The Good and The Right

Contents

Introduction

There are two ways of thinking about ethics, which manifest themselves as two clusters of concepts and language, or domains of discourse, used to recommend or command specific actions or habits of character. They may be called the Good and the Right. The good has to do with achievement of goals; the right, with laws and rules. The goodness paradigm recognizes that people have desires and aspirations, and frames values in terms of what enables a being to achieve its ends. The rightness paradigm recognizes that people live in groups that require organization and regulations, and frames values in terms of duty and conformance to rules. Goodness and rightness "are not complementary portions of the moral field but alternative ways of organizing the whole field to carry out the tasks of morality."[1]

The primary task of morality, or ethics, is to guide one's actions. Many ways of thinking about ethics focus on whether specific actions are good or bad, or right or wrong. They help one decide what he or she should do in a particular case or class of cases, or evaluate after the fact actions that someone else has done. Another approach, Virtue Ethics, focuses on qualities of character and motives for action. Within Virtue Ethics the distinction between the good and the right is also applicable. Questions about what sort of character traits one should cultivate can be answered on the basis either of what is good or of what is right. Compassion and insight are typical goodness virtues, and a disposition of conscientious obedience is a typical rightness virtue.

The Good and the Right each have their area of applicability; they often get confused; and their confusion causes no end of trouble. In this chapter I compare and contrast the two in order to promote clarity of thought. In addition, I give reasons for preferring the goodness paradigm over rightness.

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[1] Edel, "Right and Good."

The Good

What is good has to do with benefits. Something that benefits something or someone else is called good for that thing or person. We can think of this instrumentally or biologically. Instrumentally, a hammer is good for pounding nails, and what is good for the hammer is what enables it to do so well. Biologically, air, water, and food are good for living beings.

Instrumentally, what is good for a thing enables that thing to serve its purpose. To make sense, an instrumental usage of the term "good" requires reference to somebody's purpose or intention. Thus, a hammer is good for pounding nails, and nails are good for building things such as furniture or housing, and we build furniture and housing because we want the comfort and utility they afford us. The instrumental usage is expressed in terms of usefulness, of utility for achieving a purpose or intention. Some hammers are better than others in that they have better heft or weight or balance and thus can be used to pound nails more effectively.

The instrumental usage leads to the biological usage. Why is it good for human beings to have comfort and utility? Because comfort and utility nourish us and keep us alive. Unlike the instrumental usage, the biological usage does not require reference to conscious purpose or intention.

The biological usage is expressed in terms of health and well-being. Biologically, what is good for an organism is what helps it survive and thrive, what nourishes it. Some things are better for us than others in this respect. For instance, a diet of whole grains and vegetables is better, in the sense of providing better health for humans, than a diet of simple carbohydrates and fats. Another example: some plants need full sunlight to thrive, and others need shade; thus full sunlight is good for the former, and shade is good for the latter. The good, in this sense, is that which enables a thing to function well.

The instrumental usage intersects the biological when we consider what is good for something that is itself good for a purpose or intention. For instance, keeping a hammer clean and sheltered from the elements is good for the hammer; if it gets too dirty to handle easily or too rusty to provide a good impact on the nail, it is not useful as a hammer. So we can talk about what is good for the hammer in a way that is analogous to what is good for a living being. The good, in this sense also, is that which enables a thing to function well.

The approach to ethics that emphasizes goodness is called the <u>teleological</u> approach, from a Greek word, *telos,* that means "end", "purpose", or "goal". Biologically, what is good for an organism helps that organism survive and thrive. Instrumentally, what is good for a thing enables that thing to serve its purpose.

Just as good is defined in relation to an end, the value of the end is defined in relation to another end. For instance, a hammer is good for driving nails. Driving nails is good for, among other things, building houses. We build houses to have shelter and warmth. And we desire shelter and warmth because they sustain our life.

This chain of goods and ends stretches in both directions from wherever we arbitrarily start looking. A hammer is good for driving nails. So what is good for the hammer? Whatever enables it to perform its function. It is not good to leave it out in the rain; it is good to handle it carefully, swing it accurately with grace and force, and put it away safely.

This approach is also sometimes called a <u>consequentialist</u> approach or an <u>effect-oriented</u> approach because both the instrumental and the biological usage give meaning to the term "good" by reference to the consequences or effects of an action or event. That whole grains are good for humans means that the effect of eating them is healthful. That a hammer is good for pounding nails means that using it for that purpose is likely to have the effect you want, namely that the nails go in easily and straight

The Goodness approach to ethics uses the terms "good" and "bad" to evaluate actions, things, people, states of affairs, etc., as well as maxims or guidelines for conduct. Some synonyms for "good" in this context are "helpful," "nourishing," "beneficial," "useful" and "effective." Some synonyms for "bad" are their opposites: "unhelpful," "unhealthy," "damaging," "useless" and "ineffective."

