

REACTION #5

In Book 2, *Virtues of the Character*, Aristotle states that “since there are three conditions arising in the soul - feelings, capacities, and states - virtue must be one of these”. If happiness is the aim of virtuous conduct, achieved as a byproduct of doing good, we must achieve a mean within capacity to become virtuous. We must achieve a state within our capacities.

For the psychologist to think of the spectrum of impulsive to compulsive concerning the proper etiquette in verbal sharing in a classroom environment is to find a mean of conduct at which something is normal and acceptable or clinically significant. The capacity of a child to react appropriately with respect to his or her feelings or states in a classroom environment decides whether he or she is considered proper, and thus good and virtuous. Virtue thus lies in capacity.

Aristotle would say my father, who I deride as a low life scoundrel, is a virtuous lawyer. His personal and professional identity is indistinguishable from the trade he plies through which he endeavors to effect good for his clients. In his other *capacities*, such as in his role of father and husband, he failed. However, in his capacity as a town councilman my father achieved prestige, moreover exercising his civic responsibilities also as a member of the local Exchange Club, which is a ‘do-good’ for the community organization.

I think Aristotle says happiness is the aim of virtuous action which needs to be achieved through learning to take pleasure in the good things in life, such as being excellent and exercising temperance, not in vice, and as a byproduct of being virtuous we will necessarily be viewed as good. The concept of mean, as Aristotle expresses it, is to countervail between excess and capacity in any pattern of activity.

According to Erich Fromm in Man for Himself all humans possess capacity for character traits which shape the individual such as being compulsive or impulsive, childlike or youthful, and man’s natural personality develops around aspiring to be a dozen or more of these desirable traits (as for example are impulsive and youthful) which shape the individual whose job it is to aim to become constantly better by working on the expression of their function as balanced between what’s viewed as objectively good and bad in context. Thus for Fromm, development of a more highly evolved personality in accord with objective values is not only good, but part and parcel of excellence and thus being virtuous.