—freedom, knowledge, and money—help those without power or access to resources. You also expect that power will not be abused by either individuals or the community leaders so that everyone's rights as a human person will be honored.

Your Classical Virtue is the one of the four virtues identified by Greek philosophers you find the most important to embody.

Your classical virtue is Justice—ensuring that all in the community are treated fairly and impartially.

As you seek ethical maturity, you know you should embrace justice, ensuring that all in the community are

treated fairly, and begin to listen to your heart to develop empathy for those affected by your decision.

Noticing the problems caused by arrogance and injustice, you seek moderation in your commitment to justice to make your actions be acceptable within a given context. You also strive to control your intolerance through developing empathy for others.

Your Key Phrase is the statement you use to describe your ethical self.

Your key phrase is “I am fair.”

Because you value a strong community and want to be seen as a thoughtful and responsible citizen, you strive to treat all people the same—regardless of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability, age, or national origin.

As you get in touch with your emotions to begin to balance your reliance on collective wisdom, you begin to pay attention to how you use your personal power to support others and help them get ahead. And, as you seek meaning in life by being part of a vibrant community, you resonate with slogans like “think globally and act locally” as you consider how best to make a difference in your world.

Using the Relationship Lens

By prioritizing rationality and equality, the Relationship Lens provides a unique perspective on what specific actions count as being ethical. This lens also has its own process for resolving ethical dilemmas. As you translate your overarching values into actions—applied ethics—each perspective provides a particular nuance on what counts as ethical behavior. This next section describes how you can use the Relationship Lens to resolve an ethical dilemma.

Deciding what is Ethical is the statement that describes your preferred method for defining what behaviors and actions are ethical.

Members of the community use their collective reason to design and implement processes to provide justice for all.

With a considered preference for rationality, you rely on the collective reason to design and implement processes to provide justice for all. With a considered preference for equality, you are committed to having consistent fair processes so all people can fully participate in the community and not be unfairly targeted or accused. You also care about distributive justice, where people have equitable access to goods of the community, such as education, health care, employment, and clean air.

At the end of the day, you believe an action is ethical if creates a fair system for resolution of disputes; cares for all members and institutions of the community, especially in the allocation of resources and power; and contributes to each member of the community knowing that they are included as full participants in their political and economic life.

Your Ethical Task is the process you prefer to use to resolve ethical dilemmas.

Your ethical task is to strive to ensure that all in the community are treated fairly and

impartially.

Your primary focus is seeking the Truth. As you gaze through this lens, in considered conversation with others, you follow the collective wisdom—reason—to thoughtfully choose the principles, the ethical norms, that you believe will contribute to a just society. You have faith that those who also seek the truth in community will agree on the same principles.

You also believe that as the community engages in conversation about the distribution of resources to various members of the community, individuals with power and resources should generously share with those who are without, so all can be successful members of the community.

Your Analytical Tool is your preferred method for critically thinking about ethical dilemmas.

Your preferred analytical tool is authority.

You determine what is true by exploring and vetting the best solutions advocated by community experts. Reasoning together to find the best method to structure society, your strongly held goal is to use collective wisdom and expertise to find ways to equip those in the community in need so they can care for themselves.

Your Foundational Question helps you determine your ethical boundaries.

Your foundational question is “What is equitable?”

As you ask, “What is equitable?” you thoughtfully evaluate political, economic, and organizational systems to identify those that do not meet basic thresholds of justice—fair-handed access to information, a voice in the situation, and sufficient resources to be able to thrive.

You know that without a strong commitment to seeking justice, the community may blindly accept societal structures that leave some people—historically women and racial minorities as well as those without education or skills—without the personal resources or power needed to be able to live a good life.

Your Aspirational Question helps you become more ethically mature.

Your aspirational question is “How can I care for those with no power?”

As you expand your perspective to include others, you develop empathy—using your reasoning skills and imagination when faced with controversy or difficulties to ask, “What is a fair process for resolving this dilemma?” You want to hold people accountable for harming others and care deeply about making sure that those without knowledge or power are treated fairly.

Your perspective further expands to include yourself as well as others as you seek a greater purpose in life than only reflexively meeting other people’s expectations. You begin to moderate your considered preference for rationality and equality by asking, “What is my place in the web of life?” Asking this question allows you to develop perspective instead of pettiness as you reflect on the fact that although we act individually, we are all profoundly interconnected—both environmentally and economically.

Your Justification for Acting is the reason you give yourself and others to

explain your choice.

Your justification for acting is “I wanted to make sure everyone was treated fairly.”

You like to explain your choices by announcing that, having thoughtfully considered your ethical obligations, you have taken action that resulted in a measured use of power and a fair allocation of resources for everyone involved in the situation.