There are degrees of goodness and its opposite, badness. That some plants need full sunlight to thrive and others need shade means that full sunlight is good for the former and not so good for the latter.

I am very skeptical of claims there exists something absolutely good, that is, something alleged to be good without reference to its effects. Certainly on my definition of "good" such a concept makes no sense. Also, there is no end to the chains of goods and ends, no *summum bonum* (highest good) in which all chains culminate or from which all goods are derived. The world is a web, not a hierarchy. The only ultimate good would be the good of the entire universe and all that is within it, not an abstract entity or concept apart from it.

An ethic – a set of moral principles or values – based on goodness applied to concerns about choices between courses of action will ask questions about the anticipated or hoped-for benefits of one course of action as opposed to another. An ethic based on goodness applied to concerns about character will ask questions about the anticipated or hoped-for effects on one's habitual way of approaching life of one course of action as opposed to another.

The Right

What is right has to do with conformance to rules or regulations. This is easy to see in non-ethical situations. For instance, the right answer to "What is 37 divided by 9?" is "4 and 1/9." We apply a mathematical rule, the rule for how to do long division, and derive the right, or correct, answer. In ethical situations, we apply a moral rule to determine what the right course of action is. If one finds a wallet with some money in it and the owner's identification as well, the right thing to do is to return the money to the owner because it is wrong to keep something that does not belong to one, especially if one knows who the owner is. The moral rule in this case is "it is wrong to keep something that does not belong to one."

The approach to ethics that emphasizes rightness is called the <u>deontological</u> approach, from a Greek word, *deon*, that means "duty." One does one's duty when one acts according to the moral rules. We could also call this a <u>rules-based</u> approach. (By "rules" I mean prescribed guides for conduct, not generalizations that describe physical reality, such as the laws of nature.)

According to the deontological approach, an action is justified on the basis of a quality or characteristic of the act itself, regardless of its consequences. That characteristic is its conformance to a rule. Morality is concerned with identifying and obeying moral rules. It is right to obey the rules and wrong to disobey them. Any particular act can be judged right or wrong according to whether and to what extent it conforms to the moral rules. A central concern, then, is to identify the rules so one can make sure one is acting in accordance with them. Once the rules are established, all one needs to do in order to be moral is to do one's duty, which is to act in accordance with the rules.

The language associated with this school uses the terms "right" and "wrong" to evaluate actions. Some synonyms for "right" are "proper," "legal" and "correct." Some synonyms for "wrong" are "improper," "illegal" and "incorrect."

The problem, of course, is how to determine the moral rules. Humans seem to have an innate sense of morality, of right and wrong; but, notoriously, the actual set of rules they espouse varies from culture to culture. Although many people unreflectively adopt the rules taught them by their parents, teachers, religious leaders and culture, the task of philosophy is to provide a rational grounding for one's choice of what rules to follow. Philosophers have proposed numerous ways of determining what the rules are, such as divine command, the dictates of pure reason, and using an intuitive moral sense to apprehend an unseen but existent world of values. So far, there is no agreement on which of these is correct.

There are a number of other uses of the term "right" in addition to conformance to moral rules, such as the following:

- Correct, truthful, as in "the right answer." This implies that rightness is exclusive, that there is one right answer or opinion and that others are wrong.

- The best possible option or a very good option, as in "the right choice." This also implies exclusivity, but is problematic. Often one does not need to do what

is best. Sometimes one only needs to do something good enough to get a useful response, a response that gives feedback so one can further hone one's strategy, one's response to what is happening.

- Fitting, appropriate, in harmony with the way things are. This sense is more akin to the goodness paradigm. It asserts an aesthetic component of rightness, as when one artistically puts an element of a composition in "the right place."

- What the speaker approves of or assumes people generally approve of. This is an uncritical usage and is the least useful.

I mention these for completeness. The primary meaning of "right" in an ethical context is conformance to moral rules, and that is the meaning I address in this chapter.

