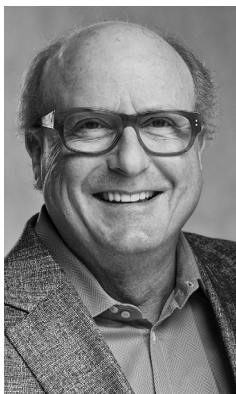


# Self Interest is the Foundation of Ethics



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**G**oogle “Joey Ferguson and Art Linkletter“ and you will find an amusing YouTube video of me as a 4-year-old on Linkletter’s television show, People Are Funny. In that episode I am given the opportunity to choose from a variety of gifts for my mother, my father and myself while my Dad is sequestered backstage where he can’t hear us. After I have selected one gift for each of us, Art tells me that I can only have one of the three for real and he asks me which one I want to keep. When my father is brought onstage he is told that if he can guess which

of the gifts I chose to keep, then we could have all three. I took the electric train for myself and my father did not hesitate to predict that I would. Of course I took the train for myself; I was four.

Values, ethics and morals all begin and end with self interest. Always. This is not a bad thing, since enlightened self interest includes the quality of the social and personal relationships that are so vital to the health and happiness of all human beings. Trustworthy personal and social relationships yield a variety of tangible and psychological benefits that far outweigh the petty material advantage that dominated little Joey Ferguson’s decision process. Mature adults choose the gift for their mother and reap the many rewards of public admiration. Partners, parents, friends and colleagues who can be relied upon to observe The Golden Rule and to keep their word will be rewarded with love and money. Lying, cheating and stealing will also be rewarded with money, but not with love. This sort of analysis applies only to those relationships you want to nourish and keep. In these cases, to get what you want, you should give your significant other whatever is most important to them. This approach is selfish, smart, and admirable. Trust me. Call me.

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