

Understanding and Using the Triangles of Enlightened Conservatism

When one speaks of ethics it brings forth many different meanings. Depending on perspective it can be in the silos of business ethics, legal ethics, medical ethics, or the various theories of responsibility that philosophically have been put forth. Talking of ethics in relationship to Enlightened Conservatism and the triangles is somewhat different. It deals with the concept of cultural ethics. There are three concepts that are related but slightly different in how they are used. Morality is not used in a religious concept, but is more used in an obligation concept of the Golden Rule of what man owes to other men even though he is not required by law to do so. Morality embodies many of the concepts of various religions and philosophies that are based on the Golden Rule. Ethics is more the enforcement mechanism of that philosophy. It is a process of consideration of the various interests of different parties that ought to be considered in how a decision is made. The considerations within the triangles and the process of thought are designed to a great extent to broaden this consideration of the interests and effects of decisions on all parties involved and maintain them within a thought process of conscience, the Golden Rule, and particularly the third decision criteria of individual responsibility. While morality includes the theory and ethics the framework for decision of competing interests operationally, individual responsibility is the tactic that becomes a key decision point of how ethics is ultimately enforced. It becomes a cultural determinant that builds the system of ethics or co-responsibility as the building block of the culture. Individual responsibility is dramatically tied culturally to the philosophy of individual dignity. It is the concept of honor or "face" that often is the greatest support of individual responsibility which in turn creates a culture that emphasizes and puts on the forefront the concept of ethics which if implemented brings about a philosophy of the Golden Rule and conscience. Legal systems adopt the cultural values. Thus, if a system does not have these component parts as a whole, the culture deteriorates and the legal system changes where the law and not individual responsibility become the determinant parts. The triangles effectively keep focus on most of these key considerations.

The greatest problem with organizing ideas is often recognizing the category of prioritization of the level of thought and where it appropriately fits in an organizational structure. Perhaps the military has one of the best approaches to competently define these critical areas. They often look in terms of strategy, operations, tactics, and techniques. In society we too often confuse the different levels as we read more pinpointed media and Internet stories. Strategy is the organizing principle that arranges all the others from the top down. It is the decision at the highest level as to what the goals are to be accomplished, why they are to be accomplished, and in effect it defines who we are. The operational aspect is how you accomplish solving the goals of the strategy. If it is in a time of war, where is your place of entry geographically and for what purpose? If it is in society, how do you approach solving the problem using economic, political, or cultural power as a primary thrust? Tactics are the integration of forces that you have available that you use for the fullest impact in capability. In society they tend to be the techniques of analysis, prioritization and measurement, and the projection of trends that can help show you impacts. Techniques are specialized ways of using specific forces that

