



# The Ethical Concept of Care Part One

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# Caveats

- American
- Western
- Male
- Interpretive

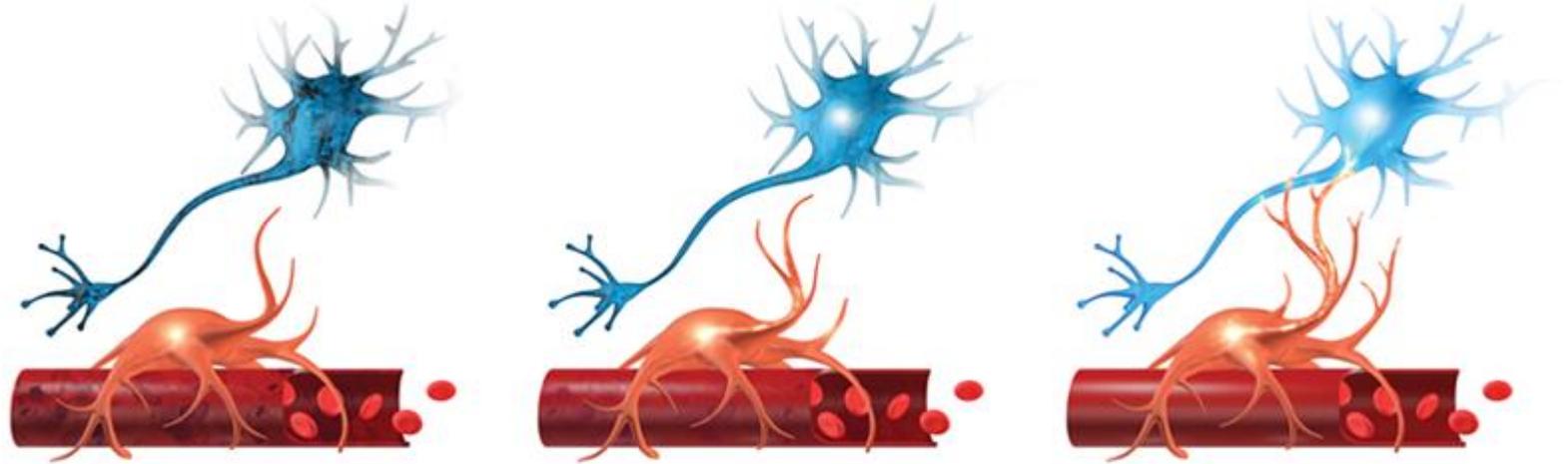
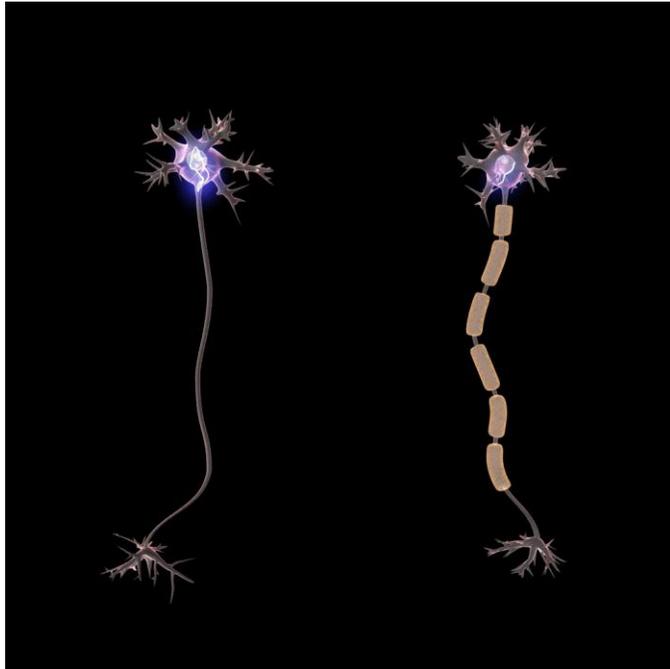


Image: <https://www.cognitivefxusa.com/blog/neuroplasticity-treatment-for-concussions>