Confusion Between the Good and the Right

All too often people confuse the notions of good and right. The confusion is understandable. Both concepts apply to what one should do, and often the debate is really about persuading someone to act in a certain way. Clarity of language and conceptual rigor seem to be less important than rhetoric. Here is an example:

> "DRM is a Catch-22 for consumers," he says. "We want to be law-abiding citizens, and we certainly respect companies' desires to protect their content, but the whole thing has become a rotten mess. You go out and buy music, and guess what, it doesn't play everywhere it should, and you have to jump through hoops to make it play. That's just wrong."[2]

One does not need to know what "DRM" stands for (it is "Digital Rights Management") in order to see that the argument quoted is partly in terms of the effects of DRM on consumers – they have to jump through hoops, and doing so is undesirable – and partly in terms of some unstated moral rule.

Here is another example:

> " In an ideal world, people would be figuring out more ways for proprietary and open source software to work seamlessly with each other .... All would benefit, and innovation would accelerate appropriately. Unfortunately, it appears the GPLv3 is finding new ways to rip the innovation fabric in half. That is wrong ...."[3]

Again one does not need to understand what the GPLv3 is (it is the GNU Public License version 3; does that help?) to see that the author is making a point about benefits but then says "That is wrong" as if the lack of benefits were what caused it to be wrong.

It is this way of using "right" and "wrong" – to express emphatically one's approval or disapproval – that leads some thinkers to assert that moral discourse is actually meaningless and merely expresses the speaker's preference or the speaker's attempt to influence someone else's behavior.

Why It Matters

If someone says something is good, one can always ask "good for what?" If someone says something is right, one can always ask "according to what rule?" The two domains of discourse really are separate, and it is not useful to mix them. Mixing them is a form of category error, that is, an error "by which a property is ascribed to a thing that could not possibly have that property."[4] That something has good effects does not make it right. That something is in accordance with a moral rule does not make it good.

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[2] URL: http://www.usatoday.com/tech/news/computersecurity/2005-11-13-digital-rights_x.htm, as of 5 September 2006
[3] URL: http://blogs.zdnet.com/carroll/?p=1592, as of 5 September 2006
[4] Wikipedia, "Category Mistake."

Making the distinction between Good and Right is important because it promotes clarity of thought. I do not argue that clarity of language is a necessary condition for clarity of thought, but it certainly helps. (Some people think more in pictures than words. I know artists who can get a little confused about words but create absolutely stunning works of art.) The clearer one's thinking, the more likely one is to succeed in the real world. Accurate thinking based on accurate perception leads to accuracy of action, action that leads to attainment of one's goals. Clear thinking enables one to survive and thrive.

Meta-ethics: Good vs. Right

The practice of the philosophy of ethics is the attempt to think carefully about ethical issues with a view to deciding how to live one's life. The idea is to base one's actions on rational thought. It consists of two parts, often called Normative ethics and Meta-ethics. (Professional ethics, the consensus in a profession as to what constitutes appropriate behavior, is a subset of normative ethics.)

The goal of normative ethics is to figure out what to do. This ranges from defining broadly-applicable maxims or rules for conduct to making specific decisions in response to particular circumstances. Normative ethics reasons from general principles to decisions about what to do in specific cases. Questions about the nature of the general principles are the province of meta-ethics. For instance, the languages of Good and Right are ways to formulate the general principles, and the choice of which language to adopt is a meta-ethical question.

Here is an example of normative ethics. Suppose you have the ethical principle that it is always wrong to tell a lie and it is always wrong to take what belongs to someone else. Suppose you find a wallet full of money and an identification card. You could just keep the wallet, but that would be taking something that belongs to someone else. You could return the wallet and keep the money, saying you found it empty, but that would be a lie. So, despite the allure of material gain, you return the wallet and the money as well. Given a strong commitment to the principles, the course of action is clear.

But what do you do if ethical principles conflict? Suppose you are living in Holland during World War II and Germany has invaded your country. Another ethical principle is that it is good to protect innocent people from harm, so you hide a family of Jews in your house. The Nazis come looking for them and ask if you are harboring any fugitives. You now have two ethical principles in conflict. Shall you protect the Jews or tell the truth? This is a meta-ethical issue: do you do what is good or what is right?

How to decide between framing ethical questions in terms of Good or Right is knotty because it is easy to get caught in circular reasoning and beg the question. If we ask which is better, we have already presupposed the Goodness paradigm. If we ask which is right, we have already presupposed the Rightness paradigm. We can assert that people who adopt an ethic based on goodness will be generally healthier and happier than those who focus on rightness, but that already assumes that goodness is superior to rightness. Or we can assert that people who adopt an ethic based on being right are morally superior to those who don't, but that already assumes that rightness is superior.