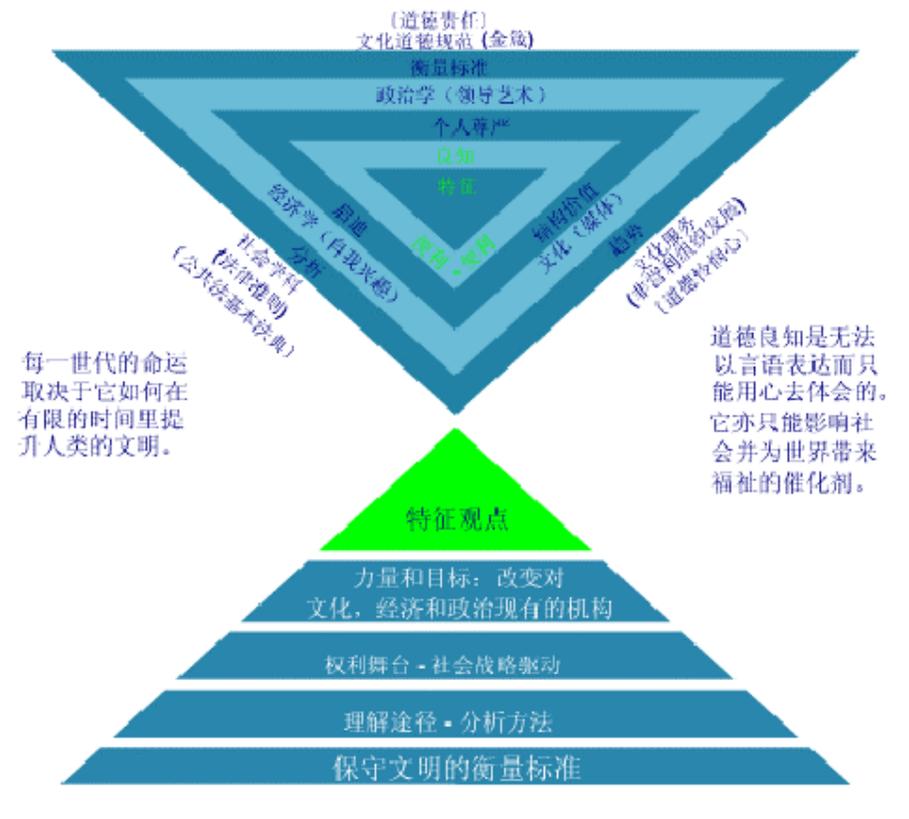
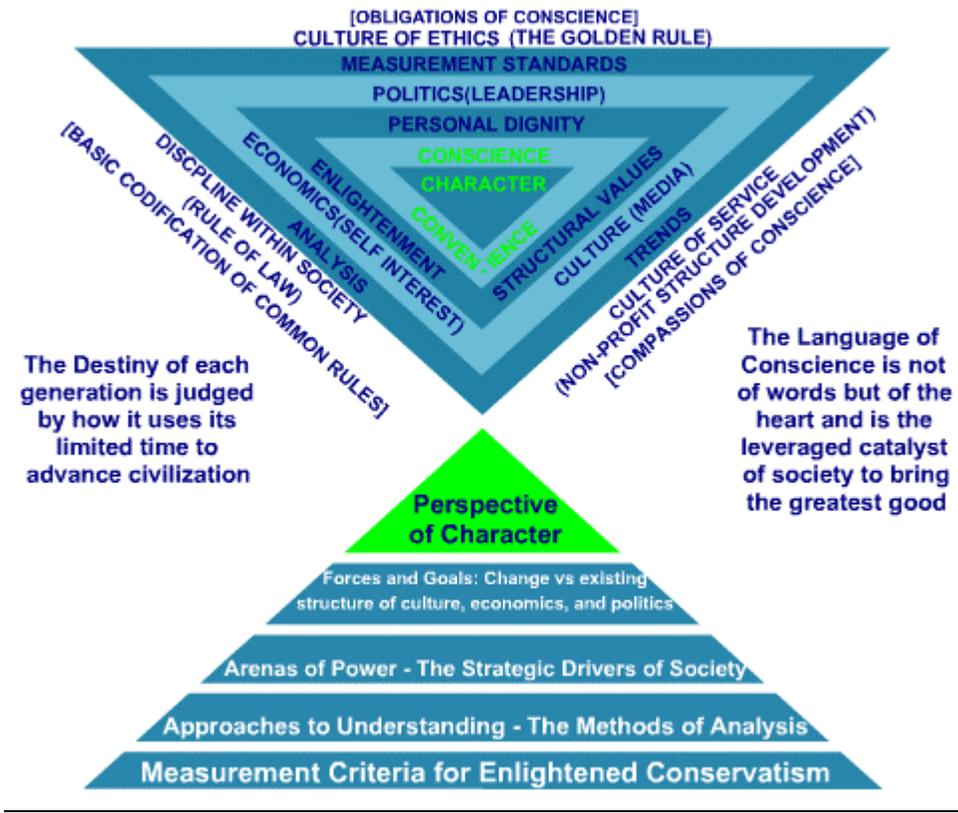
you have. In war it may be the combination of different bombing or crossfire techniques, but in society, in the three operational powers, it is more often how you might use tax policy, incentives, or deficit financing if you choose the economic thrust for the operational choices. The key is the need for a decision structure that provides support for the thought process. It begins with strategy and most important today for civilization, it starts with the strategy of developing the best in people from conscience, which is ultimately the creation of a culture that reinforces character and service. Once that structure begins the strategy, operations, tactics, and techniques all fall more logically into place. The triangles of Enlightened Conservatism are simply a graphic representation of the thought process.