# Whence Care?

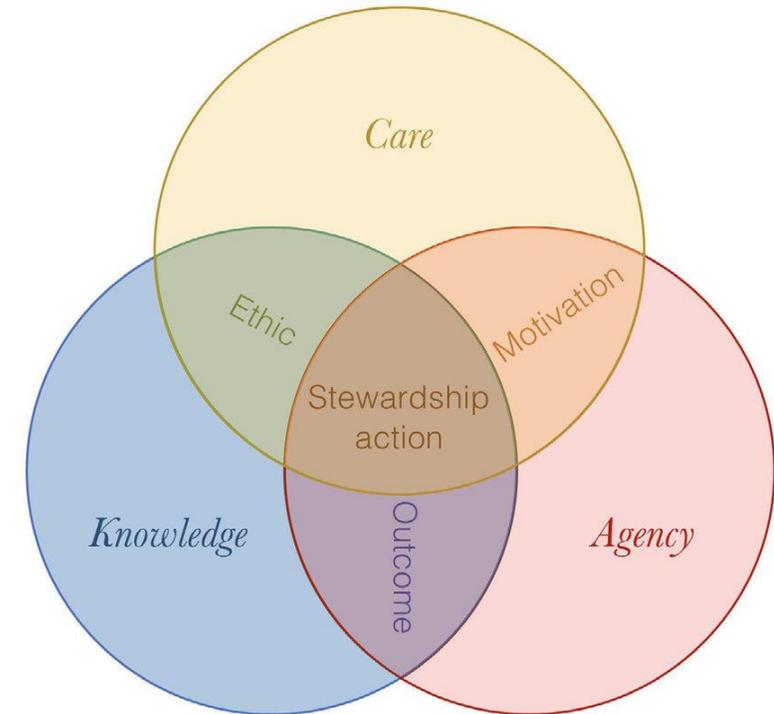


We can begin with some questions...

- How can neurons care?
- Is caring driven by evolution?
- Cultural evolution or biological evolution?
- Does caring depend on rules and rationality?
- Does caring require attachment?

# The Many Meanings of Care

Care has many meanings: when we say “cares and woes,” “care” denotes a burden; when we say “I care for you,” we express love. Care always expresses an action or a disposition, a reaching out to something. When we use it to refer to ourselves, as in “I take good care of myself,” we are in that instant thinking of ourselves as both the doer and that toward which we are reaching out. Care expresses relationships. It is used to express our deepest convictions, as when we say, “I care about dolphins”; it is used by advertisers in banal ways to make us like a company and perhaps continue to buy its products, as when we hear advertisers say, “McDonald’s cares.”



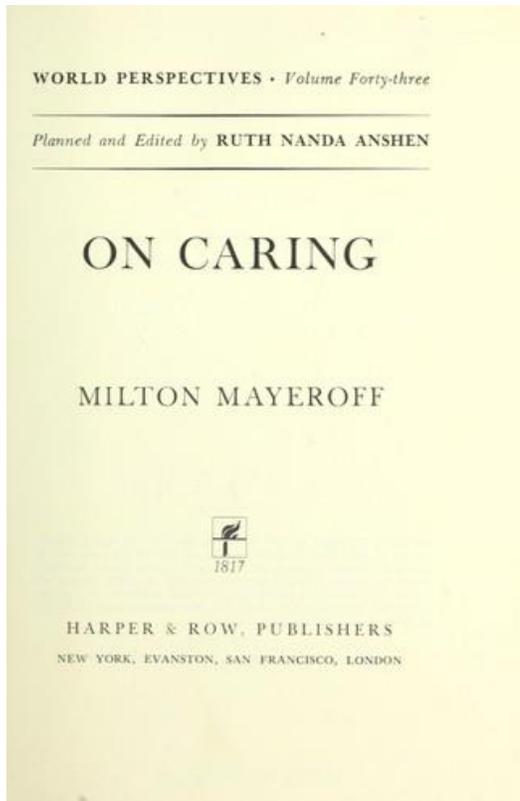
Joan Tronto, 2013, *Caring Democracies*, p. x