It is not impossible to make a choice, however. I believe it makes more sense to adopt the Goodness paradigm than to adopt the Rightness paradigm for the following reasons:

- There is a way to determine which paradigm is better but not a way to determine which is right.

- It is easier to find out what is good than to find out what is right.
- The Goodness paradigm solves the "is-ought" problem.
- It is methodologically easier to resolve conflicts among goods than conflicts among obligations.
- It is easier to justify obeying moral rules on the basis of consequences than to justify paying attention to consequences on the basis of moral rules.
- Excessive focus on being right promotes emotional distress.
- A Goodness paradigm promotes a recognition of the connectedness and unity of all things and as such is closer to reality.

The following paragraphs discuss each of these in turn.

There is a way to determine which paradigm is better but not a way to determine which is right

There is a way to determine which one (Goodness or Rightness) works better in the sense of promoting human happiness and welfare: by observation. Observe people who live by a Goodness ethic. Observe people who live by a rule-based ethic. See who seems to be happier and more fulfilled. See which set of people have more beneficial effects on those around them. Try living by the Goodness ethic yourself. Try living by a set of rules. See which one leads you to be happier and more fulfilled. See which one has better effects on those around you. I suspect that you will find that the Goodness ethic works better. Whether or not you do, the point is that there is a method: to observe the effects. The effects are observable publicly, and people can come to agreement about them. If there are disagreements, further observation can help resolve them.

There is not, however, a way to determine which one (Goodness or Rightness) is right. In order to do that you would have to determine the rules by which to judge which one is right and which one is wrong. But there is profound disagreement among philosophers and across cultures about what the rules are. Moral rules are not publicly observable, and there is no easy way to come to agreement about them.

That there is a way to determine which one is better, but not a way to determine which one is right leads me to believe that the Goodness paradigm is superior.

It is easier to find out what is good than to find out what is right

How do we know what The Good is? How can we find out what is good for us? It's not hard. Observe what makes you healthy and what makes you sick, what makes you happy and what makes you unhappy, what leads to your flourishing (the Greek word is *eudaimonia*, literally "wellness of soul") and what doesn't.

How do we know what the Right is? That is more difficult. So far there is no agreement on which of the many philosophical views is correct.

This state of affairs leads me to believe that the Goodness paradigm makes more sense than the Rightness paradigm.

The Goodness paradigm solves the "is-ought" problem

In Book III of his *Treatise of Human Nature*, David Hume asserts that normative statements (saying that something ought to be so) cannot be derived from descriptive statements (saying that something is). This has been known ever since as the "is-ought" problem.[5] I suppose it is a problem because we would like to figure out what to do on the basis of what actually exists, but it is only a problem if "ought" is used in the context of the Rightness paradigm. It is easy to derive "ought" from "is" in the context of the Goodness paradigm. The general form is what Kant calls a hypothetical imperative:

- If one wants to accomplish x, then one ought to do y.

Here is a particular example:

- If one wants to get along with people, then one ought to be honest and friendly.

We can apply this example to a particular case using an argument with two premises and a conclusion, as follows:

- Premise: Those who are honest and friendly get along with people.
- Premise: Someone (a particular person) wants to get along with people.
- Conclusion: That person ought to be honest and friendly.

This argument resembles the logical form called modus ponens:

A implies B
A is true
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therefore B is true

The ethical form replaces the second premise with an assertion about desire or intention instead of about truth and concludes with an imperative, or at least a recommendation:

A implies B
One desires B
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therefore one ought to do A

Instead of asserting that A is true and deriving B, we say that we want B to be true, and hence we should do what we can to make A true.

In the context of the Goodness paradigm, where a "good" is understood instrumentally as something that enables one to achieve a goal or purpose, it is easy and straightforward to figure out general guidelines for how to live one's life from statements of facts. It is notoriously difficult, if not impossible, to do so in the context of the Rightness paradigm. Thus, the Goodness paradigm is superior in this regard.

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[5] Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature, Book III*. Slawson, "Ought vs. Is." Wikipedia, "Is–ought problem."

It is methodologically easier to resolve conflicts among goods than conflicts among obligations

It is all too easy to find conflicts among rules. We can cast the dilemma mentioned earlier entirely in terms of right and wrong instead of Right vs. Good. It is wrong to tell a lie and it is wrong to harm an innocent person. So which rule takes precedence when the Nazis come hunting the Jews? We need to modify one of the rules to make it subordinate to the other, or appeal to some higher-level rule. But if we cast the problem in terms of benefits and harm, the choice is obvious: more harm comes from telling the truth, so one should lie and protect the innocent.

