


Do you know what's

LEARNING THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN GOOD AND BAD BEHAVIOR IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF GROWING UP. BEHAVIORISTS THOUGHT THAT GOOD AND BAD ACTIONS WERE CONDITIONED BY REWARDS AND PUNISHMENTS, BUT LATER PSYCHOLOGISTS SUGGESTED THAT WE ACQUIRE OUR SENSE OF RIGHT AND WRONG IN DISTINCT STAGES.

 Alarming, studies have shown that 60 percent of people will lie at least once during a ten-minute conversation.

Moral teaching

For a long time, it was thought that children's moral development—learning about right and wrong—was determined by teaching. Behaviorist psychologists believed that moral behavior could be shaped by conditioning. Using the idea of stimulus and response, they thought that good behavior could be conditioned by rewards, and bad behavior discouraged by punishment. But others pointed out that most people haven't committed a serious crime and been punished for it, yet they know that murder, for example, is wrong. And although

MORALITY DEVELOPS IN SIX STAGES.

LAWRENCE KOHLBERG

children of different ages, asking what they thought about morally wrong things such as stealing and lying, and observed them playing games together. As with their psychological development in general, he found that children develop a sense of morality in stages. And, just as he thought that they learn best by exploring the world on their own, rather than through instruction from a teacher, he suggested that children develop their ideas of right and wrong, fair and unfair, themselves, through their relationships with others of the same age. In games, children make rules that reflect their evolving notions of justice, equality, and reciprocity (give and take)—quite independently of teachers, parents, or other authority figures.

**IN THE SIMPLEST OF SOCIAL GAMES,
WE FIND RULES WHICH HAVE BEEN
ELABORATED BY THE CHILDREN ALONE.**

JEAN PIAGET

psychologists such as Albert Bandura suggested that we learn by imitating others, children who play aggressive video games generally don't go on to act violently, since they know this is wrong.

The rules of the game

A large part of Jean Piaget's study of children's development focused on their moral development. He interviewed

Steps in the right direction

About 25 years after Piaget's theory of moral development, Lawrence Kohlberg took the ideas a step further. He agreed that we develop a sense of morality in gradual stages, but felt that authority figures and society in general do have an influence—a sense of morality does not come from the child alone. He also

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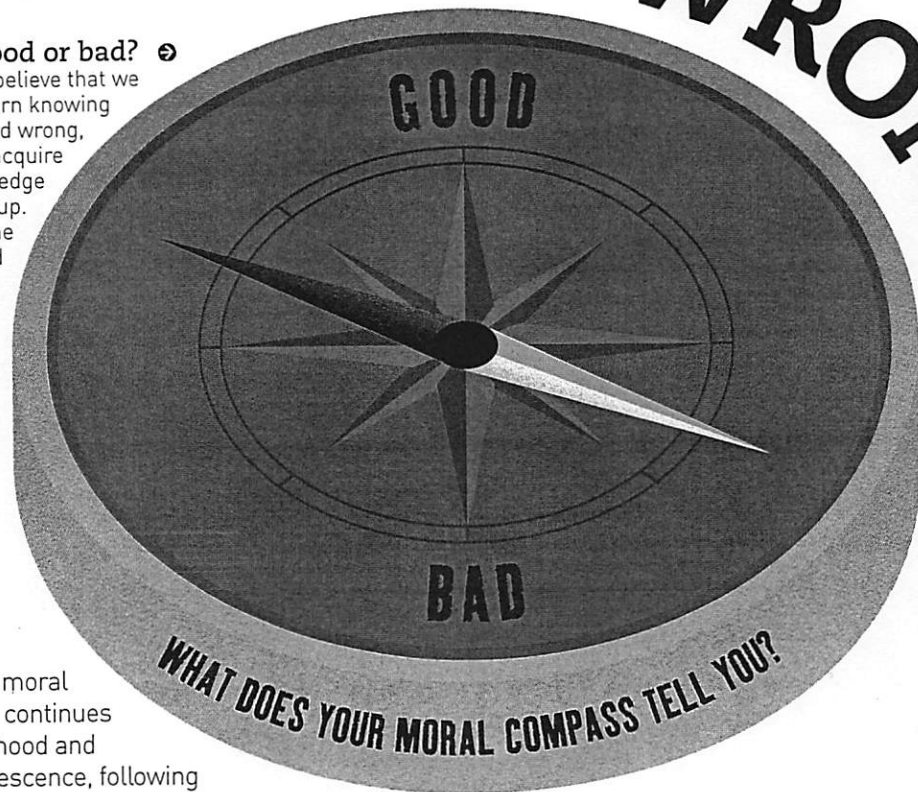
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RIGHT AND WRONG?

Good or bad? ☺

Psychologists believe that we are not born knowing what's right and wrong, but that we acquire this knowledge as we grow up. Even so, the line between good and bad is not clear-cut.



believed that moral development continues beyond childhood and through adolescence, following a series of six distinct stages. In the first stage, children are concerned with avoiding punishment; in the next, they realize that certain behavior can result in a reward. The third stage involves children trying to conform to what they believe is expected (social norms), in order to be regarded as "good" boys or girls. In the fourth stage, children recognize that there are rules governing behavior laid down by authority figures, such as parents. Moving into adolescence, children begin to understand the reasons for rules and social norms, and how their behavior affects other people, and in the final stage, they form a moral sense based on principles of justice, equality, and reciprocity.

PASSING JUDGMENT

In one moral development study, children watched a puppet show. A ball was passed to one puppet, who sent it back, then passed to another, who ran away with it. The puppets were then put on piles of treats, and each child was asked to take a treat from one of the piles. Most took from the pile of the "naughty" puppet—and one right-minded one-year-old also gave the puppet a smack.



See also: 16-17, 18-19, 26-27

