



# Gandhi and the practice of nursing

## Professional ethics and daily practice

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**ONE MAN**, Mohandas Gandhi, led us back into morality as a practical thing. In my opinion, his greatest contribution to the discussion of politics and morality was his insistence that the ends (results) and means used to achieve them is a false distinction. In fact, Gandhi demonstrated that how you do things determines the end result and that violence as a means to solving a problem brings more violence into the world. It is the result. The proof he gave—defeating the British Empire without using a single gun—showed that morality isn't impractical, it's ultimately practical. It's the only truly practical course of action.



Ethics has to do with morality—choosing between right and wrong. Politics has to do with what happens to people. Both deal with power and powerlessness, with human rights and balancing claims, with justice and fairness—and, yes, with good and evil. However, good and evil aren't the same as right and wrong. Good and evil are about the doer's intent and the impact the deed has on other people, and right and wrong are about adhering to principles. According to a philosopher, the discipline of ethics proposes to identify, organize, examine, and justify human acts by

applying certain principles to determine the right thing to do in specific situations.

### Professional ethics

Professional ethics are built around three essential components:

- 1. Purpose.** All professions develop in response to a social need that members of the profession promise to meet. Put in legalistic terms, this need (along with the power and privileges society grants to help professionals meet the need) and the profession's promised response to it constitute the profession's contract with society.
- 2. Conduct.** The ethical code developed and promulgated by the profession—its code of ethics—describes the conduct society has a right to expect from professionals as they go about the business of the profession.
- 3. Skills and outcomes.** Nursing's standards of practice state, with some precision, the obligations of nurses in specific areas of practice. Each of these components is dynamic and subject to change and reevaluation as the profession grows, as knowledge increases, and as social mores and expectations develop.

So, the ethics of a profession define why it has come to be, how its members are to behave, and what the public has a right to expect of it. According to the practical ethics of Gandhi, nurses create their profession every day in their practice.

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### Reference

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