

Wallace R. Baker

CHEATING

**THE ORIGIN, NATURE, IMPORTANCE
AND IMPROVEMENT
OF BUSINESS AND OTHER ETHICS**

WALLACE R. BAKER

©2017 Wallace R. Baker

March 2017

and law, ethics in medicine, ethics in science, ethics and religion, ethics and government, ethics and philosophy, and ethics and journalism.

7. **HOW ARE ETHICS TRANSMITTED AND FORMALIZED?**

Ethical rules are transmitted orally in families, by friends, schools, churches, cultural traditions and institutions, through sacred texts, church ceremonies, books on philosophy, religious and secular law and other ways.

Predominant Influence of Mothers

The most important time and place good character is formed is in early family life under the influence of top quality parents, especially the mother who usually concentrates on caring for and teaching her young children.

Mothers Solutions to Teaching Children Ethics

A very successful brilliant and wealthy top scientist and entrepreneur told me his mother taught him that cheating and being dishonest was stupid.

Since there is a little of the devil in most children being naughty and dishonest has its attractions to a certain number of kids, so it is probably better just to say: it is stupid.

Another outstanding mother who has raised a distinguished family taught her children that "families are for building the attitudes so necessary to building a better community. Families are for belonging to something bigger than just yourself."

Later a young person is strongly influenced by friends and contemporaries. Role models and mentors often play important parts in young persons' lives.

Declarations of Human Rights and other Documents

One also finds ethical principles stated in declarations and other documents. The Declaration of Human Rights was signed by members of the United Nations in 1948, based in

part on the Bill of Rights in the amendments to the United States Constitution, the French Rights of Man in the preamble to the French Constitution of 1958 and on the French Declaration of the Rights of Man in 1789.

Marie-Olympe de Gouges was guillotined in Paris on November 3, 1793. The fact that she was the author of the *Declaration of Rights of Women and Citizen*, or her writings favoring civil and political rights for women and the abolition of slavery, did not prevent her execution by the regime of Maximilien Robespierre which she attacked.¹³⁶

Many laws, constitutions and international treaties and other statements of principles (soft law) have ethical content.

Culture transmits Ethics

Mark Pagel, a leading researcher, sees in his new book *Wired for Culture*, reviewed in the Financial Times of March 3 and 4, 2012, page 15 and quotes taken from Clive Cookson's article, culture as "a second great system of inheritance to stand alongside our genes – a new way of transmitting information that allowed knowledge to be passed from person to person and from one generation to the next, short cutting the normal genetic route on inheritance".

To define culture, the author borrows a remark made many years ago by Lord Raglan "It is roughly everything we do and monkeys don't". His book shows "how genes and culture evolved hand-in-hand. Characteristics at the heart of human society such as altruism and diversity of skills are based on genetics but their evolution depended on the survival advantages of living in a collaborative culture".

Corporate Codes transmit Ethics

Even where legal rules and regulations apply to a company's business, unethical corporate executives often adhere only to the letter of the law, but violate the spirit or

¹³⁶ http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Olympe_de_Gouges

reason for the rule or the law. This does not protect investors, employees or third parties. Ethics, honesty and transparency are necessary to insure shareholders and third parties are fairly informed about the financial situation of a company. Ethical action needs to be based on general principles as well as on specific detailed rules which can often be avoided by a subterfuge, thus vitiating the protection of the public.

Ethical rules are transmitted in many forms, all of which hopefully improve conduct. Repetition of these rules and practicing good conduct is often the best way to do it – by example. If good examples are followed there is no need for sanctions.

8. ARE SOME BUSINESSES UNETHICAL BY NATURE?

Excessive Love of Money is Unethical

If "the love of money is the root of all evil¹³⁷", then, since the primary objective of business is to make money, are all businesses unethical? Or does the love of money only become sinful if it is excessive and leads to improper conduct relating to others? In Annex II, see excerpts from a book with a description of the sin of avarice or greed prepared for Catholic clergymen in the 18th century. It is the unrestrained love of material riches, according to this text, that leads to wrong doing. Misleading others in order to enrich oneself is what often happened in the 2008 sub-prime mortgage scandal.

Big Money Big Hero in American Culture

In theory, the best business man is the one who makes the most money and thus should become the hero figure in

¹³⁷ "For the love of money is the root of all evil, and in their eagerness to get rich, some men wander away from the faith and pierced themselves in the heart with many a pang " in I Timothy VI, 10. *The Complete Bible, An American Translation*. The New Testament translated by Edgar J. Goodspeed. 1939. The University of Chicago Press.