ETHICISMS AND THEIR RISKS:
150 new cartoons about ethics at work

Muel Kaptein
Ethics with a smile

Ethics is a critical reflection on moral values, norms, and behavior. Cartoons can be a powerful tool for this reflection: they can be used to describe and challenge morality in a visual and humoristic way. In this manner, cartoons function as ethics with a smile.

Ethicisms

This book contains 150 cartoons. Each cartoon refers to a distinctive and fundamental view about ethics in the workplace. I call these ethicisms because they are all nouns that end with the suffix –ism. Words that end in -ism describe how we think and how we perceive things. Ethicisms relate to the moral theories, doctrines, and ideologies that we follow.

The importance of ethicisms

The ethicisms that we follow are important for what ethics means to us, how we apply ethics, and how we expect others to behave. We cannot understand or change morality without understanding ethicisms.

A catalogue of ethicisms

This book is a catalogue of ethicisms, presented alphabetically. I present a short definition and a typical risk of each ethicism. The risk is reflected in the cartoon. I would like to thank John Körver for, based on my sketches, drawing the cartoons.

Share with others

The purpose of this book is to help one discover, hopefully with a smile, one’s own ethicisms and the risks they bring. You may also share the cartoons with others to address ethical issues in a disarming manner.

Enjoy and happy reflections!

Muel
1. Moral absolutism

The view that particular actions are always either right or wrong. A risk is that ethical norms are taken to the point of absurdity such that other norms are violated.
The view that ethics is about highly ideal prescriptions that cannot be actually realized or operationalized. A risk is that ethics cannot give practical guidance.

2. Moral abstractionism (also called idealism)

The view that ethics is about highly ideal prescriptions that cannot be actually realized or operationalized. A risk is that ethics cannot give practical guidance.
3. Moral absurdism

The view that we live in an irrational universe where there is no absolute morality so that people are free to construct their own morality. A risk is that this is used as a reason to behave irrationally and unethically.
4. Moral accidentalism

The view that some events just simply do not have any cause. A risk is the denial of moral responsibility.
The view that to be perceived as beautiful is the highest moral value. A risk is that unethical behavior is permissible as long as others do not witness or observe it.

5. Moral aestheticism

Because a good reputation is very important for our organization, every employee should prevent the appearance of unethical behavior. So if you will behave unethically, please make sure no one will see or know about it!
6. Moral agathism

The view that the good will ultimately triumph even though morally evil things happen. A risk is that every evil is tolerated and accepted.
7. Moral altruism

The view that the regard for the interests of others is the sole moral value and that concern for one’s own interests does not count. A risk is that one’s own rights are violated.
8. Amoralism

The view that ethical norms do not have a separate objective reality or basis. A risk is that every ethical norm can be negotiated and destroyed (or undermined).
9. Moral anarchism

The view that employees should determine the ethics of their organization and not management, who have no moral authority. A risk is that employees will set (or choose or pick out) norms that are only in their own interest.
10. Moral arithmeticism

The view that what is morally good and bad can be calculated. A risk is that what cannot be calculated is ignored.
11. Moral asceticism

The view that people and organizations should live as a hermit or a monk: pursuing a life characterized by self-discipline and self-denial through solitude, toil, fasting, and frugality. A risk is that pettiness, narrow-mindedness, and fastidiousness might arise.
12. Moral ascriptivism

The view that human beings are to be held morally responsible for their behavior even if it is the result of having been influenced by someone or something. A risk is that people are blamed for things that are beyond their control.
13. Moral authoritarianism

The view that those who have authority possess moral supremacy and the right to command subordinates without the latter's consent. A risk is that subordinates are ordered to behave unethically.
14. Moral autism

The view that one should seclude oneself from the moral expectations of others because these are distracting and demotivating. A risk is that important (new) ethical issues and norms are missed.
15. Moral autocracy

The view that one person has the absolute power (i.e., without any constraints or control) to define what is ethical. A risk is that the opinions of others are not taken into account.
16. Moral autocueism

The view that (as reading from an autocue) one should do and say exactly what others have determined, planned, or laid out in advance. A risk is a lack of authenticity.
17. Moral autonomism

