

During this Advent, Christmas, and Christmastide - Be present by thought and/or activity to the moment, increase your ethics vocabulary, immerse yourself in quotations of a moral caliber, enhance your pursuit of living the virtuous life, and become acquainted with some shakers and movers of ethics.

Sunday (**First Sunday of Advent**) - November 27 – Light a candle.

Ethical word – **ethics** - embodies those universal principles of right and wrong that transcend and endure the tests of time.

"Ethics is knowing the difference between what you have a right to do and what is right to do."

Potter Stewart

Monday - November 28 --Realize the wonderfulness of living.

Ethical word - **ethical virtuosity** - "knowing my deeper, inner authentic self and consciously choosing to act in a manner that is consistent with my personal ethical beliefs, principles, and core ethical values." Larimer.

"Character cannot be developed in ease and quiet. Only through experience of trial and suffering can the soul be strengthened, ambition inspired, and success achieved."

Helen Keller

Tuesday – November 29– Be a gray-maker – embrace the complexity of life

Ethical word – **integrity** – is the capacity to consistently identify, confront, and resolve ethical dilemmas in a manner that reflects goodness.

"The time is always right to do what is right."

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Wednesday – November 30 – Value compassion over competition

Ethical word – **core values** - represents that which you believe in and hold to be of utmost importance in your life.

"When I do good, I feel good. When I do bad, I feel bad. That is my religion."

Abraham Lincoln

Thursday - December 1 – Forgive yourself.

Ethical word - free will - a personal, freely chosen, and consciously adopted beliefs, principles, or notions of what is right and wrong; and how I ought to live my life, and more importantly, how I should treat other people.

"Faced with what is right, to leave it undone shows a lack of courage."

Confucius

Friday - December 2 – Find pockets of quiet

Ethical word – natural law - it is sometimes referred to as individual human autonomy. It refers to the notion that your heart, mind, soul, thoughts, feelings, and behavior are capable of individual direction toward goodness or evil.

"A people that values its privileges above its principles soon loses both."

Dwight D. Eisenhower

Saturday - December 3 - Confront gently

Ethical word- ethical striving - is one who is aware that there is a difference between ethics and law, and strives to demonstrate higher, more noble, and virtuous principles in one's daily life.

"Disciplining yourself to do what you know is right and important, although difficult, is the highroad to pride, self-esteem, and personal satisfaction."

Margaret Thatcher

Sunday - December 4 (Second Sunday of Advent) - Remember your grandma's and grandpa's values

Ethical word- Aristotle - "The way I think determines what I say, and what I say becomes my behavior, and my behavior becomes my habit, and my habit becomes my character, and my character becomes my destiny."

"Relativity applies to physics, not ethics."

Albert Einstein

Monday - December 5 – Treasure your family

Ethical word – **character** - is the result of one's thoughts and feelings, tempered by one's conscious choices (the exercise of free will), and manifested, revealed, and demonstrated by one's personal conduct and behavior.

"Dangerous consequences will follow when politicians and rulers forget moral principles. Whether we believe in God or karma, ethics is the foundation of every religion."

[Dalai Lama](#)

Tuesday - December 6 – Appreciate ordinary days

Ethical word- **Existentialism** - when confronted with an ethical dilemma, you should look within yourself for the right moral path to follow, and that you should make a conscious choice to follow your deeper, inner sense of right and wrong – Soren Kierkegaard, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Albert Camus.

"Nothing that is morally wrong can be politically right."

[William E. Gladstone](#)

Wednesday - December 7 – Do not delay giving compliments

Ethical word- **principle of double effect** - It claims that one may perform actions that could kill, but the acts are permissible only if the person does not intend the killing.

"Without ethics, everything happens as if we were all five billion passengers on a big machinery and nobody is driving the machinery. And it is going faster and faster, but we do not know where."

Gandhi

Thursday - December 8 - Focus on the love you can give

Ethical word – **cynicism** - A Greek philosophy school of thought that espoused that one arrives at true happiness by renouncing all external desires and extolling the self-sufficiency of the desire to be a good person.

"In matters of style, swim with the current; in matters of principle, stand like a rock."

[Thomas Jefferson](#)

Friday - December 9 - Find something to be thankful for

Ethical word – emotivism - The view usually associated with logical positivism claiming that ethical statements are mere expressions of emotion and, as such, have no basis in truth or falsehood.

"Integrity is telling myself the truth. And honesty is telling the truth to other people."

Spencer Johnson

Saturday - December 10 – Count your freckles, moles, age spots, or wrinkles

Ethical word- duty - That which ought to be done, either legally or morally.