*Where Enlightened Conservatism is a philosophy of giving to every other man the same dignity and rights that you expect for yourself, that concept reflects not only the thoughts of philosophers such as Confucius and his Silver Rule, but also religions such as Christianity and Judaism in the Golden Rule of Christ, and is primarily based upon a core of conscience. I have been asked how *The Language of Conscience* fits with Islam. The difficulty many in the West have with Islam is that since it has no main arbitrator of the Koran there are many different interpretations. However, the very core of Islam is conscience. The word that is used is “zameer” and it is from it that the teachings transcend. *The Language of Conscience* in the books is quite similar to “zameer key awaaz.” The point that I make is that if you were to have a unifying philosophy for the world, or an organizing thought to which peoples could be pulled together, it is conscience. Unlike good versus evil, which are often perspectives from where you stand, conscience versus convenience is more internal enlightenment. Do you care of others and the future or only self and the present? That is definable by the rules of the culture.*

If the organizing principles of civilization is a culture of morality where each man respects the other you get a certain set of rules. This morality of common obligation from oneself is different than being moralistic and forcing views. That is the point that is often overlooked and obfuscated.

Tieman H. Dippel, Jr.

<http://www.thelanguageofconscience.com/>



We designed the triangles of Enlightened Conservatism as simply a graphic representation of the thought process of Enlightened Conservatism. The triangles serve a variety of purposes, and it is often important to separate out which function is being sought. Much like the common example that we use that the game concepts of tic tac toe, checkers, and chess are similar, it depends on the level of thought and sophistication of the rules. As in Picasso's sculpture of the Bull's Head the bicycle handle bar and a bicycle seat make the sculpture, it is often not the physical object that is to be appreciated, but instead the appreciation of the creativity involved in seeing different relationships.

At a fundamental level, the triangles are very helpful in categorizing the most important functions and elements of a society. The forces of change against the existing structure are constant. The great powers of economics, politics, and culture are fundamental components that fit into different combinations for other issues such as education or the environment where there are more specialized functions. These combinations include a variety of the fundamental powers and the methods by which judgment is made and the ultimate culture that you tend to seek as compared with the culture as it presently exists. In this basic sense the triangles simply categorize functions of society in one method that allows for comparison with other societies using a judgment criteria of the level of conscience upon which the society operates with the Golden Rule as informal measurement criteria. In the process of developing knowledge and wisdom, it also allows for a more effective grouping of people and ideas in more specialized areas that can then be a part from the bottom up of a bigger top down approach.

At the checkers level they become important because they allow a better discussion and strategic analysis of how these factors work in coordination, particularly with a view to future impact and unintended consequences. Oftentimes an answer may appear appropriate within one of the areas such as economics. But the answer is not necessarily the best answer if you also looked at the long-term cultural impact that it would ultimately produce. Having a system of wisdom that made more deliberation between component parts is particularly essential. An example might be a city council meeting where decisions are made on a more immediate basis with more political input and often a great deal more emotion as compared to the way decisions are made in a judicial case. The judicial case is reasoned with more time and a process that involves looking at all of the past history on the issue from case law, having advocates for each side bring out the most important points for clarification, and then a court deliberating to give a final judgment. In that sense what the triangles provide, if used properly, is a way to anticipate with much more depth the impact of actions and policies. While they are more appropriately used for a public policy set of deliberations, they also have a number of benefits for individuals as well.