The view that one should strive for autonomy to determine what is right and wrong. A risk is the neglect of context and society.
18. Moral bacteriophobia

The view that to keep intact one’s own integrity one should not take any risks that may compromise it. A risk is passivity.
19. **Moral bonism** (also **optimism**)

The view that the world and human beings are generally or fundamentally good but not perfect. A risk is that evil is ignored.
20. Moral bureaucratism

The view that ethical behavior is produced by an administrative system of rules and procedures devised by some remote person behind a desk. A risk is the undermining of self-regulation.
21. Moral caveat emptorism

The view that buyers (= empor) and other stakeholders should be aware of the information asymmetry between them and the organization and that they should bear their responsibility. A risk is that the organization uses this as a justification for its own unethical behavior.
22. Moral circumstancism

The view that circumstances should be perfect for one to be able to take responsibility for one's behavior. A risk is there will always be an excuse for why one cannot be responsible.
23. Moral classicism

The view that ethical norms were better in the bygone days. A risk is the ignorance of changing circumstances that require new norms.
The view that an individual’s moral beliefs and actions should benefit the collective (such as the company, profession, or community). A risk is that the individual’s interests and integrity are neglected.

24. Moral collectivism
25. Moral communalism (also sovereignism)

The view that each unit of an organization should autonomously and independently decide what is moral for them. A risk is that the morality of the organization becomes inconsistent.
26. Moral compartmentalism

The view that a person or organization may have different and unrelated sets of morality for different roles and functions. A risk is becoming disintegrated and limited, with no comprehensive morality.
27. Moral concretism (also hypostatizationism, reificationism, and reism)

The view that morality should be represented through concrete things. A risk is that norms that are not made concrete are neglected.

*Kurt*
28. Moral conformism (also tribalism)

The view that one should adopt the morality of the group to which one belongs. A risk is one’s morality is sacrificed.
29. Moral consequentialism

The view that only the consequences and results of an action count in determining its rightness or wrongness. A risk is that bad intentions and bad behavior are not taken into account.
30. Moral conservatism (also ritualism)

The view in maintaining traditions that seek to preserve established moral practices or that resist change in morality. A risk is that unethical behavior remains unchanged.
31. Moral constructivism

The view that morality is constructed rather than received and has an objective value. A risk is that morality is destructed.
32. Moral contextualism

The view that ethical norms are not absolute but are dependent on the specific context. A risk is that the context fully determines what is ethical.
33. Moral contractualism

The view that what is right and wrong is based on an explicit or implicit agreement between people. A risk is that everything that has not been agreed in advance is supposed to be allowed.
34. Moral controlism

The view that people will only do the right thing when they are being controlled through monitoring, checks, and inspections. A risk is that people feel that they are not trusted.
The view that people should behave in accordance with accepted moral norms that have been either arbitrarily or artificially determined. A risk is that people follow norms that are not ethical.

35. Moral conventionalism (also normalism)

Child labour is commonly accepted in this country. So it is our moral duty to also employ children!
36. Moral corporatism

The view that the interests of a corporation are most important and should always be served. A risk is that other legitimate interests are violated.
37. Moral creativitism

The view that it is acceptable to interpret the situation and norms to one’s own advantage while still complying with the norms. A risk is that the spirit of the norm is violated.
38. Moral cynicism

The view that one has to approach conventional morality in a critical way. A risk is that there is disdain for good moral norms.
39. Moral darwinism

The view that only the best ethics will survive. A risk is that ethics is seen as a competition of who has the better ethics.
The view that concentrates on finding ruptures or inconsistencies among moral norms in order to break it down (= deconstruct). A risk is that dilemmas, as the conflict of norms, are seen as the failure of ethics and thus a reason for not behaving ethically.
41. Moral democratism

The view that the majority defines what is ethical and unethical. A risk is that the moral opinions and interests of the minority are neglected.
42. Deontologism
(also imperativism)

The view that emphasizes universal imperatives such as moral laws, duties, obligations, and prohibitions. A risk is that no exemptions are possible even if the situation calls for it.
43. Moral descriptivism

The view that ethics merely represents or describes how people and organizations act in real life and that ethics cannot prescribe normative behavior. A risk is that ethics does not guide behavior.
The view that all human actions are fixed or pre-ordained by external forces before they happen, thereby denying the existence of free will and human choice. A risk is that people deny responsibility for their actions because they are just a product of external forces.

