

*"We are what we repeatedly do.  
Excellence then, is not an act, but a habit."  
- Aristotle*

## VIRTUE ETHICS

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# INTRODUCTION

- ✓ **Aristotle was born in 384 at Stagirus.**
  - ✓ **He was a great critique of his teacher Plato. Basically his theory of idea.**
  - ✓ **Aristotle's interest covers a vast range of areas includes Biology to ethics and politics.**
  - ✓ **Aristotle is known as an encyclopedic genius.**
  - ✓ **Certainly, father of logic and biology.**
  - ✓ **Aristotle was the most synthetic thinker of his time.**
  - ✓ **Aristotle was the first philosopher who realized the importance of character of a human being.**
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- ❑ Aristotle emphasized on Virtue based theory and telos to maintain a *eudaimonic* life. The Neo-Aristotelian coined the termed virtue ethics.
  - ❑ It helps and guides people to live the life of good.
  - ❑ It focuses on behavior rather than rules or the consequences.
  - ❑ Virtue should be for the right person, for the right object, in a right amount, at the right time, for a right end in a right or appropriate way.

# The Goal of Human Existence

- *Eudaimonia*
- Flourishing, Happiness
- A Lifelong Pursuit, accomplished
  - Rationally, through theoretical wisdom and contemplation
  - Functionally, through practical wisdom and politics
- \* Aimed at the “perfect happiness” which is the perfect activity
- \* An excellence in any activity in accordance with the nature of that activity
- \* Thus, “*Human happiness is the activity of the soul in accordance with perfect virtue (excellence)*”. (I.8; Pojman, 394).

# The Virtues

## \* Intellectual Virtues

- \* Wisdom, Understanding, Prudence

- \* SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE, TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE, INTUITIVE REASON, PRACTICAL WISDOM, PHILOSOPHIC WISDOM.

- \* Taught through instruction

## \* Moral Virtues

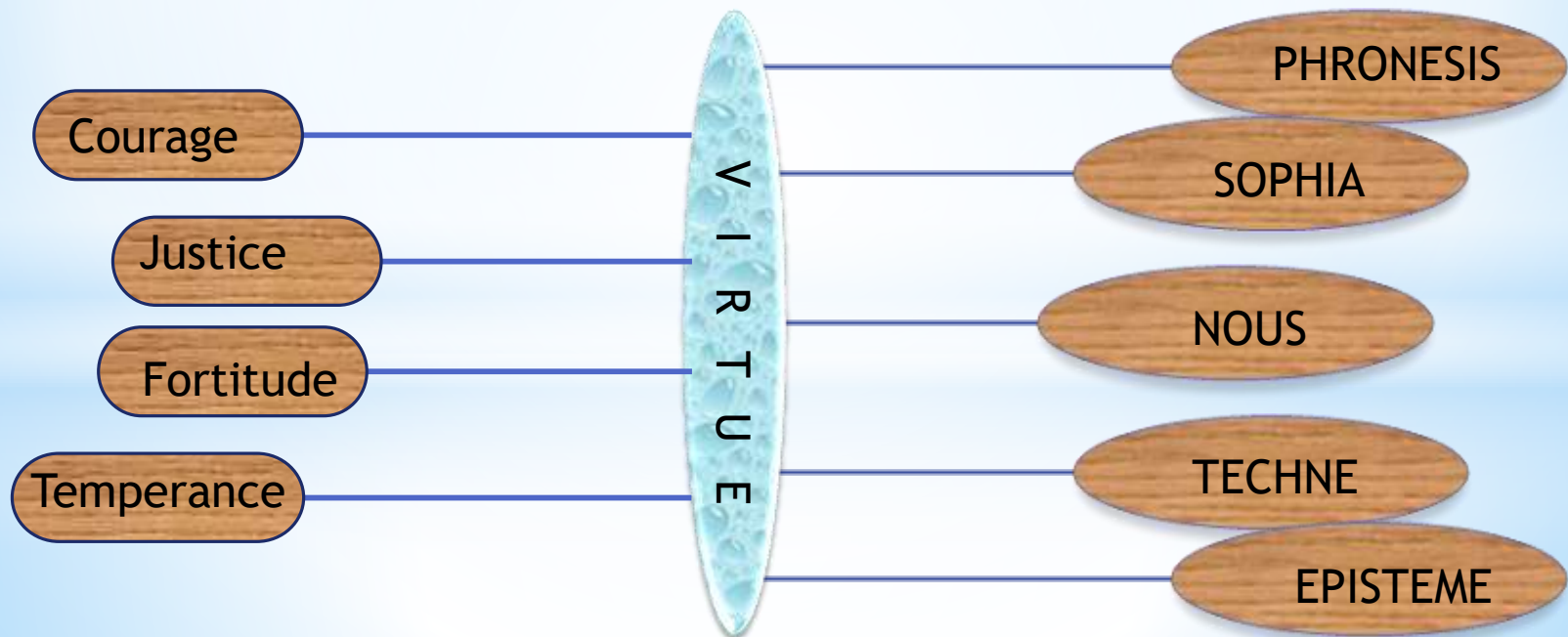
- \* Prudence, Justice, Fortitude, Temperance

