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# **CHEATING**

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

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

Hermes –The god of commerce, invention, cunning and theft who serves as messenger and herald for other gods, as patron of travelers and rogues and as the conductor of travelers to Hades.

Greek Mythology

"In the performance of duties, we shall have to become skilled evaluators of duty, and by calculation perceive where the weight of the duty lies ... Circumstances alter cases."

Cicero<sup>1</sup>

#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

This book began by formulating some important questions relating to the subject of business and other related ethics in order to investigate and better understand the subject.

These questions include: Where did ethics come from? What is their origin and history? What constitutes their nature, description, dimension and characteristics, starting with animal behavior, religion, living in a community, values, philosophy and other possible sources? Does evolution always produce better ethics? Are ethics the same for everybody? Do or can universal ethics exist? Do ethics change depending upon gender and with whom you are dealing – family members, friends, strangers or foes? Do ethics vary at different times like environmental ethics? Are

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<sup>1</sup> The quote from Cicero is taken from Witton, Howard. 2007. *Developing the Ethical Competence of Public Officials. A capacity Building Approach*. Private paper prepared for UNESCO.

ethics subject specific? Are ethics separated from business? Are some businesses in whole or in part unethical? Does ethical conduct pay and if so for whom? Can ethics be enforced thru law and enforcement of justice? What is the relation of ethics, (morality), law and justice? How are ethics formalized and transmitted to future generations? Can research help us improve ethics? Why are ethics important? What role does government play in trying to reach an ethical society? And what are the consequences if government is not ethical?

These are some of the questions this book attempts to answer. To do so, where possible, the author has cited history, experience and the best scholars he could find from a wide variety of specialized fields. The most important areas of knowledge drawn on in this book are biology, the study of animals (ethology), the study of primates, anthropology, behavioral economics, political science, philosophy, religion, and natural sciences<sup>2</sup>. This book is trans-disciplinary.

The study of Business Ethics was initiated for the author at a 1998' UNESCO work shop organized by Marie Louise Kearney from New Zealand, the Director ERC (NCP) sector for External Relations Cooperation, who invited the author to preside at this work shop.

This problem area is important because it is woven into our lives, affects outcomes of our efforts and is an important element in the tragic economic crises that reoccur from time to time causing great damage to those who lose employment, homes and savings.

These crises have expanded geographically in their effects in an increasingly globalized world where shock

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<sup>2</sup> Other fields also considered in this book are: history, psychology, other social sciences, economics, physics, the science of chaos and complexity, modeling, chemistry, evolutionary science, comparative human development, neuroscience and behavioral neuroscience, psychiatry, brain science, medicine, law, technology and communication technology and other bodies of knowledge or experience that shed light on this subject.

waves travel faster and faster across communities and national boundaries. There is less stability than when our world was more compartmentalized by national borders and there was more separation between different peoples and events. Rapid innovation has brought rapid changes to life so that many people crave less change and more stability.

The scope of this subject is human nature which is complex and varied and was formed over millions of years. Our ethical capabilities are limited by our human nature which is still to a great extent animal nature.

It cuts across and depends on the many different bodies of knowledge mentioned above, intertwined in complex patterns, chaos and disorder going back to our primate evolution, starting about eight million years ago when our line of development separated from monkeys and apes. It also involves different human cultures in more recent times.

The new information revolution has facilitated the solution to some of our problems but has also complicated getting the right information since there is so much of it.

The major thread that runs through this book is the relation of money, ambition, competition and power of individuals, companies or small groups, to ethical conduct. Conflicts occur where individual striving runs against the good of the community. Another complicating aspect is conflict between different ethical and cultural values that underlie what is considered ethical. Competition often plays an important role. The quality of the family life in raising children is essential. The effects of unlimited reproduction and unwanted children affect human character in many parts of the world. This has led to the present population explosion, poverty, crime, terrorism, out-sized prison populations in the U.S., and unhappiness. A minimum level of wealth usually increases happiness. The ambition of the author in researching and writing this book is to try to find ways to make life on this earth more heavenly, without

waiting to find out what happens after death in the hope that the afterlife - if it exists - will be better.

The outcome of humanity's search for improvement may depend upon whether Darwin's theory of survival of the fittest still works in the modern world and whether it will lead to a better world. To improve social life, business interests need to actively cooperate by being more ethical, more accountable and socially innovative in the public interest. Will Darwin's principle of survival of the fittest continue to drive the world and in what direction?

The doors the author has used to open up this subject are the series of important questions mentioned above and found in the table of contents and at various points in the text itself.

This introduction continues by raising issues, later dealt with in more detail, to illustrate and introduce the different ways to approach the subject and its complexity.

## **2. HUMAN BEHAVIOR INCLUDES EVIL ACTIONS AND MORAL CONDUCT**

The variety of human conduct is huge. Genocide is where killers do not consider their victims as humans but objects for which there is no empathy. Part of the brain is activated when humans are involved, in particular the pre-frontal cortex. This region becomes active when we are interacting with or thinking about other people, but it is not active when we are dealing with inanimate objects.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Eagleman, David, a neuro-scientist at Baylor College of Medicine, has written "The Brain Network", 24, 25 October 2015, page 21, Financial Times quoted above. This article is based in part on an edited extract from his book "The Brain : The Story of You", 2015, Pantheon Press and published by Cannongate Books, also in 2015.