<https://we.riseup.net/assets/448799/Joan+C.+Tronto+Caring+Democracy+Markets%2C+Equality%2C+and+Justice+%282013%2C+NYU+Press%29.pdf>

<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/326587484> Stewardship as a boundary object for sustainability research Linking care knowledge and agency (Image)

# On Caring

- Milton Mayeroff, 1971



- “To care for another person, in the most significant sense, is to help him grow and actualize himself.”
- “Caring, as helping another grow and actualize himself, is a process, a way of relating to someone that involves development, in the same way that friendship can only emerge in time through mutual trust and a deepening and qualitative transformation of the relationship.”
- “In the context of a man’s life, caring has a way or ordering his other values and activities around it... there is a basic stability in his life; he is ‘in place’ in the world, instead of being out of place, or merely drifting or endlessly seeking his place.” [https://openlibrary.org/books/OL5758563M/On\\_caring](https://openlibrary.org/books/OL5758563M/On_caring).

# Domains of Care Ethics

Practices and principles of care have been explored in the domains of:

- critical psychology (Noddings 1984)
- political theory (Tronto 1993)
- justice (Engster 2009)
- citizenship (Kershaw 2005; Sevenhuijsen 1998)
- migration and labor studies (Boris and Rhacel 2010)
- care in business ethics and economics (Gatzia 2011)
- scientific choices for development (Nair 2001)
- health work and sciences (Latimer 2000; Mol 2008)
- disability studies and activism (Sánchez Criado, Rodríguez- Giralt, and Mencaroni, 2016)
- accountability procedures (Jerak-Zuiderent 2015)
- food politics (Abbots, Lavis, and Attala 2015)
- animal rights (Donovan and Adams 2010)
- farming practices (Singleton and Law 2013)
- grassroots activism (Barbagallo and Federici 2012)
- social and health work, and policy (Hankivsky 2004)
- knowledge and science (Muller 2012; Suzuki 2015)
- politics in technoscience (Martin, Myers, and Viseu 2015)
- ecology (Curtin 1993)
- Human-nonhuman relations (Haraway 2011).

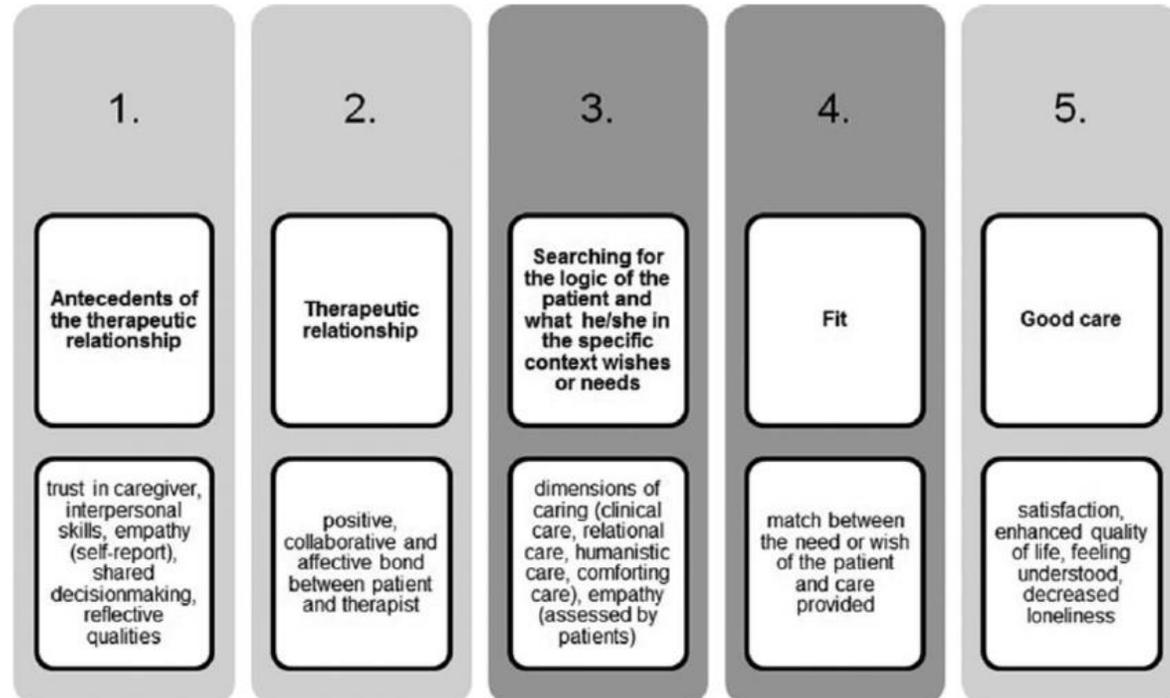
María Puig de la Bellacasa (2017) Matters of Care.

