



The Consequences of Moral Decisions

Our actions, decisions, and attitudes that are **loving** or **morally right** produce all or some of the following results in us or those we affect:

1. an increased ability to trust others
2. greater honesty in relationships
3. a lessened sense of separation from others; a breaking down of barriers
4. an increased attitude of cooperation
5. greater self-respect; the ability to look in the mirror and feel genuinely happy with oneself
6. a better attitude toward people in general; more confidence in the idea that people are really good
7. a feeling of peace and joy; a sense of doing what one is called to do and making the most of life

Our actions, decisions, and attitudes that are **selfish** or **morally wrong** produce all or some of the following results in us or those we affect:

1. a decreased ability to trust others; suspicion
2. phoniness in relationships; being two-faced
3. a sense of separation from others; a feeling of isolation
4. a decreased attitude of cooperation; trouble getting along with others
5. less self-respect; more guilt or embarrassment
6. difficulty in accepting others; a feeling that people are concerned only about themselves
7. a feeling that life is meaningless or hopeless

Two factors are closely related to the above sets of consequences and affect them in an important way:

First, when we talk about the breaking down of barriers between people (number 3), this means less separation and more unity between individuals. But this is also true of relationships between those individuals and others in the world around them. For example, in a dating relationship or a marriage that is healthy and loving, partners are drawn to each other, but this does not cut them off from others. Their love for each other makes them more open to others, not less. If their "love" excludes relating to other people, perhaps the relationship is not truly loving.

Second, in everything we do or decide, we have to be concerned not just with right now but also with what the long-range effects are going to be on ourselves and others. Each of us must ask, How will this affect me and others later on?