"Do not be too moral. You may cheat yourself out of much life so. Aim above morality. Be not simply good; be good for something."

Henry David Thoreau

Sunday - December 11- (Third Sunday of Advent) - Be happy for no reason all – be full of smiles

Ethical word- ethical egoism - An ethical theory claiming that the pursuit of self-interest is morally correct and rational; see Ayn Rand.

"Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and awe, the oftener and more steadily we reflect on them: the starry heavens above me and the moral law within me."

Immanuel Kant

Monday - December 12 – You get another chance each morning

Ethical word- ethical relativism - The ethical theory that denies the existence of universal moral truths and proposes that right and wrong must be defined based on differences in cultural norms and mores.

"Have the courage to say no. Have the courage to face the truth. Do the right thing because it is right. These are the magic keys to living your life with integrity."

W. Clement Stone

Tuesday - December 13- Be honest

Ethical word – **ethical realism** - Any view that acknowledges that our knowledge of the real, objective nature of the world is influenced by the mind, on which sensory experience is necessarily dependent.

"Moralties, ethics, laws, customs, beliefs, doctrines - these are of trifling import. All that matters is that the miraculous becomes the norm."

Henry Miller

Wednesday - December 14 – Written words are lasting treasures

Ethical word- **hard determinism** - All behavior is invariably and without exception determined by causal factors beyond the control and responsibility of any individual, so that, in effect, free will and moral choice do not exist.

"If ethics are poor at the top, that behavior is copied down through the organization."

Robert Noyce

Thursday - December 15- Listening is essential

Ethical word- **Cogito ergo sum** - "I think, therefore I am." From Descartes' "Meditations" referring to his certain, indubitable knowledge of his own existence as a thinking, conscious being.

"We don't set out to save the world; we set out to wonder how other people are doing and to reflect on how our actions affect other people's hearts."

Pema Chodron

Friday - December 16 - Be strong for others

Ethical word- **soft determinism** - While there is a cause for all action, certain choices can still be made freely as actions that stem from the character or will of the person, thus preserving the notion of moral responsibility.

"Even the most rational approach to ethics is defenseless if there isn't the will to do what is right."

Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn

Saturday - December 17 – Say a prayer

Ethical word- **bioethics** - The branch of ethics that studies moral problems in medicine and biological technology, for example issues about euthanasia and cloning humans.

"I consider ethics, as well as religion, as supplements to law in the government of man."

Thomas Jefferson

Sunday - December 18 – (Fourth Sunday of Advent) - Care about doing your very best

Ethical word- **amoral** - Devoid of morality; operating completely outside the realm of moral value.

"Little progress can be made by merely attempting to repress what is evil. Our great hope lies in developing what is good."

Calvin Coolidge

Monday - December 19 - Inner music is a lasting gift – always have a song in your heart

Ethical word- **altruism** – An empathic and unselfish concern for the welfare of others, with no other end in mind.

"The simplest and shortest ethical precept is to be served as little as possible . . . and to serve others as much as possible."

Leo Tolstoy

Tuesday - December 20 - Be happy for no reason all – be full of smiles

Ethical word-” **akrasia”** (weakness) - Ancient Greek, incontinence, weakness of will; a condition where one knows something is good, desires it, yet still does not embrace it.

"Have the courage to say no. Have the courage to face the truth. Do the right thing because it is right. These are the magic keys to living your life with integrity."

W. Clement Stone

Wednesday - December 21 - Live in spirals – twists and turns we encounter

Ethical word- consequentialism - The view that the value of an act should be judged solely based on one act and how it impacts others, that is, the consequences of one's actions. This contrasts with aretaic ethics where the value of an act is determined by the character of a person, where the value is determined by the intentions and motives of the person.

"The most important persuasion tool you have in your entire arsenal is integrity."

Zig Ziglar

Thursday - December 22 – Every person is a hero

Ethical word – benevolence - The belief that the happiness and good of others is desirable and that such happiness should be spread as equally and as widely as possible among the beings being affected.

"The world has achieved brilliance without conscience. Ours is a world of nuclear giants and ethical infants."

Omar N. Bradley

Friday - December 23 – Love yourself as well as others

Ethical word- Cartesian dualism - Referring to the mind/body problem; it holds that the mind, although a substance separate from the body, nevertheless interacts with the body, a different substance.

"Over the past two decades, we have clearly seen an erosion of ethical values."

Arthur Levitt Jr

Saturday - December 24 - Keep on playing

Ethical word- categorical imperative - As a moral principle formulated by Immanuel Kant, it states "act only according to that maxim that you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law."

"A man is ethical only when life, as such, is sacred to him."