44. Moral determinism (also necessitarianism)

MY THEFT IS A BLOODY SHAME. BUT I CANNOT BE BLAMED FOR IT. IT’S MY PARENTS’ FAULT: THEY BEGOT ME!
The view that the basis of ethics is to discuss things and that as long as things can be discussed openly, then they are ethical. A risk is that the wrong things are discussed.

45. Moral discussabilism (also communicationism and talkism)
46. Moral distancism
(also bufferism)

The view that ethics should not become too close but kept at arm’s length because on the one hand, ethics is useful, but on the other hand, it is dangerous, risky, and a threat. A risk is that ethics has marginal impact.
47. Moral dogmatism

The view that emphasizes the rigid adherence to doctrine over rational and enlightened inquiry. A risk is the lack of flexibility and openness toward other opinions.

WE SHOULD RESPECT ANIMALS. OUR CONSTRUCTION WORK IS DISTURBING THE BIRDS’ BREEDING. SO WE’LL STOP WORK AND RESUME IN SIX WEEKS.
48. Moral dualism
(also dilemmaism)

The view that the universe is controlled by two opposing forces. A risk is that everything is seen as a dilemma.
49. Moral eclecticism

The view that does not respect the boundaries of existing moral beliefs but instead selects ideas from each. A risk is arbitrariness in beliefs and ethical norms.
50. Moral egalitarianism

The view that equality for all humans is the most important ethical value. A risk is that effort and output are not stimulated.
The view that right and wrong is determined by the maximization of self-interest. A risk is the violation of the interests of others.

51. **Moral egoism** (also **egocentrism** and **egotism**)
The view that individuals who form an elite are above morality and have the right to privileges. A risk is that elites misuse their position (and become too big for their boots).

52. Moral elitism
53. Moral emotionalism

The view that determining right and wrong is based on feeling. A risk is that reason is ignored.
The view that moral statements are inherently biased and nothing more than expressions of emotions. A risk is that moral judgements are dismissed as emotional outbursts.

54. Moral emotivism
The view that the experience of the senses is the most reliable or even the only source of knowledge for moral concerns. A risk is that people ignore potential moral issues.

55. Moral empiricism
The view that judging the morality of another culture should solely be done on the basis of the morality of one's own culture. A risk is the ignorance of the specific nature of other cultures.

56. Moral ethnocentrism

YOU'RE TRYING TO BRIBE ME!
I HAVE TO IMMEDIATELY REPORT THIS TO THE NATIONAL AUTHORITIES!
57. Moral eudaimonism

The view that puts personal happiness at the center of ethical concerns. A risk is the ignorance about any other concerns.
58. Moral exceptionalism (also antinomianism and grandeurism)

The view that moral norms do not apply to those who are special and extraordinary. A risk is that such people think they are permitted every unethical behavior.
The view that right and wrong is determined by the values and behavior of role models. A risk is the selection of the wrong role model.
The view that people should make their ethical behavior publicly known because otherwise it cannot exist and be acknowledged.

A risk is that even normal behavior is exaggerated or blown out of proportion.

60. Moral exhibitionism (also demonstrativism)

The view that people should make their ethical behavior publicly known because otherwise it cannot exist and be acknowledged.

A risk is that even normal behavior is exaggerated or blown out of proportion.
The view that each person, as a result of living, must create his or her own values. A risk is that one denies common universal values.

