

Teleology

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Teleology: the belief that a phenomenon has been designed with a particular end in mind. Generally, this is associated with a religious/theological/metaphysical orientation, though there is a school of evolutionary biology that argues for a greater design, just not one necessarily imposed by God or a God-like being.

So how does any of this come into play in healthcare?

Imagine a patient from a background governed by a teleological worldview in which God has determined that patient's fate and the course his or illness is going to take.

Now suppose that the patient is being treated by a healthcare provider who has been educated in a framework dominated by deontology (which argues that actions should be based on rules, duties or obligations).

Result: tension, frustration, and lack of comprehension on both sides. Medical and nursing ethics, for instance, often revolve around such issues.

All's decreed by God divine
And determined by design
God is good; God is great
He alone decides my fate.