Albert Schweitzer

Sunday - December 25- (Nativity of the Lord – Christmas) - Let faith be your guide

Ethical word- Eudaimonia -. Ancient Greek, “happiness or well-being,” associated with the ethical views of Aristotle.

“Your ethical muscle grows stronger every time you choose right over wrong.”

Price Pritchett

Monday - December 26 - Take a walk

Ethical word- meliorism - The view that the world can become increasingly better through human action, thus improving the human condition.

“A country should be defended not by arms, but by ethical behavior.”

Vinoba Bhave

Tuesday - December 27 – Stretch

Ethical word- hedonism - The ethical theory that claims that the pursuit of one’s own pleasure should be the aim of all action.

“Ethics is knowing the difference between what you have a right to do and what is right to do.”- Potter Stewart

Wednesday - December 28 – Savor the gift of your health

Ethical word- humanism - Any view that emphasizes the importance of human dignity, welfare, and values, especially in contrast to religious or supernatural views.

“The first step in the evolution of ethics is a sense of solidarity with other human beings.”- Albert Schweitzer

Thursday - December 29 - Experience the moment

Ethical word- intuitionism - In ethics, the view associated with G.E. Moore that knowledge of ultimate good and morality is apprehended directly by some special faculty in us of moral sense.

“Action indeed is the sole medium of expression for ethics.” -Jane Addams

Friday - December 30 - Rekindle hope

Ethical word- **problem of evil - The view that a benevolent, omnipotent, omniscient God is incompatible with the existence of real evil in the world.**

“The time is right to always do what is right.” – Martin Luther King Jr.

Saturday – December 31 - Write a Haiku – here is mine – Cardinal bright red, sitting on the edge of spring, aflame for summer--

Ethical word- **greatest happiness principle - A view central to Jeremy Bentham and utilitarianism, holding that moral action requires that the greatest good be attained for the greatest number of beings, regardless of who the individuals who receive that happiness.**

“A man without ethics is a wild beast loosed upon this world.” – Albert Camus.

Sunday - January 1 - The Octave Day of Christmas Solemnity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God - Practice joy

Ethical word – **justice - Commonly divided into retributive and distributive, the former deals with punishments that correct the imbalance to society caused by a crime; the latter concerns the fair allocation of benefits and burdens of in society.**

“Only morality in our actions can give beauty and dignity to life.”
– *Albert Einstein*

Monday – January 2 – **Plato - The most important reality in this world of ideas is the idea of the “Good.” Goodness was a central fact about the universe. Thus, the main goal of his ethical system is to gain a vision of the Good.**

“We have two kinds of morality side by side: one which we preach but do not practice, and the other which we practice but seldom preach.”– *Bertrand Russel*

Tuesday – January 3 – **Socrates** - “The unexamined life is not worth living.”

“In law, a man is guilty if he violates the rights of others. In ethics, he is guilty if he only thinks of doing so.” – *Immanuel Kant*

Wednesday – January 4 – **St. Augustine** - Used Plato’s philosophy as the basis of Christian ethics as two-sided: a. life of reason leads to temporal well-being; and b. faith leads to salvation and eternal happiness.

“Educating the mind without educating the heart is no education at all.” – *Aristotle*

Thursday – January 5 – **Aristotle** - His *Nicomachean Ethics* is the first systematic treatment of ethics in Western civilization. To live the virtuous life is to experience true happiness.

“Acting responsibly is not a matter of strengthening our reason but of deepening our feelings for the welfare of others.” – *Jostein Gaarder*

Friday – January 6 – **St. Thomas Aquinas** - Natural Law – the divine law as written in the hearts of human beings – can be discovered by reason and cultivated by conscience

“Non-violence leads to the highest ethics, which is the goal of all evolution. Until we stop harming all other living beings, we are still savages.” – *Thomas Edison*

Saturday – January 7 – **Immanuel Kant** - A “categorical imperative” (command) binding on all people because it is affirmed by reason, and every rational person accepts his or her obligation to follow reason.

“The power to make a choice goes with the duty of accepting the responsibility of the outcome of the choice.” – *Michael Eneyo*

Sunday – January 8 - Epiphany – End of Christmastide – John Stuart Mill - Utilitarianism states that Utility or the Greatest Happiness Principle is the foundation of morals-everyone’s happiness is equal and one’s own happiness should not be pursued at others’ expense.

“I think ethics is the broader thing that’s less focused on prohibitions and is more perhaps looking at principles and questions and ideas about how to live your life.” – *Peter Singer*

Compiled, edited, and adapted by Roger J. Vanden Busch – November 8, 2022

