**Key Terms**

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Chapter 9: Deontology

**actual duty** The one prima facie duty that is more important than any other in a particular situation and so is the duty that ought to be fulfilled.

**beneficence** The duty to act so as to improve the condition of another or of others.

**categorical imperative** A binding principle that holds unconditionally for everyone regardless of their desires or situation. The categorical imperative has several formulations, including the principle of universal law, principle of ends, autonomy principle, and the kingdom of ends principle.

**consequences problem** Kant’s problem resulting from dismissing consequences as of no moral importance.

**direct duty** A moral obligation one can have directly to another person regardless of any other duties one might also have.

**deontology** A general approach to ethics that rejects consequences as a basis for moral right or wrong and instead focuses upon duties and right acts.

**ends** A term employed in Kant’s Principle of ends, that which a means is a tool for attaining.

**fidelity** The duty to speak truthfully, keep promises, pay debts, and so on.

**Good Will** Exemplified in persons, this is the only thing of foundational moral worth according to Kant; the Good Will freely chooses to do something because it is one’s moral duty.

**gratitude** The duty to express thanks, return favors, and so on.

**hypothetical imperative** A conditional principle that prescribes how to act if you satisfy some condition or hope to achieve some goal.

**imperfect duty** An obligation that can depend upon one’s circumstances and may be fulfilled to varying degrees.

**indirect duty** A moral obligation one person can have to another person regarding a third party; for example, I have a moral obligation to an animal’s owner not to harm her animal, even if I have no moral obligation to the animal itself.

**intuitionism** Maintains that we can discover our general moral duties and determine our actual duty in a given situation by consulting our inner selves honestly and thoughtfully.

**justice** The duty to act fairly to distribute goods to people according to their due.

**Kingdom of Ends principle** A version of Kant’s categorical imperative that imagines an ideal society consisting of equal creators or legislators of the moral law (according to the autonomy principle). These agree to the system of laws they make and conform to their requirements.

**many formulations problem** Kant’s problem that the way we formulate a maxim can make a universal law right or wrong.

**maxim** A general rule or pattern of behavior that one can act in accordance with. A Kantian maxim also expresses the intention of acting that way; for example, “I will lie to get someone to do what I want.”

**means** A term employed in Kant’s Principle of ends, a tool for attaining something else.

**non-maleficence** The duty to avoid harming others.

**perfect duty** An absolute obligation that cannot be obeyed by degrees and does not depend on circumstances.

**prima facie duty** A duty that I ought to fulfill unless some more important moral duty overrides it.

**principle of autonomy** A version of Kant’s categorical imperative: every person is equally a creator of the universal moral law; that is, each person “makes” the moral law.

**principle of ends** A version of Kant’s categorical imperative: Act so as to treat every person affected by your action as an end and never as a means only.

**principle of universal law** A version of Kant’s categorical imperative that tells us toact only in accordance with a maxim that can at the same time be willed as a universal law or principle.

**rational agents problem** Kant’s problem with adequately respecting people who are not rational free agents.

**reparation** The duty to make up for any wrongs you have previously done to another.

**self-improvement** The duty to invest in one’s well-being and growth.