

# *Ethics & Emotional Appeals*

The role of and limitations of  
emotional appeals in  
persuasion.

## *Review:*

- Ethics are standards of expression and behavior.
- These standards vary across time and place.

## *Review (Cont.)*

- There are three basic standard types:
  - A. Standards that tell us what is obligatory.
  - B. Standards that specify what is desired.
  - C. Standards that affirm that which is forbidden.

## *Ethical Origins:*

- Ethical standards originate from one or more of the following:
  - 1. An individual's self-actualization.
  - 2. Peer pressure to conform.
  - 3. Institutional norms.
  - 4. Societal norms & pressures.

# *What Are Emotions?*

- Emotions are physiological manifestations of changes in:
  - Hormonal changes or imbalances.
  - Internal body biochemistry changes.
  - Ingesting of external mood-altering substances (ie: drugs, stimulants).
  - Body electrostatic changes.

## *Emotions (Cont.):*

- Your emotions are not caused by others or by events. No one else can make you feel a certain way (ie: sad, happy, lustful, lonely, confused, ....)
- You control your emotions or choose not to exert self control over your emotional state.

## *Emotions (Cont.):*

- Admittedly, circumstances or select others can place you in situations where you find yourself or allow yourself to be influenced, pressured, seduced, or invited to have and to express certain socially acceptable/expected emotions.
- Even here, your emotions are **your** choice.

# *Exceptions to Emotional Autonomy:*

- Certain mental illnesses can impair emotional autonomy.
- Substance ingestion/abuse can impair emotional autonomy.
- Willful neglect of one's autonomy can relegate emotional states to habit and external manipulation.

# *The Nexus of Ethics & Emotions:*

- Using emotions to persuade others is ethical as long as the persuader allows, encourages, and facilitates rational decision-making on the part of the persuadee.
- Short-circuiting rationality on the part of those being persuaded by the sole use of or hyper use of emotional appeals is unethical.

# *Unethical Persuasion*

## *Responsibilities:*

- If a persuader influences another by employing unethical persuasive means (such as the misuse of or over use of emotional appeals), that persuader has to assume some level of responsibility for adverse outcomes resulting from such persuasion.

## *Responsibilities (Cont.):*

- The individual being persuaded has a personal responsibility to:
- Ask relevant questions concerning what others are trying to get you to do.
- Deliberate the outcomes of others' persuasion.
- Not be rushed into a decision.
- Take personal responsibility for our decisions.

# *Typical Emotional-Laden Persuasive Strategies:*

quilt

loneliness

hatred

fear

conformity

patriotism

lust

jealousy

pride

greed

shame

compassion

obligation

vanity

impatience

## *Emotion Variables:*

- Not all emotional appeals work equally well. There are several variables that affect emotional appeal success including:
  - emotion's potency
  - persuadee saliency
  - fit to persuadee personality

## *Emotion Variables (Cont.):*

- timing of emotional strategy
- attributed emotional motives
- persuadee anticipation of strategy
- persuader's track record related to persuasive success
- intensity of emotions employed

## *Conclusion:*

- Emotional appeals tend to work best when they:
- are used moderately.
- complement logical appeals.
- become **internalized** by persuadees.
- affirm the person being persuaded.
- increase rationality.

## *Conclusion (Cont.):*

- Internalization occurs when others' ideas/appeals are adopted as one's own and become melded with other values, attitudes, beliefs, and behavior held by the individual.
- Emotional appeals are a means, not an end, to ethical persuasion.