


Business Ethics and Virtue

Aristotelian Functionalism

1. Whether an x is good partly depends on what an x is. A good x fulfills its function well.
2. Rationality is the distinguishing characteristic of persons.
3. People must, therefore, exercise rationality in order to function well and live good lives.
4. Furthermore, a thing is happy if it fulfills its function.
5. Therefore, people who live good lives by functioning well will also live happy lives.




Aristotle (384 – 322 BC)

Virtues

The characteristics that allow things to function properly are called 'good-making features' or 'virtues'.

They depend on:

- (1) the thing's function
- (2) the thing's circumstances



The 4 Main Virtues of Character:
 Courage, Honesty, Temperance/Self Control, Justice/Fairness

Doctrine of the Mean

Question: How do you know how to act in any given situation?
Answer: Find the mean between the extremes: the 'just right' point, NOT living in moderation.

cowardice ←————→ rashness
 courage

Note: The mean is relative to the situation

The 4 Virtues in Business

Courage: risk-taking and willingness to take a stand for the right ideas and actions.

Honesty: in agreements, hiring and treatment of employees, customers and other companies.

Temperance: "reasonable expectations and desires" (Soloman 34).

Justice: hard work, quality products, good ideas, fair practices

Learning to be Virtuous

Questions: What is the right thing to do in the situation?
 How do you become that type of person?

1. Model yourself after a virtuous person.
2. It will be hard at first! (Weakness of the Will)
3. Do it anyway, and it will become a habit (disposition).
4. Habit = Character Trait = Virtue (if it is a good habit)


Aristotle v. Nietzsche	
<u>Virtues</u>	<u>Virtues</u>
“The Good Corporate Citizen”	“The Entrepreneur”
Courage	Independence
Justice/Fairness	Creativity
Temperance/Self-Control	Risk-Taking
Honesty	
Friendliness	
The Unity of the Virtues	The Discordance of the Virtues

Business Virtues v. Virtues of a Citizen

If the traits that allow “the market ... to work at full efficiency” = those that “allow the market to work harmoniously in ... society”, then the virtues of a business person = the virtues of a citizen (Solomon 33).

TRUSTWORTHINESS & COOPERATION

Business Virtues

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trust Temperance/Self-Control Empathy Justice/Fairness Honesty Learning Gratitude Civility Moral Leadership 	 <p>Steve Jobs, Apple Founder and CEO</p>
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(Ian Maitland, “Virtuous Markets”)