At the chess level, the entire component of the triangles is a top-down vision of how you would implement an organizing principle of conscience as exemplified by the development of character and compassion. It is an approach that focuses upon the importance of personal dignity beyond just political rights with the belief that the ideal civilization is one of the Golden Rule whereby each man is willing to give every other man the same dignity and rights that he expects for himself. The reason personal dignity

is the fulcrum of the change vs. structure issues of stability rests in the nature of the three powers. The nature of politics is such that men naturally wish to control as much of their individual destiny as possible, which is counterbalanced by the need for security that often has group connotations, but by nature would move to smaller government and more liberty as these are refined. The nature of economics is that markets, through their allocation of resources with competition, generally give the highest growth rates even though as Schumpeter's creative destruction demonstrates this reallocates creative resources, often painfully. But when you rise in economic levels and move up Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, you reach higher levels that still do not give you happiness. There can be only one top 1% even if levels as a whole rise greatly. You only intensify competition, and everyone pays more and works harder if materialism is the scorecard of social heights.

Culture, is the ultimate determination of happiness, satisfaction, and ultimately stability. What is valued by society sets the level of what determines happiness or self worth. That is in the values of the culture and what gives true value in developed societies as they move to higher levels of economic and political growth. Personal dignity is the fulcrum of the triangles because it is the ultimate cleavage on the diamond not only of stability, but is the determinant of how one views his self interest in all things. It is the perspective of dedication. Whether it is The Way of Sun Tzu, the Discipline and Morale of Attila or the expediency of Machiavelli, it is the realism that dedication matters. It is also the Idealism of the virtue of Aristotle, the recognition of obligation of Confucius, and the love of Christ. It is a lesson of politics not to judge a man by the public man but by the private man if you wish to understand him. Such is the same for societies, and the concept of personal dignity is the ultimate balance of both and is the fulcrum. Cultural values ultimately decide its placement to favor one course over another.

Organizing principles, and the visions that they entail, are key in a modern world where change is extremely difficult because of the complexity of systems. Unless you have a top-down overview of the goals that you wish to achieve, it is difficult to help lead a migration of leaders toward them. A limited number within society take an interest in leading and becoming involved in the public process. This public process is not just politics and government but is also the structure of economics, of service, and of civilization. There are a limited number of uncommon men and women that take a leadership position for the beliefs that they hold and for their desires to advance civilization forward or in the areas of convenience to advance themselves forward. That distinction between whether you operate out of conscience or out of convenience is a fundamental one because it affects your perspectives on the materiality and self-interest of economics and also affects your perspectives and style in politics. Understanding these distinctions becomes particularly important if you need to educate populations so that they are able to migrate individually through these leaders to a more positive society. With the Internet and the availability of information, knowledge is often not so much the issue as whether the knowledge given is truly credible, and whether it has the wisdom to be used thoughtfully.

It is most critical with the triangles to understand the importance of recognizing one's perspective in using them. Having this in mind is key in organizing the analytics applied before you start. The triangles separate out groups of considerations and show relationships, but recognizing why you are using the triangles often determines your success and has to be a beginning point. Are you using them to find a compromise or to arrange materials on options for another decision maker? Usually a compromise can be presented as an option, but the analytics needs to show the impacts. Some issues are not that capable of effective compromise. An example is that of using a hot water bottle or an ice pack on a headache. Either may work, but mixing them to tepid water has to affect. You can spend much time seeking compromise that is wasted if the presentation is to another decision maker who wants clear options. If the key to policy is how you affect a culture long term through personal dignity considerations, then whether an option builds personal responsibility or increases dependence and victimization concerns tells a great deal about the policy. The perspective entering the effort, and the perspective taken in making decision choices is key and has to be recognized. The triangles can be used at many levels and approaches as an organizational tool, but like any tool, to be effectively used, it must be used with a specific purpose that is known in advance.

