



Immanuel Kant

**What makes
an intention a
good one?**

The good will

You are walking home.
You see a rich old lady, who
has fallen over. Do you:

- help her
- not help her
- rob her



Kant would contend, 'help the old lady'.

It is a moral duty to help others when you can ('ought implies can')

For an act to be moral, the good will must comply with the moral law

You decide to help because you...

- get a buzz out of helping others
- are naturally sympathetic
- might get a reward
- are afraid of mum reprimanding you for not helping



- could get your name in the paper
- like old people & think they're cute

Kant would contend that none of these reasons is good enough

though we might praise and encourage some of them

we cannot esteem them

they have no genuine moral worth

“that [an action] conforms to the moral law is not enough; it must also be done for the sake of the moral law”

What, for Kant, are the two elements of the good will?

A good will

- acts in accordance with the **moral law**
- acts because of the moral law
- out of a sense of duty (Pflicht) and reverence (Achtung) for the **moral law**

Human Nature

- For Kant, humans are 'imperfectly rational'
- **Imperfect:** we have natural desires and inclinations, and can act from these
- **Rational:** we have reason, and can act from universal, rational principles

The 3 motives of human action

- 1. 'for some other **end**' i.e. because it has desirable effects
- 2. '**immediate inclination**' e.g. because you like doing it in itself
- 3. for the sake of **duty** i.e. because of the **moral law**

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Read Kant's examples and
decide whether the actions

- conform to the moral law

- are performed for the sake
of the moral law

- Explain each of Kant's examples concisely in your own words
- Explain, too, what it shows about the good will.

1. What are the two dimensions of a good will?
2. What do the words *Pflicht* and *Achtung* mean?
3. What is Kant's conception of human nature?
4. What are the three possible motives for human action?
5. Recall Kant's six examples (shopkeeper, the preservation of life, the philanthropist).

Progress with Kantianism

- 1. What is Kantianism?
- 2. What is the highest and prime good?
- 3. Why is a gute Wille good irrespective of its effects?
- 4. What renders a gute Wille good?
- 5. What is the moral law?