

WHAT IS A HUMANIST APPROACH TO BEING GOOD?

We have many **shared feelings, needs, and values**. We all want to be happy. We all need love and friendship and want to be treated fairly and with respect. Nearly all of us value kindness, freedom, honesty, and justice. This can help us to see why we should be good to each other, because other people are like us.



ZENA

Rules can be helpful, but they can also sometimes lead to problems. We can disagree about what they mean and sometimes different rules appear to tell us to do different things. We therefore always need to think about the **consequences** of our actions and think about whether following a particular rule is the best course of action.



JESSICA

Our moral values don't come from somewhere outside humanity. The origins of morality lie inside human beings. They have **evolved** alongside us. We have good reasons to treat others well. We are social animals. We evolved a **natural** capacity for empathy with others, to recognise their feelings, to imaginatively identify with them, and to feel compassion and concern for their suffering. We are not always good. But most human beings are good to each other most of the time. In most situations we know what is the right thing to do. We can work it out.



IAN

Most of us have **empathy**. We can use this to think how other people might feel. This comes naturally to human beings, but there are also ways to broaden our empathy. We can spend time with people and we can read **stories** about other people, both real and fictional.



GRACE

Empathy can help us to see that we should treat other people the way we would want to be treated. This is called the **Golden Rule**.

Morality is not about following rules or doing what some agent outside humanity wants of us. The reason to be kind and helpful rather than uncaring or cruel is because our actions have an **impact** on other people, society, and the planet. We only have **one life** and so we should aim to promote happiness and reduce suffering in the here and now. That includes non-human animals. Other animals are capable of suffering. We should try to minimise their suffering too.



ALEX

We might not have all the answers, but the best approach is to think about our **shared human needs and values**, to try to use **empathy** and **reason**, and to reflect on the choices we make. There is nowhere else outside of humanity we can turn to for answers. We have to accept the **responsibility to think for ourselves**.



HARI