[https://syllabus.pirate.care/library/Maria%20Puig%20de%20La%20Bellacasa/Matters%20of%20Care%20\(171\)/Matters%20of%20Care%20-%20Maria%20Puig%20de%20La%20Bellacasa.pdf](https://syllabus.pirate.care/library/Maria%20Puig%20de%20La%20Bellacasa/Matters%20of%20Care%20(171)/Matters%20of%20Care%20-%20Maria%20Puig%20de%20La%20Bellacasa.pdf)

<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/325218986> Maria Puig de la Bellacasa 2017 Matters of Care Speculative Ethics in More Than Human Worlds Minneapolis and London University of Minnesota Press 265 pages ISBN 978-1-5179-0065-6

# (Some) Dimensions of Care

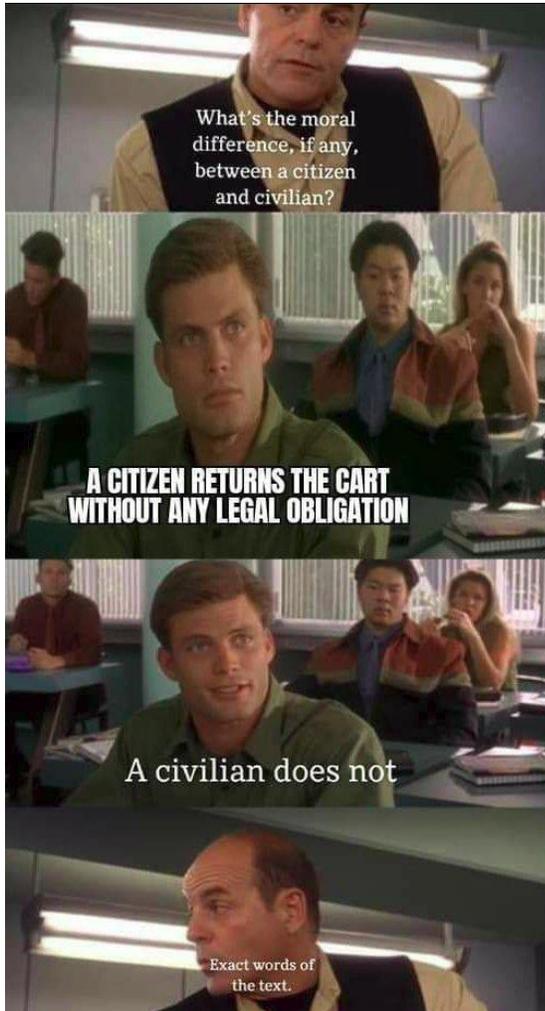
- Empathy
- Social Justice
- Equity
- Cultural Responsiveness
- Inclusion
- Empowerment



Kuis, Hesselink, Goossensen, 2013

<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/257535862> Can quality from a care ethical perspective be assessed A review