61. Moral existentialism

Although the proposed decision of the board is very unethical, we as the ethics committee approve it because otherwise our company will go bankrupt and then there will be no room at all to do ethical things!
The view that moral knowledge comes from experience. A risk is that a lack of experience could be used to rationalize unethical behavior.
63. Moral extremism
(also vandalism)

The view that it is desirable to carry out to the extreme a particular morality using extreme means. A risk is that evil means are employed.
64. Moral fallibilism

The view that moral norms may exist objectively but that humans cannot reliably or conclusively establish this because empirical knowledge can always be revised with further observation. A risk is that moral norms are not taken seriously because they may be reformulated at any time.
65. Moral fanaticism

The view that an unrestricted critical zeal is necessary for ethics to advance. A risk is that people become obsessive.
66. Moral fatalism

The view that the fortunes of human beings are predetermined, thereby stressing the negative or tragic nature of human life and the inability to modify one’s fate. A risk is that people become negative about ethics in practice.
The view that when ethics is damaged, it should and could be repaired as quickly as possible. A risk is that the complexity of improving ethics is denied.

67. Moral fixism

PLEASE EXECUTE TOMORROW AT 12 PM
ETHICS INTERVENTION 3, 37, 62 AND 89
68. Moral formalism (also codism, legalism, and nomism)

The view that emphasizes the strict adherence to formal rules and regulations. A risk is the failure to think through what one finds ethical.
The view that ethics should merely be a useful instrument for other purposes. A risk is that ethics is not seen as a value in and of itself.

**69. Moral functionalism** (also instrumentalism)

*When we say that we put ethics before profitmaking, it means that we can continue making more profits!*
The view that pleasure is the highest good and that the fundamental standard of ethical judgment should be pleasure. A risk is the violation of other interests and principles.

70. Moral hedonism (with epicureanism as the enlightened version)
The view that the psyche of a person consists of multiple parts: the id (the basic, instinctual drives, like needs, wants, and desires), the super-ego (plays the critical and moralizing role, like the conscience), and the ego (the organized, realistic part that mediates between the id and super-ego). A risk is that people use their own id as an excuse for their unethical behavior.

71. Moral hybridism

The view that the psyche of a person consists of multiple parts: the id (the basic, instinctual drives, like needs, wants, and desires), the super-ego (plays the critical and moralizing role, like the conscience), and the ego (the organized, realistic part that mediates between the id and super-ego). A risk is that people use their own id as an excuse for their unethical behavior.
The view that it is permissible for one to act contrary to the moral principles and values one claims to hold. A risk is that one becomes corrupt as the contradiction increases.

72. Moral hypocriticism

I SWEAR THAT THE CLIENT'S INTEREST IS ALWAYS PARAMOUNT
73. Moral ignorantism

The view that ignorance is good when it prevents one from taking on too much moral responsibility. A risk is that people intentionally keep themselves ignorant about issues for which they bear moral responsibility.
74. Moral illusionism

The view that ethics is merely an illusion and deception is beneficial. A risk is that reality is ignored.
75. Immoralism

The view that rejects conventional morality, any systematic approach to ethics, and even ethics itself. A risk is that any moral norm is ignored.
76. Moral imperialism

The view that one ought to promote and impose one’s morality on others to gain control over their morality. A risk is that the morality of others is suppressed.
The view that one should only pay attention to ethics after incidents. A risk is that ethics does not get preventive attention.
The view that different moral views conflict with each other and that they cannot be reconciled. A risk is that conflicting norms that can and should be reconciled are kept conflicting.

78. Moral incompatibilism
79. Moral indifferentism

The view that ethical norms, concepts, and theories are all equal and on a par with each other. A risk is that every norm is tolerated.
The view that individual interests and rights are paramount and that the individual person is of supreme value. A risk is that people ignore their duties toward others.

80. Moral individualism (also personalism and claimism)

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HUMAN RIGHTS... AS LONG AS IT IS DUTY-FREE FOR ME

WINK
81. Moral integrativism

The view that given its universal relevance, ethics should be everywhere. A risk is that ethics gets integrated into everything and thus becomes invisible and unrecognizable.
82. Moral intentionalism

The view that motives and intentions are the objects of moral evaluation. A risk is that unethical behavior is neutralized by claims of having good intentions.
83. Moral interpretivism

The view that every ethical norm is a matter of interpretation. A risk is wrong interpretations.
84. Moral intuitionism

The view that our intuitive awareness of what is right or good forms the foundation of our ethical knowledge. A risk is that people misuse their intuition.
85. Moral isolationism

The view that one can understand only the morality of one's own culture and not that of other cultures. A risk is that criticism from people of other cultures is dismissed.
The view that in cases of doubt regarding moral matters the more liberal course should always be followed. A risk is that freedom is expanded at the expense of moral norms.
The view that individuals should be left free to determine their own ethical choices because they are individually or collectively capable of doing so. A risk is that management shifts the ethical responsibility to the employees.