Of course we can find conflicts among goods as well, but it is easier to resolve them by looking at a larger context. It would certainly be to your financial benefit to keep the wallet and the money you found. Without reference to moral rules, it would appear that the best thing to do would be to keep the money. But to do so would harm yourself. It tends to make you less trustworthy; it may well make you feel bad about yourself; and it causes a division between you and the owner, isolating you from that bit of human contact. To give the money back would make the owner happy, make you feel better, and strengthen the bonds of connection between you and other. On balance, returning the money is the better thing to do.

That it is methodologically easier to resolve conflicts using the Goodness paradigm indicates that it is to be preferred.

It is easier to justify obeying moral rules on the basis of consequences than to justify paying attention to consequences on the basis of moral rules

One can always ask why one should obey the moral rules. The answer invariably turns out to be because the consequences of doing so are more favorable than those of not obeying them.

In childhood the rules come from one's parents. By obeying them we gain parental approval and avoid punishment. Extending this to the social norms of one's community, obeying the rules means being a good citizen. Doing so we gain the approval and avoid the scorn of those whose opinions matter to us, not to mention avoiding fines and jail sentences. To a more mature mind, the rules might seem to come from the dictates of one's conscience, an internal voice which judges our actions as right or wrong, as worthy of approval or disapproval. By obeying, we gain a sense of uprightness, of rectitude, and we avoid feeling guilty. Further reflection leads us to wonder where the voice of conscience comes from and what the justification is for what that voice tells us. We find ourselves with a sense of duty and wonder who or what imposes that duty. Many believe that God defines the moral rules and imposes the duty to obey. God is thus a surrogate parent, and by obeying God's commands we gain divine reward and (we hope) avoid divine punishment. Kant alleged that the dictates of pure reason impose the duty to act so that the basis on which we act could be universalized without contradiction. For a rational being, contradiction is certainly unfavorable. Others postulate an unseen world of values, not unlike Plato's Forms, which the moral sense in some way apprehends. The consequences of doing one's

duty in this view are an internal sense of being in harmony with moral reality, of being virtuous and worthy of approval, whether or not anyone actually approves.

In all of these cases, the reason for obeying the rules turns out to be a concern with the consequences of doing so or not doing so. This leads me to believe that the Goodness paradigm, which emphasizes consequences, is more inclusive than the Rightness paradigm, which emphasizes rules.

Coming at it another way, we can ask why one should pursue what is good. If we try to answer the question from within the Rightness paradigm, we find the Utilitarian position, that what is morally right is that which maximizes pleasure and minimizes pain among all concerned. (If we think that the concepts of pleasure and pain are too narrow, we can extend it to say that is right which maximizes well-being among all concerned.) But the problem with the Utilitarian position, which is well-known, is that it is in practice impossible to calculate the long-term benefits and harms with sufficient precision. The so-called hedonic calculus is unworkable.

More to the point, there are a great many rules-based positions, and Utilitarianism is only one of them. Many of the deontological positions deny that one should pay attention to consequences in determining what to do. But, as I have shown, the reason for adopting a deontological position in the first place boils down to consequences.

From the Goodness point of view, the answer to why one should pursue what is good is straightforward. If you do, you will feel better and function better than if you don't. If you don't, you will feel and function worse.

(Logically, one could then ask why you should want to feel and function better. Logic fails here, however. The question is, if not logically absurd, at least ridiculous. The fact is, we do want to feel and function better, as does every other living thing, because it is built into our nature, who and what we are.)

The fact that it is easy to justify adherence to moral rules on the basis of consequences, and easy to justify concern with goodness on the basis of consequences, but difficult to justify concern with consequences on the basis of moral rules, leads me to believe that a concern with goodness has logical priority over a concern with moral rules.

Focusing on being right promotes emotional distress, but seeking to increase benefits and reduce harms promotes emotional health

I do not know if there have been any controlled studies, but my observation of people leads me to believe that an orientation towards Rightness causes or is at least correlated with emotional distress. Viewed from the outside, the distress manifests as uptightness, defensiveness, and a tendency to blame, punish and alienate other people whom one perceives as violating the rules. From the inside, when I feel morally indignant or punishing, I am agitated, angry and compulsive. It is not at all a pleasant feeling. When I focus on maximizing benefits, I am alert, inquisitive and thinking about objective reality. It is a much more pleasant way to be.