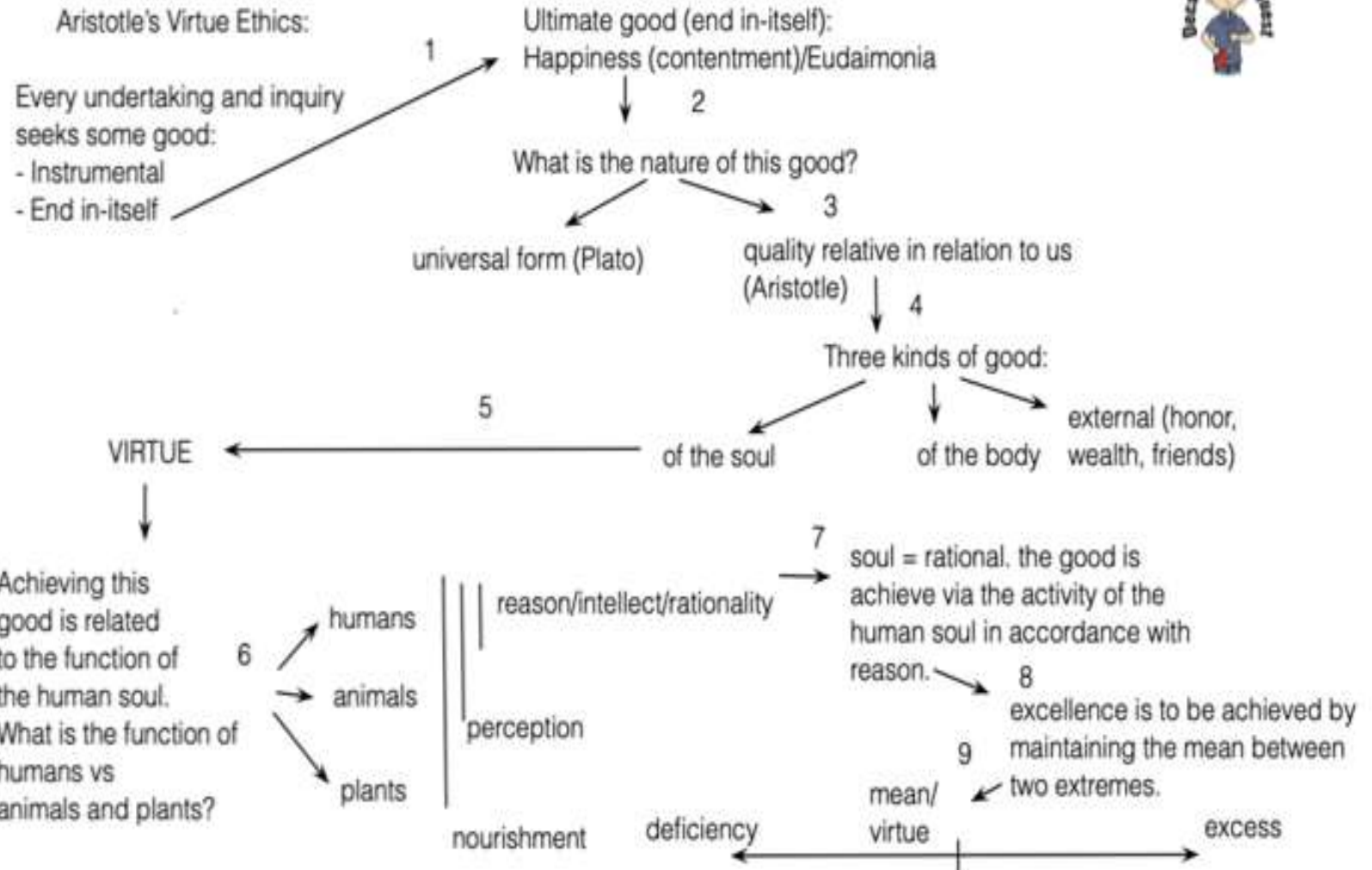
- \* The result of habit

- \* Not natural or inborn but acquired through practice

- \* Habit or disposition of the soul (our fundamental character) which involves both feeling and action

- \* It is the character that strengthen human being to flourish.



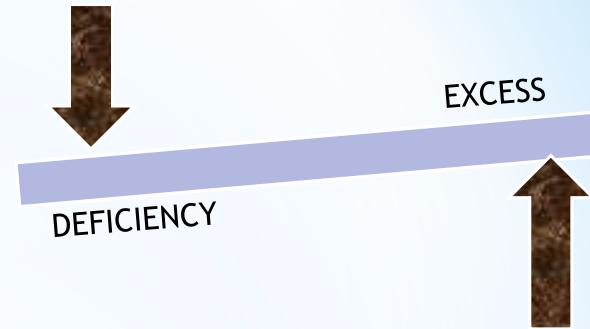


Source: <https://decafquest.com/2021/02/09/aristotle-virtue-ethics/>



# The Doctrine of the Mean

- \* Proper position between two extremes
  - \* Vice of excess
  - \* Vice of deficiency
  - \* Ex- courage
- \* Not an arithmetic median
  - \* Relative to us and not the thing
  - \* Not the same for all of us, or
  - \* Any of us, at various occasions
  - \* *“In this way, then, every knowledgeable person avoids excess and deficiency, but looks for the mean and chooses it”*
- \* Defined through Reason
  - \* Education, contemplation, reflection
- \* Balanced with Other Virtues and applied using *phronesis*:
  - \* To have any single strength of character in full measure, a person must have the other ones as well.\*
    - \* Courage without good judgement is blind
    - \* Courage without perseverance is short-lived
    - \* Courage without a clear sense of your own abilities is foolhardy
- \* *“The virtuous person has practical wisdom, the ability to know when and how best to apply these various moral perspectives.” (\*Hinman)*



# virtues in different context

- \* People are very different.
- \* But we face the same basic problems and have the same basic needs.
- \* Everyone needs **courage** as danger can always arise.
- \* Some people are less well off, so we will need **generosity**.
- \* Everyone needs friends so we need **loyalty**.

## Strengths of Virtue Ethics

- ❖ Importance of the Person, Motive, Heart, Conscience  
Connection to Community
- ❖ Realization that morality is not defined by moments but by a long-term process
- ❖ Allowance for Gray areas, varying contexts, different levels of moral maturity and life contexts
- ❖ G.E.M. Anscombe revived Aristotelian virtues and named them as virtue ethics.
- ❖ Michel Sandel, Charles Taylor, Philippa Foot, MacIntyre, Amrtya Sen are the communitarian followers of Aristotle's Ethics.

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