87. Moral liberalism (also libertarianism)

The view that individuals should be left free to determine their own ethical choices because they are individually or collectively capable of doing so. A risk is that management shifts the ethical responsibility to the employees.
The view that people have the right to behave badly when they are treated badly (as redress) or when they have done good things (as compensation). A risk is that unethical behavior is bought with a good deed.

88. Moral licencism
(also vigilantism)

I vote in favour of donating five percent of the generated illegal profit to a good cause.
89. Moral loyalism (familiarism and nepotism)

The view that we bear the greatest responsibility toward those who are closest to us. A risk is the ignorance of interests that are further from us in terms of awareness, distance, and time.
90. Moral malism

The view that the world is evil. A risk is that all evil is tolerated or even committed by oneself.
91. Moral managerialism

The view that ethics can and should be managed. A risk is exaggerated and too rigorous management.
92. Moral marginalism

The view that morality is relevant but not very important. A risk is that ethics is only applied to minor but not to major issues.
The view that the market, through the principle of supply and demand, determines what is ethical and unethical. A risk is that without a market for ethics there is no ethics.

93. Moral marketism
94. Moral materialism

The view that because products possess intrinsic goodness, companies have the duty to produce the products (and the consumers have the duty to buy them). A risk is that other moral assumptions of the economic system are blindly accepted.
95. Moral measurism

The view that morality should be measurable because only then does it exist. A risk is that the focus is on measurement and on what is being measured and not on what it means.
96. Moral meliorism

The view that the world tends to become morally better. A risk is the denial of threats that make the world morally worse.
97. Moral messianism

The view that one has to rescue the ethics of others by saving them from evil. A risk is that one becomes intrusive.
98. Moral minimalism

The view that ethics should get some attention but only in a limited way. A risk is that ethics gets too little attention.
99. Moral modestyism

The view that the ethics of others is superior to one’s own. A risk is the devaluation of one’s own ethics.
The view that management should have broad moral autonomy. A risk is that supervising functions regarding management (such as compliance, risk and audit) have a very marginal role.

100. Moral monarchism

WE HAVE A SIMPLE COMPLIANCE CHARTER. MY VOTE AS CEO AND YOUR VOTE AS COMPLIANCE OFFICER HAVE EQUAL WEIGHT. BUT IN CASE OF A TIE AND WE CANNOT COMPROMISE, THEN MY VOTE COUNTS "DOUBLE!"
101. Moral monism

The view that there is unity with one superseding value, goal, or principle. A risk is the neglect of true dilemmas.
102. Moralism (also prescriptivism)

The view that the function of ethics is to prescribe what people should (not) do. A risk is that ethics is being prescribed too much.
The view that one should approach issues and other persons in a simple and innocent way in order not to become suspicious and anxious. A risk is that there is too much faith on the goodness of others.
104. Moral narcissism
(or narcissism)

The view that the pursuit of vainglorious and egoistic gratification is to some extent morally desirable. A risk is of becoming smug.
105. Moral naturalism

The view that only natural laws and forces (as opposed to supernatural or spiritual ones) govern the world so that moral claims are ultimately about features and facts of human beings, human nature, and human societies. A risk is that ‘ought’ (what should) is derived from ‘is’ (what is given in nature).
The view that ethics is a negative concept, understood in terms of pain, costs, limitations, and restrictions. A risk is the focus on not behaving unethically instead of also performing ethical actions.

106. Moral negativism

There is one question regarding your ethical performance last year: how often did you act unethically?
The view that completely rejects ethics because any talk of an objective morality is incoherent and baseless. A risk is the attempt to behave as unethically as possible.

107. Moral nihilism

According to this report, 30% of our business is unethical. That’s quite a disappointment! How can we fix the remaining 70%?
108. Moral nominalism

The view that the naming of things defines reality. A risk is that by using euphemisms wrong practices are made less wrong, neutral, or even good.
The view that moral norms are based on the reality of human nature and are mind-independent. A risk is that subjective opinions are dismissed.