At your best, you responsibly use your power and pay attention to the needs of the least advantaged to help them get the resources they need. You are also aware of where you have received benefits and privilege—often by being born into a family with resources and power or even just perhaps being part of the majority in your own community.

Strengths of the Relationship Lens

The ethical perspective of the Relationship Lens has been used by many to provide a map for ethical action as they seek to build fair communities. Spirited conversations about the proper balance between equal opportunities to succeed and equal opportunities of results are the hallmark of this particular lens. While communities have made provision for the poor and widowed among them, the expectation is also clear that those who are able are expected to work.

Your Gift is the insight you provide yourself and others as we seek to be ethical.

Your gift is advocacy.

As you engage in thoughtful conversation with those who are seeking justice, you advocate for those without voice to make sure that everyone’s perspective is brought forward in the decision-making process. You include all the stakeholders and consider their interests. As you consider those without voice or power, you make sure that all are given respect and honored in the call to action.

Your Contemporary Value is the current ethical value you most clearly embody.

Your contemporary value is to seek the common good.

You are actively committed to embodying civic values such as freedom and justice. That commitment privileges equality—the right of people to live in a community that treats them fairly and provides for them. You highly value people working together to have political, economic, and organizational systems that treat all people with respect and equity.

As you move from public policy to private action, you begin to expand your community based understanding of the truth to also consider the impact of your actions on individuals. As you and others in community consider the big picture, you find a systems-based approach to ethics useful, assessing community gathered knowledge about how to develop equitable systems that will allow others to develop trust in you and those in authority. At your best, you have a deep concern for those without power and are sensitive to the misuse of power.

Your Secondary Values are those that logically flow from your primary

values.

As you harmonize rationality and equality, your secondary values focus on using power wisely to care for the least advantaged.

The Path of the Citizen involves embracing *consistency* and *equality*. You *impartially administer justice*, making sure that the processes and protocols of the community and organization are consistently, fairly, and impartially enforced, typically blaming individual failure on a system or process failure. You value *fairly compensating* people as you believe that people should be paid fairly for the work they do, wherever they are in the community hierarchy. Finally, you *strive to consistently hold all people appropriately accountable*, as you believe that those with power should not be excused from their responsibilities. You also believe that those who have no control over their situation should bear minimal blame for errors or problems.

Challenges of the Relationship Lens

One of the greatest challenges of the Relationship Lens is recognizing that you can never be perfectly rational because, as a human, you regularly make decisions that are inconsistent with your stated beliefs and preferences. Those who have a considered preference for both rationality and equality are vulnerable to the ethical blind spots of the Relationship Lens that come from relying primarily on community consensus and deferring to authority.

Using the binoculars of the Relationship Lens helps avoid ethical blind spots that come from enmeshment in the community where people are seen in the aggregate and the impact of your policies on individuals is easily overlooked.

Your Blind Spot is the place you are not ethically aware and so may unintentionally make an ethical misstep.

Your blind spot is an overconfidence in process.

Because you want to be a good citizen, you can become overly focused on following the established processes that you forget that the purpose of the system is to achieve justice and equality. Transfixed by getting the processes right, you may ignore the plight of those who are lost in the system because you weren't paying attention to individuals.

Being somewhat insensitive to the emotional climate of the situation, you may miss the signals that you receive from others that you are creating or advocating for unworkable systems. Finally, trying to meet the requirements of your understanding of what is fair, you may become rigid as you fail to reflect on the meaning and purpose behind the systems you have put in place.

Your Risk is where you may be overbearing by expecting that people think just like you.

Your risk is being authoritarian, or in common terms, dictatorial.

Believing you know what is right, you run the risk of becoming autocratic and authoritarian to get your way. If you are not mindful, you may become so attached to advancing your own position within the system that you abuse your power and abandon your commitment to justice to reach the top.

As you become increasingly ambitious, you might use groupthink and emotional entrainment to blind others to your ambition. Because those you represent often identify with your status and power, they may fail to hold you accountable for your excesses.

Your Double Standard is the rationalization you use to justify unethical actions.

Your double standard is excusing yourself from following the processes.

Humans are skilled at deflecting blame if caught being unethical—taking actions that do not live into their own stated principles and thus eroding trust in the community. As you view the world through the Relationship Lens, you judge others by their status and whether they are part of the group with which you identify.

When tempted to be unethical, your ethical spin will often be *exemption*—giving reasons believing your membership and position in a privileged group exempts you from following the same rules or processes as everyone else. Distancing yourself from the emotional pain of others, you believe that you don't have to evaluate the foundational fairness of the systems and institutions of which you are a part. Even while carving out privileges for yourself and your friends, you will convince yourself that the action you took really was fair, even though your ethical self tells you otherwise.

