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Preconventional Morality

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preconventional morality

n. In Kohlberg's theory of moral development, this is the first and lowest level of reasoning, characterized by egocentric concerns and a focus on concrete consequences of actions. Two stages compose this level of moral reasoning. In stage 1, obedience/punishment orientation, children base their moral judgments on avoidance of physical punishment and unquestioning obedience to authority figures, particularly because of their ability to mete out physical punishment. In stage 2, individualism and exchange, also called instrumental relativism, children begin to understand that people hold multiple perspectives but judge morality of actions in terms of the practical benefits that can be gained by those behaviors. For instance, children will judge that actions are appropriate if concrete gains can be obtained. Children ages 4 to 10 are often considered to be in this level of moral reasoning. — MRTG