

Whole Brain Ethics A New Method for Deterring Unethical Behavior

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Every organization would like their members to be ethical and law-abiding. A glance at newspapers across the world demonstrates, however, that deviance is quite ubiquitous. Most organizations do engage in some type of ethical training of members in addition to whatever formation has been received in the family, and from educational and religious organizations. When you examine the methods that are typically used to convey this learning, they are largely informational, and/or built on case studies, precedent, legalisms, philosophical surveys, doctrinaire pronouncements, codes, and credos. These are often, then, the basis for discussion and application to ethical dilemmas. Students, using logic, analyze, weigh, evaluate, synthesize and learn ethical problem solving models to apply in the future.

What we have, as a consequence, is a situation that overlooks the whole brain and utilizes only part of it. The part that is used is mighty: reason, logic, analysis, weighing, and synthesis, all with the distinct goal of achieving objectivity. The part that is omitted in the teaching of ethics is the power of the mind to imagine, feel, visualize, experience, intuit, and make a personal equation of the issue. It is this part that is the subjective emotional responsive core of an individual, where real engagement, change, and improvement are more likely to occur.

What will be explicated here is this new path. It will elaborate on the movie-making capability of the mind. It utilizes real people who are respected and loved, and memories, in a spontaneous evocation of feelings and standards of behavior. The imaginary visualization has a twofold design: it highlights the pain associated with getting caught in a deviant act, and then, secondarily, the rewards associated with conforming ethical behavior. After this experience students reflect on what happened in their mind and draw out lessons learned.

This method is not designed to replace present methods of ethical instruction, but to augment them, by tapping the powers of the brain that are every bit as powerful as the ones presently emphasized. The hope and the research for the future is that use of the method will, indeed, increase the deterrence of unethical behavior.