

Ethics

We can develop neither the moral knowledge nor empathy crucial for an impartial morality unless we have been in intimate relationships. Someone reared by uncaring parents, who never established close personal ties with others will simply not know how to look after or promote the interests of either intimates or strangers. No one knows how to do mathematics or to play football without acquaintance with the discipline or the game. Likewise, no one knows how to consider the interests of others unless they have been in an intimate relationship.

The same would be true generally of efforts to promote the interests of others. Most of us learn how to discern the needs of others within our families: our parents comforted us when we were hurt; they laughed with us when we were happy. Eventually, we learned to be concerned about them.

Though I expect we may have some biologically inherited sympathetic tendencies, these will not be developed adequately unless others have cared for us and we have cared for them. If we are not motivated to promote the needs of our families or friends, how can we be motivated to promote the needs of a stranger?

On the other hand, if we develop empathy toward our friends, we will be inclined to generalize it to others. We become so vividly aware of our intimate's needs that we are willing to help them even when it is difficult to do so. But since empathy is often non-specific, we will be likewise inclined to 'feel' pain in acquaintances and strangers. Having felt it, we are more likely to do something about it.

From Lafollette H – Personal Relationships in Singer P (ed) – *A Companion to Ethics* (Blackwell, 2004)

1. (a) Clarify the argument and/or interpretation in the passage. **(24)**

(b) Do you agree with the idea(s) expressed? Justify your point of view and discuss its implications for understanding religion and human experience. **(16)**

(Total 40 marks)

TOTAL FOR PAPER 1B: 40 MARKS

Start your answer on page 3.



