

## Deontology (AKA Kantian Ethics): The One Page Version ☺

### What is it?

- Created by a guy named Immanuel Kant.
- When you think “Deontology” think “DUTY,” as in “What is my duty to this person (or group or agency or system)?”
- So basically it’s the Samurai approach to ethics (have some ironclad rules and follow em)

### How do I use it?

- Only two rules! Both are under a heading called the “Categorical Imperative”
- FIRST RULE
  - Basically, do NOT do anything unless you’d be ok with EVERYONE doing it.
  - Ex: Don’t steal because if everyone stole then it’d be the Purge.
  - So the answer to your mom’s question “If everyone was jumping off a bridge, would you do it too?” is yes if you’re following Kant’s rule.
  - Fancier way to say this is Nietzsche’s “Eternal Recurrence of the Same,” which is basically Groundhog Day ethics.
- SECOND RULE
  - You CANNOT use people as means to ends. People are always ends, NOT means to ends.
    - This means you too. (So, for example, you can’t say “I’ll sell my organs to get concert tickets.”)

### Pros

- Only two things you gotta watch out for
- Avoids a TON of traps that Utilitarianism falls into (doesn’t solve the Trolley Problem but captures why it’s kinda messed up)
  - Humans (vs. happiness or pleasure or etc) become the MOST important thing. So it’s a HUMANE ethics.

### Cons

- Took philosophers about 30 seconds to find counterexamples (the Les Miserables example)
- Leaves out emotion (Utilitarianism doesn’t)
  - But Kant’s BFF Arthur Schopenhauer fixed this a few decades later
- Bit harder to apply especially with systems
  - For example, is DHS as an agency treated as an end . . . or the DHS workers . . . or the kids . . . or ???
  - More moving parts makes it harder (but not impossible) to apply