Humanity Formulation of the Categorical Imperative
Universalizability Principle

The universalizability principle says to act only in such a way that you can consistently will that your maxim be a universal law.
Universalizability Principle

There are three steps in applying the universalizability principle. First, formulate your maxim. Second, conceive a world in which that maxim is a universal law. Third, discover whether you can consistently will that your maxim be a universal law.

Another way to put the third step: "Would you still choose your maxim if everyone else were acting on that maxim?"
Universalizability Principle

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A deep diagnosis of the problem seems to be that mere consistency is too weak. There is always a way to be consistent, and so there is always a way to perform some action that I want.
Categorical Imperative

Kant gives two formulations of the categorical imperative.

What's the first formulation?
Categorical Imperative

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The universalizability principle is the first formulation.
Categorical Imperative

Kant gives two formulations of the categorical imperative.

The universalizability principle is the first formulation.

The second formulation is the humanity formulation.
Categorical Imperative

The humanity formulation of the categorical imperative:

"Act so to treat humanity, whether in your own person or in another, in every case as an end and never merely as a means."
The Humanity Formulation

The intuitive idea:
- Always treat humanity as an end in itself
- Don't use people
The Humanity Formulation

The intuitive idea:

- Always treat humanity as an end in itself
- Don't use people
- Don't treat people as mere things
- Treat people with respect and dignity
The Humanity Formulation

The intuitive idea:

- Always treat humanity as an end in itself
- Don't use people
- Don't treat people as mere things
- Treat people with respect and dignity
- Humanity is of absolute worth, of utmost dignity
The Humanity Formulation

The intuitive idea:
- Everything else has a price, but humanity is beyond price.

(What do you think that means?)
The Humanity Formulation

An implication is that self-respect is just as much a moral duty as respect for others.
The Humanity Formulation

"Act to treat humanity, whether in your own person or in another, in every case as an end and never merely as a means."
The Humanity Formulation

"Act so as to treat humanity, whether in your own person or in another, in every case as an end and never merely as a means."
The Humanity Formulation

What is "Humanity?"
The Humanity Formulation

Humanity is the ability to deliberate, decide and choose.

It is the ability to act on reasons and principle.

It is autonomy.

The capacity to will, and not just to want.
The Humanity Formulation

"Act to treat humanity, whether in your own person or in another, in every case as an end and never merely as a means."
The Humanity Formulation

An end is the final reason for action.

An end has no further explanation.

It's a reason that doesn't depend on anything else.

(Why are you studying? Why do you want good grades? Why do you want a good job? Why do you want a happy life? a happy life, in this little story, is the end of studying.)
The Humanity Formulation

Act so as to treat humanity, whether in your own person or in another, in every case as an end and never merely as a means.

A means is the opposite of an end: it's something you do to get something else.
Applying the Humanity Principle

Consider lying to a friend to get a loan.

- If I lie, how do I treat his humanity?
Applying the Humanity Principle

Consider lying to a friend to get a loan.
- If I lie, how do I treat his humanity?
- Would that lie treat him with respect and dignity?
Applying the Humanity Principle

Consider lying to a friend to get a loan.
- If I lie, how do I treat his humanity?
- Would that lie treat him with respect and dignity?
- Or would I value the money more than I value the humanity of my friend?
Applying the Humanity Principle

Consider lying to a friend to get a loan.
- If I lie, how do I treat his humanity?
- Would that lie treat him with respect and dignity?
- Or would I value the money more than I value the humanity of my friend?
Applying the Humanity Principle

Consider lying to a friend to make them happy.

- If I lie, how do I treat his humanity?
- Would that lie treat him with respect and dignity?
- Or would I value their happiness more than I value the humanity of my friend?
Applying the Humanity Principle

Kant's cases for the humanity principle...

- Suicide
- Lying for a loan
- Improving one's talents
- Charity
Applying the Humanity Principle

Other cases for the humanity principle...

- grieving mother
- murder
- slavery
- drugs!
Applying the Humanity Principle

Consider lying to a friend to make them happy.

- If I lie, how do I treat his humanity?
- Would that lie treat him with respect and dignity?
- Or would I value their happiness more than I value the humanity of my friend?

For Kant, it will never matter what lie you tell: a lie--any lie--subverts the rationality of another person and so treats their rationality as a means, which is always wrong.