Your Vice is the quality of being that could result in you being intentionally or carelessly lured into unethical action.

Your vice could be turning into an ambitious elitist and failing to moderate your desire for power.

While unethical action can come from being unaware, humans also have moral flaws that, if not acknowledged, may turn unethical choices into habits. Because you intensely prefer rationality, you are particularly susceptible to the vices of arrogance and impatience. Without awareness and reflection, you can become judgmental and rigid, certain that you are more just than others.

Intensely preferring equality, you are particularly susceptible to the vices of disloyalty and injustice, ironically targeted at people and groups you believe are not being fair and generous. Without self-knowledge, humility and compassion, you can become rigid in your own definition of the truth, quick to label others as unethical if they are not meeting their obligations for fairness and equity—as defined by you.

Your Crisis is the circumstance that causes you to stop and evaluate your ethical choices.

Your crisis could be precipitated when you isolate yourself and feel guilty.

As you continue to walk the Path of the Citizen, you will at some point face a personal crisis as you acknowledge your inability to live into your strongly held commitment to justice. Believing that the institutions you work for can be fair and just, when faced with the imperfection of all institutions because people are flawed, you can feel isolated and betrayed by your community and guilty for trusting the institution or organization to live into its highest stated ideals.

And, as you realize that some people will demand more than their fair share and take advantage of your

generosity, your faith in humanity may unravel and you may wind up on a slippery slope to unethical behavior—becoming resentful and taking on behaviors that you had previously denounced. As you impose your will on others, you may become isolated from those who support you. As some point, you may even find that you have become exiled and are no longer welcome in your own community.

Strategies for Ethical Agility and Ethical Maturity

Resolving ethical conflict is an ongoing as well as challenging task. Because our personal morals and community ethics come from our deeply held values, we must approach the problems mindfully. Great self-knowledge helps us identify the values that are in conflict. Listening respectfully to others as they express their preferred course of action based on their core values also helps. Seeking harmony between our personal expectations and the behavior that the community rewards enhances ethical effectiveness and leads to ethical maturity, the ability to live in personal integrity while respecting the value priorities of and caring for both other individuals and the community as a whole.

Ethical agility is measured by our ability to use all four ethical lenses effectively. We develop ethical agility as we practice looking at the world through different ethical lenses, become more aware of the places where we are tempted to be unethical, and remember to ask the core questions that define each ethical perspective.

Follow the checklist for action

Ethical courage involves not just analyzing and reflecting—but also taking action. Pausing to check a proposed action against the value priorities of the Relationship Lens is a good final step for people from every ethical perspective. Using the checklist from each lens ensures a balanced decision, one that considers the core values and commitment of each lens.

- Ask what additional processes and safeguards are needed to provide fundamental fairness for all people, from the executive suite to the mail room.
- Make sure that representatives of all stakeholders are at the table when making decisions for the well-being of the community. Each voice is important.
- Listen for where people perceive that injustice is being done. Pay attention particularly to those who don't have a voice because of lack of power, resources, or position. Attend to those who are excluded because they belong to a group that is not given freedom.
- Make sure the processes fulfill their purpose.

As you become skilled at using your ethical telescope to identify the ideal principles that guide you on your path, you will find yourself in good company with others who follow the Path of the Thinker on their journey through life.

Develop ethical agility

Ethical agility is the ability to use all four ethical lenses—and the center perspective—effectively. You become more ethically agile as you practice looking at the world through different ethical lenses, become more aware of the places where you are tempted to be unethical, and remember to ask the core questions that define each ethical perspective.

Recognize the language of the different lenses

As you read about different approaches to ethics, you can pick up the subtle clues to other people's ethical perspectives by the words they choose to describe the problems and the reasons for their proposed course of action. To learn more about the other ethical lenses, read the information about each ethical lens under the tab *Ethical Lenses* on the menu bar or review the descriptions of the ethical traits for each lens under the tab *Traits*. You can also print the document "Overview Four Ethical Lenses" found under the *Ethical Lens* tab to have a quick reference guide to all four ethical perspectives.

Use all the ethical perspectives

Each ethical lens has a unique perspective on both the way to solve a problem as well as the specific characteristics of the most appropriate solution. To learn more about how each ethical perspective approaches ethical dilemmas, click Lens in the top navigation bar and read through the descriptions of each ethical lens.

Ethical agility is the first step towards ethical maturity, a life-long process of becoming ever more self-aware and learning how to move with dignity and grace in our community. As we move from fear into confidence, from thinking only of our self to considering others and the community as a whole, we gain ethical wisdom—a primary task of life as we seek that which is True and Good to find the Beautiful.

If you want to learn more about the how to understand and effectively use your ethical profile, please refer to *The Ethical Self*, by Catharyn Baird and Jeannine Niagaris (2016).