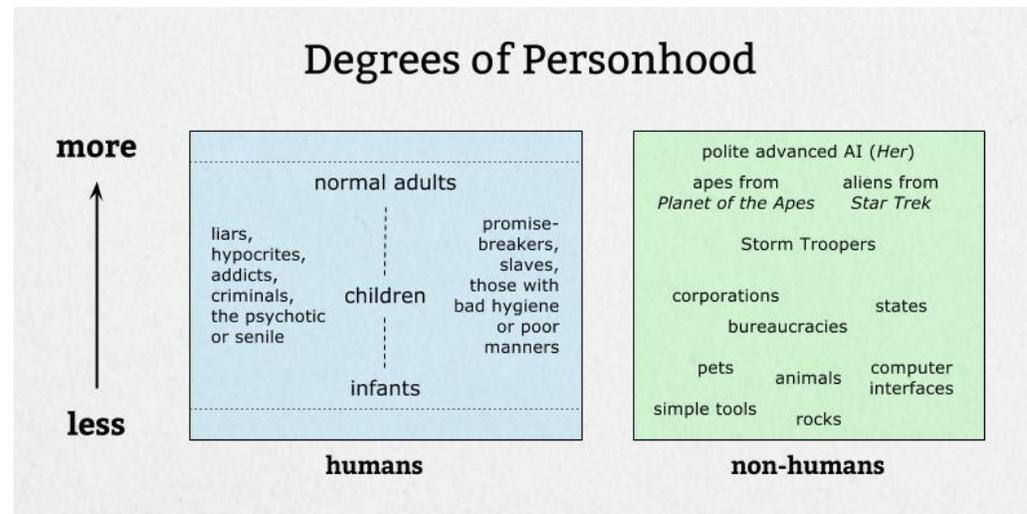
# Types of Care



- Different types of care:
  - For ideas, for objects
  - For other people, for animals
  - For ourselves, what happens to us
  - As protection, production (Tronto, 2013, ch. 3)
    - (The work ethic vs the care ethic)
- Joan Tronto: “what it means to be a citizen in a democracy is to care for citizens and to care for democracy itself.” p. x

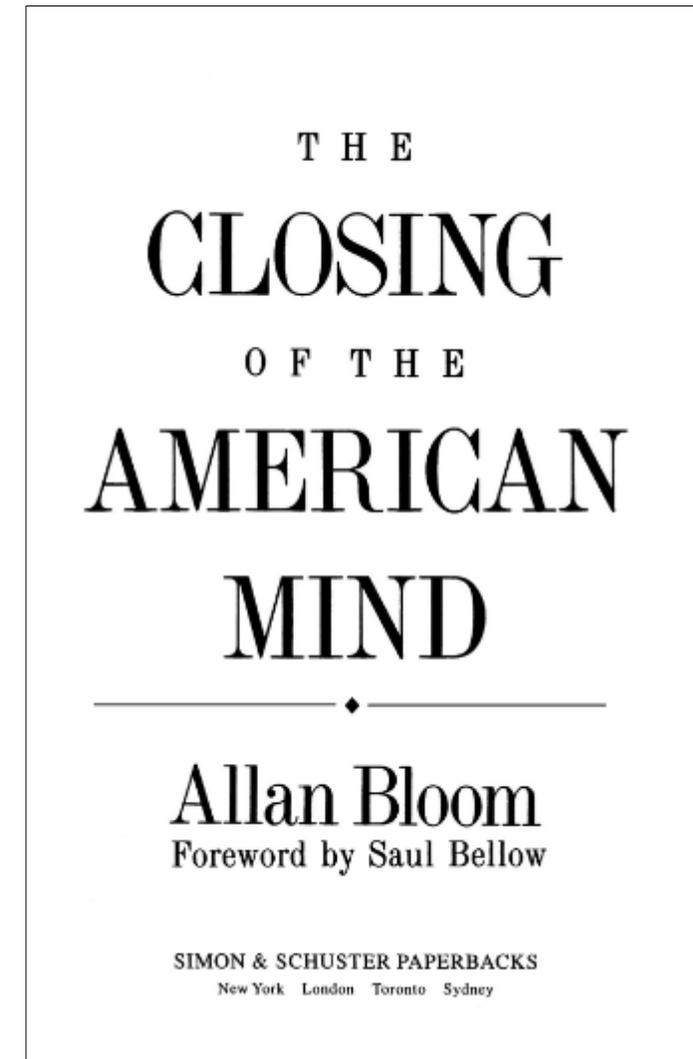
# A Mark of Personhood

- “If we decide that the capacity to care is as much a mark of personhood as reason or rationality, then we will want to find ways to increase this capacity.” (Noddings, 1992, p. 24)
- - the experience of caregiving, both as carer and recipient, is essential for this



