# ETHICAL THEORY

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## Justifying a Concern for the Well-Being of Others

As you read the material for our next class, keep the questions below in mind. To answer these questions you will have to reflect critically on what you have read and possibly re-read important passages. Keep in mind that there are two basic kinds of information that you need to look for in the reading:

1. What are the main points or conclusions that an author accepts with respect to a particular issue?

2. What are the reasons, important considerations, and evidence that lead the author to accept that conclusion?

For our purposes, *it is information of the second sort that will be our primary concern* since our most basic task is to *evaluate the reasons and evidence* that are offered to support accepting one possible conclusion about an issue, rather than another.

Although I strongly suggest that you write out brief answers to these questions, you do not have to turn in written responses. You do, however, need to be prepared to speak intelligently about these issues at our next class meeting.

### Reading

- John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism*, "What Utilitarianism Is" & "Of the Ultimate Sanction of the Principle of Utility".

  This reading assignment does have some overlap with previous ones. However, you are now being asked to focus on different aspects of it, so please do re-read the relevant sections.

### Questions

1. What reasons does Mill give for rejecting egoism? Is this an argument against *foundational* egoism, *factoral* egoism, or both? What exactly is the scope of Mill's theory at the factoral level? Do animals have moral status? (See "What Utilitarianism Is", paragraphs 9, 10, 13, 14, and 18, as well as the argument from "Of the Ultimate Sanction of the Principle of Utility".)

2. In "Of the Ultimate Sanction of the Principle of Utility", Mill tries to show how people could be motivated to follow utilitarian principles. How does his argument work? What role does sympathy play in it? What are its key premises?