One of the problems of today is that those wanting to be leaders or pundits with ideas must be shrill and on a particular side to gain attention to be on media. There are few successful pundits who are not imaged Republican or Democrat, liberal or conservative. The concept is for the listener or moderator to be the judge. But often the moderator comes from a perspective of the ratings goals and the individual listener wants an unbiased analysis to consider. Building a network of unheard pundits will not work in this environment, but building a system to help individual analysis can. You do not have to educate all people but only provide the opportunity to all. And if enough adopt it, the benefits of the system become more effective as opposing sides use it. The Texas Lyceum, in its early days, used opposing views to start but concentrated on a solution progression that ended with several alternatives that were logical and possibly accomplishable. In the Chinese approach the Marxist Dialectic and cultural history compares opposites to determine a middle way of balance and solution. What is lacking in America today is the non-partisan middle ground that may not be so much compromise as wise choices. If people cannot solve it individually, a system supported by them can. Only ideas change ideas.

In a culturally dominated age, which occurs to combat the terrorism of politics and the corruption of economics, ideas become more important than tanks, airplanes, and other military power. The battle is on an individual and a community level as to who dominates the culture: the builders of conscience for the future or the destroyers of convenience of the present. Who fits into what category is often dependent on where people stand if this is just rhetoric. But if you have a system that gives a perspective on how to judge the measurement of the personal dignity of man, the common good, morality, and the fabric of advancing civilization then substance plays a major part because wisdom and not emotion is the determinant. It is toward that end that the triangles make a beginning step.

The overview of the triangles allows for a more optimum solution of problems. Many times economic problems are not solvable within that block alone, nor are political problems or even many times when the two are placed together. The addition of the cultural dimensions and conscience versus convenience will probably be in the next twenty years the most considerable power of its era. Politics often divides on concepts of the use of governments, small or large, with principles that are often described as right or left. Economics is often decided on self-interest and usually becomes defined by rich versus poor. Cultural values on the other hand tend to be more of a binding tie and often fall in the realm of conscience versus convenience. Those values of conscience tend to look to the future and consider others, where those of convenience are often shorter term in perspective and are concerned primarily with their own interest. If you add the cultural dimension, particularly if it is from a conscience standpoint, you are able to present a concept of organizing principles that change the matrix of economics and politics in different ways. The difficulty is that oftentimes politics and economics adopt change only when there is a crisis. Culture is different in that it is developed over time. What you teach the current generations may not be as related to an immediate crisis as it is preparatory for how to view and handle the next crisis as it occurs. Even at that point it is often quite difficult to find constructive change for the long run because it requires shared burdens. What enlightened conservatism tends to do is simply make those arguments more clearly placed to all sides but does so in what would be called a language of conscience. You very seldom succeed if your arguments begin by being negative. If you begin with an argumentative stance or you begin with a negative stance that says "it can't be done because . . .," you normally set a tone for conversation that has little benefit. If you start a conversation with respect, seeking ideas and move forth that "an idea might be possible, but here are the problems with it . . .," oftentimes an honest discussion of the problems can change attitudes, and you will at least have a listener that may return the respect that you granted.

Creating that language of conscience environment is what at least allows differing groups to grant each other the self-respect and the dignity for adequate discussion. At the same time, that does not mean total toleration because with the granting of rights and dignity you also have a significant set of obligations. It is the balancing of these rights and dignities versus the obligations that go with their preservation that is also built into the character arguments that the triangles present. The key is really the next generation, how they look at issues can be the often described melting pot of common values unification or the salad bowl of diverse individual goals of groups. In a world much more competitive and facing economic pressures, the society that is unified on common values and obligation is one that is more easily managed. Like football teams with equal talent, management's strategy produces the victory more often than luck. If the triangles are a trademark or brand, they are intended to emphasize an appreciation for unity, for wisdom, and for conscience at their various levels of understanding as ideas. On a physical organizational plane they represent a classification system, an analytical / measurement system, and a strategic purpose or goal for ultimate achievement to which all else can be adapted.

The ideas of the triangles are not unique, but a synthesis of history. The development of a philosophy and system that refines and promotes them is an entirely different concept. In our modern age the Internet, the global perspective, and the need for a common vehicle with a language of conscience may be more appreciated. But the key, the power of culture, is fundamentally in what and how we teach and instill values in our children, regardless of what nation or society. The triangles fundamentally crystallize that issue to anyone who works with them in depth.