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ELI Ethical Lens Inventory

Relationship

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You use your reasoning skills (rationality) to determine what processes and systems should be put into place to assure fairness and justice for all in the community (equality).

Core Values: Equality and Rationality

You prioritize the value of equality over autonomy. Your primary concern is the well-being of the whole community and you believe that assuring the community's well-being is the best way to assure that individuals are treated fairly. You prioritize the value of rationality over sensibility. You believe universal rules exist that apply equally to everyone and that the best results are achieved through consistent application of the universal rules.

Classical Virtues: Justice

You value social balance and believe this is achieved through loyalty and consistency in dealings among members of the community. In your mind, a predictable system that assures the well-being of all, especially those without power, is a just system.

Key Phrase: "I am fair."

Because you value equality and rationality, you tend to assume that the universal application of a fair system is the best way to achieve an ethical result.

Determining What Is Ethical: Being fair

You define an ethical person as one who seeks justice and fundamental fairness in the community. The ethical person uses systems that give everyone in the community, especially those without power, a chance to succeed.

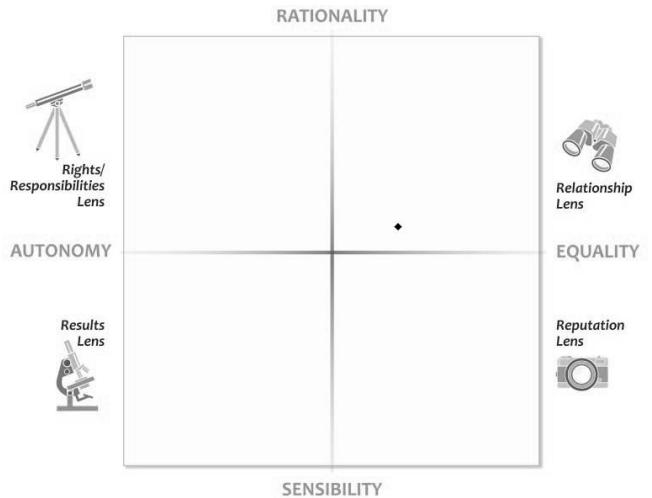
Analytical Tool: Authority

You tend to think through a problem carefully and research options, paying particular attention to the experts on the subject, to find the best solution for a problem. Your goal is to make a fully informed decision and to meet the needs of the community, without harming the least advantaged.

Gift: Advocacy

Because you are concerned with fairness, when you are at your best you work for what is just for all, i.e., what keeps people connected to others in the community. You assure that systems and processes are coherent, uniformly followed, and they protect the least advantaged without creating undue burdens for the rest.

Blind Spot: Overconfidence in process



Because you believe that a consistent process results in a just outcome for all, you sometimes trust the process too much. Although everyone should have equal access, not everyone does. Unequal access gives rise to unjust outcomes, even when the process itself is fair. You tend to believe that ethical decisions are the natural by-product of the universal application of a fair system.

Risk: Being authoritarian

Because you trust reasonable systems to solve problems, you run the risk of being authoritarian: expecting deference to power concentrated in a hierarchical authority. Because you have thought carefully about what is right in a given situation, you tend to assume that your way is best and abuse power as you impose your will on others for their own good.

Double Standard: Exemption

As you seek justice for all, your temptation will be to exempt yourself and leaders you trust from the rules. You'll convince yourself that the rules were meant for other people or that the action you want to take really is just for everyone - even though your "Fair Self" tells you otherwise.

Vice: Becoming an ambitious elitist

Your personal ambition may overpower your concern for justice. When it does, you will tend to overlook abuses of power by those in leadership positions. This will be especially true when those in leadership are part of your group, and they claim to be protecting the rights of those who cannot protect themselves.

Crisis: Isolation and guilt

Unless you develop the practice of mindfulness and reflection, at some point you will become isolated. No one can guarantee justice, or even a fair process, as your "Fair Self" demands. You will also feel guilty if you begin to resent that so few people you help seem grateful. If you find you have few friends, it could be because your obsession with justice drives everyone away.

Seeing Clearly: Listen to your heart

To see more clearly, check to see whether your intuition, your heart, agrees with your head. To find balance, explore the gifts of the other lenses - flexibility and concern for the individual. As you consider what is fair, remember to temper your actions with concern for individuals. Look for ways to balance the rights of individuals with the well-being of the community and remember to be flexible. As you learn to consider individual perspectives in your decision making process, you will live out the best of your ideals with compassion and care for all.