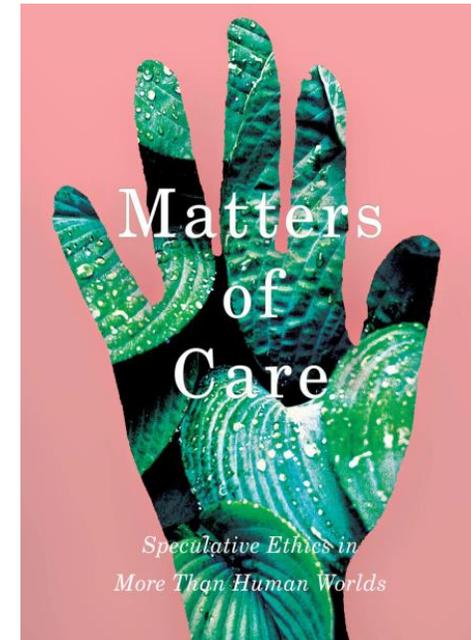
# Felt Need

“Allan Bloom... writes: ‘For there is no real education that does not respond to felt need’ (1987, p. 19). Where he differs dramatically from the alternative offered in this book is in his way of identifying those needs; he insists that they must be ‘the permanent concerns of mankind’ (p. 19). He claims to know what the needs are before he meets his students, because he knows the unchanging quality of human nature.” - Nel Noddings



# Solving Problems

“Matters of Care encourages us to confidently resist the rhetoric of playing the game of ‘solving problems’ by responding to any question – be it academic malpractice, poverty, racism, ecological crisis like climate change, wars – in standard ways or by pretending that our particular research is not directly related to the textures of more than human worlds it is situated in.”



Sonja Jerak-Zuiderent, 2018, review of María Puig de la Bellacasa (2017) Matters of Care.

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# The Ethical Concept of Care

- Wikipedia: “The ethics of care is a normative ethical theory that holds that moral action centers on interpersonal relationships and care or benevolence as a virtue.”
- Some assumptions of the theory are basic:
  - Persons are understood to have varying degrees of dependence and interdependence on one another.
  - Other individuals affected by the consequences of one's choices deserve consideration in proportion to their vulnerability.
  - Situational details determine how to safeguard and promote the interests of those involved.

# Kohlberg's Six Stages of Moral Development

**Kohlberg's Theory of Moral Development:  
The Six Stages**



-  1. Rules are fixed and absolute
-  2. Judging actions according to individual needs
-  3. Conforming and being "nice"
-  4. Respecting authority
-  5. Considering individual rights
-  6. Ethical principles and abstract reasoning

**verywell**

# In a Different Voice



- “In *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women’s Development* (1982), Carol Gilligan identified a kind of moral reasoning that was based on an ethic of care rather than an ethic of justice.”
  - Developed “primarily” through a woman’s voice (v. Kohlberg)
  - Stages of care: for the self, for the other, both (balanced) based on a criticism of Kohlberg’s six stages (that advance to e.g. deontology or social contract)
  - “Women are more likely to make moral decisions based on issues of care, inclusion, and personal connection, rather than on a more abstract and distant notion of justice.”

# Felt Need (2)

Noddings: “Gilligan described a morality based on the recognition of needs, relation, and response. Women who speak in the different voice refuse to leave themselves, their loved ones, and connections out of their moral reasoning.”



<http://mehrmoammadi.ir/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/The-Challenge-to-Care-in-School-Nel-Noddings.pdf>  
[https://nhtac.acf.hhs.gov/soar/eguide/observe/trauma\\_related\\_responses](https://nhtac.acf.hhs.gov/soar/eguide/observe/trauma_related_responses)