109. Moral objectivism (constituted by moral universalism, moral realism, and moral absolutism)

I AM NOT INTERESTED IN WHAT YOU BELIEVE AND EXPECT. IT IS ABOUT THE OBJECTIVE TRUTH!
The view that it is acceptable to intentionally keep others in ignorance. A risk is that others are prevented from making good decisions by and for themselves.

110. Moral obscurantism
111. Moral obstructionism

The view that it is acceptable or even a duty to oppose norms that are proposed by others. A risk is that even good norms are opposed.
112. Moral opportunism

The view that it is acceptable to take advantage of any circumstances, with little regard for principles. A risk is that ethics is sacrificed when it is advantageous.
113. Moral oppressivism

The view that humans only behave ethically when they are compelled and coerced to do so. A risk is harsh enforcement.
114. Moral outsourcism

The view that it is acceptable to entrust ethical responsibility to others, such as experts and specialists. A risk is that one avoids one’s own responsibilities.
I want to let you know that we have made a secret agreement with our main competitors to raise the selling price of our products by 20%.

115. Moral pacifism

The view that the highest value is peace. A risk is that people will ignore ethical issues that might disturb the peace.
The view that one should not take important ethical decisions and actions alone. A risk is that one involves others in unethical actions.

116. Moral partnerism (also co-makerism)

The view that one should not take important ethical decisions and actions alone. A risk is that one involves others in unethical actions.
The view that there are no overriding moral principles that are applicable in every case but that moral judgements are made on a case-to-case basis. A risk is that each particular case has its own selective morality.

117. Moral particularism
118. Moral perfectionism (also punctualism and utopianism)

The view that moral perfection is the highest value. A risk is that people suggest that they are flawless and completely honorable.
The view that moral judgements depend on an individual's context or point of view and that there are many equally valid moral opinions about any given topic. A risk is that people may have a positive opinion about unethical behavior.

119. Moral perspectivism (also polylogism)

The view that moral judgements depend on an individual's context or point of view and that there are many equally valid moral opinions about any given topic. A risk is that people may have a positive opinion about unethical behavior.
120. Moral pessimism (with pejorism as severe pessimism)

The view that reality and the universe are essentially malevolent and evil and that true ethics is unattainable. A risk is that this is used as a justification for doing bad things.
121. Moral pluralism

The view that there are several equally correct and yet incompatible fundamental values that in many cases cannot be objectively ordered in terms of importance. A risk is that decision-making becomes impossible when one is pulled from all sides.
122. Moral populism

The view that norms should be made understandable for and in the interest of the “little man”, such as the simple employee. A risk is that morality is made too popular.
123. Moral pragmatism

The view that emphasizes the practical value and application of ethics. A risk is that the lack of attention to reflection.
124. **Moral primitivism**

The view that a simple and natural morality is best. A risk is that morality is not adequate for current or complex issues.
125. Moral privatism

The view that ethics is personal and private. A risk is that people are not supposed to use their conscience at work.
The view that one behaves ethically as long as one sticks to procedural norms. A risk is the denial of substantial norms.
127. Moral profitism

The view that making profit is the highest moral value because it is the means for serving the interests of others. A risk is that other values are violated.
128. Moral programism

The view that ethics can be programmed. A risk is that there is no room for the unexpected.
My company is very mission driven. We have changed our mission statement at least seven times in the last ten years.

129. Moral radicalism

The view that severe changes in morality are needed. A risk is very frequent and big changes.
130. Moral rationalism

The view that moral truths and standards are knowable *a priori* just through clear reasoning and independent thinking. A risk is the moral feeling is deactivated.
131. Moral realism (also normalism and normism; part of cognitivism)

The view that moral propositions refer to objective facts, independent of the human mind and opinion. A risk is that ethics becomes impersonal and remote.
132. Moral regrettism

The view that unethical behavior is not problematic as long as people regret it. A risk is that unethical behavior is easily perpetrated given the idea one will regret it afterwards.
133. Moral relativism

The view that conceptions of morality are relative to the person or group holding them. A risk is that universal moral norms are denied.
134. Moral sensationalism (or sensualism)

The view that morality is constructed from or consists of our sensations. A risk is that objective morality is denied.
The view that due to some specific characteristics of the business context, business ethics prescribes different norms than general ethics. A risk is that business ethics loses its ethics.
The view that focuses excessively on doing good deeds in the short term. A risk is that this kind of attention to ethics cannot be sustained.
The view that the particular circumstances deserve to be given more weight in ethical decision-making than general or universal moral norms. A risk is that ethics becomes too flexible.