Those who focus on maximizing benefit, regardless of who is right and wrong, tend to be more open, pleasant, tolerant and happy. Less obsessed by emotional pain, their ability to find workable responses to life situations seems to be greater.

There is, of course, no way to compare one person's emotional state to another's. But one can compare, via memory, one's own emotional states at different times. This requires some degree of self-observation and consequent self-knowledge. If you put in the effort to do so, I think you will find that focusing on how to obtain good outcomes is a much more pleasant way to live than focusing on who is right and who is wrong and feeling resentful and blaming toward those you think are wrong.

A Goodness paradigm is closer to reality in that it promotes a recognition of the unity and connectedness of all things

This consideration depends on the metaphysical assertion that reality is one and that all apparently separate things are connected in that unity. I discuss that assertion in other chapters.

The Rules-based paradigm implies division and separation. It is all too easy to differentiate between those who obey the rules and those who don't, and to vilify and persecute the latter. Of course the latter have their own set of rules and vilify and persecute the former. The result is strife and discord.

Focusing on goods, one looks at the health of the whole and of each part of the whole. One seeks to include the parts in the whole. This approach is more conducive to a recognition of Oneness and is thus more aligned with reality.

Lacking a recognition that all things are inter-connected, a focus on goods rather than rights or duties may also lead to strife, as numerous wars over territory and resources have demonstrated. But too often the justification for such wars is couched in rules-based morality.[6] It is much harder to break out of the "us vs. them" rules mentality than to consider additional evidence within the mentality that looks for benefits and harms. Better outcomes result from thinking in terms of good and bad than from thinking in terms of right and wrong.

Conclusion

For all these reasons, it makes more sense to frame ethical considerations in terms of good and bad, beneficial and harmful, or effective and ineffective, than in terms of right and wrong, proper and improper, or correct and incorrect. When asking any

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[6] To give but one example, in the early 21st century the leaders of a powerful nation, most of whose citizens professed to be Christians, whipped up enmity against "Islamic terrorists" to justify invasion of a much weaker country that in fact posed no threat. Many believed the real reason was the leaders' desire to gain control of the weaker country's oil resources; but the stated reason was to protect the stronger nation from terrorists, and the sub-text was that Christians are right and Muslims are wrong. This entire effort showed ignorance of the greater benefits that could have accrued to everyone – including the misguided leaders – had the leaders recognized that a more lasting security could be had by cooperating and finding common ground.

ethical question – what should one do in a given situation, what kind of person one should strive to be, how to resolve conflict among persons or nations – frame the question in terms of goodness and badness, what is beneficial or harmful, to yourself and those around you.

Advice – Use Goodness Language

To conclude, here is some advice from Christopher Avery, trainer in effective teamwork and author of the book *Teamwork Is An Individual Skill.*[7]

> "[We] request that a group remove the words 'right' and 'wrong' from their shared team vocabulary. We ask them instead to simply substitute the words 'works' and 'doesn't work.'"[8]

"Works" and "doesn't work" refer to effects or consequences. Focusing on effects has several advantages:

- It opens one to more possibilities. To say something is "the right thing" to do implies that there is only one right thing. But there may be many good things to do.

- It keeps one's attention on the present and open to learning. To say "the right thing" or "the wrong thing" makes implicit reference to a rule, and rules tend not to change. But the real world is always changing, and what works today might not work tomorrow. Relying on moral rules tends to make one overly certain of things; focusing on what works tends to help one keep learning what works and what doesn't, and under what circumstances.

- It promotes healthy relationships. Again from Avery:

> "[Using 'works' and 'doesn't work'] connects us in relationship instead of assigning disconnected states of being. Authoritative use of 'right' and 'wrong' can numb us into operating as disconnected automatons. Think about it. 'That's right' can be falsely affirming and 'that's wrong' can be falsely degrading. I have found myself so sensitive to this that when my young son points and says 'That dog's brown,' instead of responding 'that's right,' I affirm him by saying 'I agree Thom, that dog appears brown to me too!' I don't know about you, but I prefer the connection that comes with that. It works for me!"[9]

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[7] Avery, C. M., *Teamwork Is an Individual Skill: Getting Your Work Done When Sharing Responsibility*.
[8] Avery, "Use 'Works' And 'Doesn't Work.'"
[9] ibid.

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2.1	20 May 2011	Bill Meacham	Fix minor typo. Revise sequence of paragraphs in "The Good."
2.2	15 August 2017	Bill Meacham	Update Edel reference to cite current URL.
2.3	20 February 2018	Bill Meacham	p. 10: replace "is based on" with "resembles".