137. Moral situationalism

Unfortunately we cannot offer you a job. We are a flexible company and we need a colleague whose ethics are also flexible!
The view that all claims to moral knowledge should be doubted or actively rejected. A risk is that one disagrees offhand with any moral norm.

138. Moral skepticism (with pyrrhonism as total or radical skepticism)

The view that all claims to moral knowledge should be doubted or actively rejected. A risk is that one disagrees offhand with any moral norm.
The view that people should try to evade responsibilities as much as possible (by diving like a submarine). A risk is that no one takes responsibility for unethical practices.

139. Moral subism (also hypegiaphobiaism)

Welcome to this first and most important session of our Leadership Development Program. Today we will learn how to pass the buck!
The view that right and wrong is determined by what someone happens to think or feel is right or wrong (thereby denying objectivity). A risk is that unethical behavior is not objectionable as long as the perpetrators act in accordance with what they think or feel is right.

140. Moral subjectivism (part of cognitivism; and consists of irrationalism, nihilism, and emotionalism)

The view that right and wrong is determined by what someone happens to think or feel is right or wrong (thereby denying objectivity). A risk is that unethical behavior is not objectionable as long as the perpetrators act in accordance with what they think or feel is right.
141. Moral supremacism (with sexism as an element; also known as moral chauvinism and sectarianism)

The view that there are certain traits (such as age, race or social class) the possession of which makes one superior than those who do not have them, and hence makes it acceptable for the former to dominate, control and subjugate the latter. A risk is smugness.
142. Moral symbolism

The view that morality is or should be presented in symbols that stand for morality. A risk is exclusive focus on symbols and ignoring actual behavior that is contrary to morality.
143. Moral syncretism

The view that attempts to unify seemingly inharmonious moral principles, standards, and opinions. A risk is that real dilemmas are ignored.
The view that one’s primary moral responsibility is to execute one’s task or function. A risk is that other norms are ignored.
The view that morality should govern everything a person does. A risk is that individual preferences are undermined.
The view that a particular moral belief is superior to and should triumph over all other beliefs. A risk is that other beliefs are humiliated.

146. Moral triumphalism

Our company ethics is so strong that we want everyone in our sector to follow it!
147. Moral universalism (opposed to moral nihilism and relativism)

The view that some ethical norms apply to all individuals in the same situation. A risk is that there is no room for individual ethics.
The view that a behavior is ethical if it produces the most benefits (utility) for all persons involved (“the greatest good for the greatest number”). A risk is injustice in the distribution of benefits.

148. Moral utilitarianism (version of consequentialism)

The view that a behavior is ethical if it produces the most benefits (utility) for all persons involved (“the greatest good for the greatest number”). A risk is injustice in the distribution of benefits.
The view that character is the ground for evaluating and developing ethics. A risk is the ignorance of ethical norms and their consequences.

149. Moral virtueism (also Aristotelianism and Neo-Aristotelianism)

The view that character is the ground for evaluating and developing ethics. A risk is the ignorance of ethical norms and their consequences.
The view that the individual will is the fundamental power in the universe for realizing ethical behavior. A risk is that the context that facilitates moral behavior is ignored.

150. Moral voluntarism
Cartoons are a powerful tool for reflection on ethics in the workplace. This book contains 150 new cartoons. Each cartoon refers to a view about ethics (an ethicism) and its risk. The cartoons can be used to address ethical issues at work in a visual and humoristic way.

Muel Kaptein is a professor of business ethics and integrity at the Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University. He is also partner at KPMG where he helps organizations in developing and auditing their ethics. See for more information: www.muelkaptein.com