How to Make Friends and Maximize Value

Dissertation

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Abstract

Consequentialism is traditionally seen as having a problem accommodating friendship. Having the attitudes that consequentialism requires, it is thought, makes the attitudes required for having friends difficult if not impossible.

In chapter 1, I consider Peter Railton's version of this criticism specifically with regard to intimate relationships. He terms it the alienation problem and offers a solution: consequentialists need not be tied to any particular way of thinking about or making decisions; they ought instead to make sure that they would change their decision procedure if another way would produce more value. Unfortunately, this solution has three problems. First, it risks a psychological incoherence as the agents try to make sure another way of making decisions wouldn't maximize value while at the same time avoiding consequentialist assessments. Second, the sacrifices involved in having friends seem to be hard to justify on a consequentialist basis given global poverty. Last, without doing consequentialist assessments a consequentialist won't know what the right decision procedure is, and on this picture if a consequentialist does perform consequentialist assessments the consequentialist won't be able to access that right decision procedure.

In order to present a rival picture to Railton's, in chapter 2 I present some setup. First, I consider a range of psychological dispositions and settle on the disposition to find salient to decision-making particular features of the world as the relevant disposition.
Second, I develop a causal, expectation-based account of a certain kind of relationship that I take our friendships to generally fit. Third, I present a certain disposition, the disposition to follow through on the expectations one creates through the development of a relationship for the reason that the other person is one's friend. I end the chapter with a discussion of the decision procedure a person who had that disposition, disposition D, would follow.

In Chapter 3, I argue that disposition D solves the criticisms I leveled against Railton in Chapter 1. I first argue that D solves both incoherence and alienation by acting directly for the friendship, but where that friendship is understood as a good-making feature of the world and so as a consequentialist consideration. Second, I argue that friendship can be justified on a consequentialist picture because of the psychological support, necessary for other consequentialist sacrifices, it provides. Last I argue that expectation-based dispositions will maximize value because our expectations track the value of the relationships.

In Chapter 4, I generalize my conclusions. In particular, I first argue that the psychological picture I present and the dispositions on which it depends solves a problem that all moral theories face. Second, I argue that anyone who thinks consequences matter ought to think the reasons we have in virtue of being friends are all reasons to promote the value of friendship. I argue that this value promotion thesis is simpler and fits the way we understand friendship on a day-to-day basis better than its rivals.
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Partiality and Impartiality

The moral is impartial among agents. From the moral perspective, no person is inherently superior to any other. While most theorists would agree, that claim is sufficiently vague and ambiguous that the degree of substantive agreement is in doubt. Greater precision is required. Thomas Nagel is one of the philosophers who has engaged directly with the impartiality of morality, and a rough sketch of his account of it follows: to say that morality is impartial is to say that when we consider a situation from the moral perspective, we abstract away from particular individuals and particular perspectives. No person involved has any special perspectival status; there is no 'I' or 'you'. Being any particular person holds no intrinsic moral weight from the moral perspective.¹ This is an appealing interpretation of the basic intuition. It gives weight and precision to the claim while still staying neutral on substantive questions the answering of which would commit us to some particular moral theory or other.

At the same time that impartiality plays such a central role, lived moral experience gives significant weight to the thought that some people are more important or relevant to

us than others, simply in virtue of their relationship to us. Our family and our friends seem to have special moral claims. Faced with the decision of either saving a stranger or a lover, someone who chose to save the stranger would ordinarily seem not only to be difficult to understand, but to have acted wrongly from the moral perspective. Moreover, the relationships that give rise to these felt obligations are precisely the relationships that do the most to add value and meaning to our lives. To give up on these relationships would be to deny important parts of life that make it worth living.

The tension is obvious. How can it be, on one hand, that morality pays no attention to particular perspectives, and on the other, that particular individuals have moral claims specifically on me in virtue of their relationships to me? One way to resolve the tension would be to simply give up on our intuitions about the moral importance of partial relationships, but I do not think this is a live option. These relationships and intuitions are too central to our lived experience; any moral theory must accommodate them on pain of being judged critically flawed. Therefore, any viable moral theory needs some way to explain how it is that moral intuition takes these special relationships to be central, while at the same time granting that impartiality is a large part of what makes the moral perspective distinctive.

However, while I do believe all moral theories face a challenge of this type, the challenge is particularly pressing for consequentialism. To see why, consider TAC, a toy version of act consequentialism: all states of affairs are ranked by some value function, and each agent is to take the action that produces the state of affairs that is most highly ranked.² In TAC, the value function contains no terms that are indexed to the agent or

² This is a toy account in that it is radically incomplete in a variety of ways, but nonetheless will serve the
otherwise vary among agents, and as a result, on this theory, value is the same for everyone; it is agent-neutral. This fact about TAC is the way in which the toy theory exemplifies the impartiality of morality, and to that extent, it is a virtue of the theory. But that same fact implies that the degree to which, e.g., the saving of my mother's life contributes to the ranking of a state of affairs cannot vary between myself and any other agent. Such a theory tells me to save my mother's life in exactly the circumstances it tells anyone else to save my mother's life; the fact that she is my mother makes no difference in what it tells me to do. Therefore, it seems any version of consequentialism which shares the minimal principles of TAC must share its drawback: the theory has no mechanism for accommodating the moral claims that those closest to us make on us in virtue of our relationships.

The minimality of this toy theory means that very many consequentialist theories are going to share its principles, and therefore its problem. But one might seemingly avoid this problem by giving up on the agent-neutrality of the value function. Consider TAC*, which is identical to TAC except that the value function contains terms that are indexed to the agent. As a result, the relevant states of affairs will be ranked differently depending on the identity of the agent. In TAC*, it might very well be the case that the value function evaluated with respect to me ranks the states of affairs where my mother's life is saved much more highly than those states of affairs are ranked according to the value function evaluated with respect to some person with no connection to my mother.\(^3\)

While serious critique of agent-relative consequentialist moral theories is outside the scope of my project, I prefer to defend agent-neutral consequentialism. The problem with TAC* is that one of the major motivations for defending traditional consequentialism is the way it exemplifies moral impartiality. TAC* can no longer claim that the way morality is impartial is simply in the way the value theory treats everyone the same. There is a sense in which TAC* treats everyone the same on a meta level; the relationships that matter are the same for each person and the degree to which they matter are the same for each person. Nonetheless, because there is no objective ranking, there is no objective value. If we were interested in Nagel's view from nowhere, TAC* provides the wrong sense of impartial. TAC* thereby gains the intuitions of partiality by losing the intuitions of impartiality. Because I am motivated by the strong impartiality in traditional consequentialism, I seek to show that even a consequentialism that does not resort to agent-relativity can accommodate considerations of moral partiality while retaining its commitment to full-blown impartial value.\(^4\)


\(^4\) As a result, from here forward I use 'consequentialism' to refer to consequentialist theories with agent-neutral value theories.
Critiques of Consequentialism from Partiality

What has been said so far is very abstract indeed. Critics of consequentialism have generally preferred to refine these issues into specific critiques, aimed at showing precisely how consequentialism fails some more particular desideratum that moral theories need to satisfy. I focus here on two such specific critiques.

The first is perhaps the simplest and most straightforward version of a criticism born of the general tension between partiality and impartiality in morality. Part of the lived moral experience of partiality, this argument states, is the moral prohibition on sacrificing our closest loved ones—or at least the moral permissibility of saving our loved ones. But the structure of consequentialism does not allow for any such serious prohibition. If the situation develops such that the only way to maximize value is to let our only child drown, then so be it; in such a situation, consequentialism is committed to the claim that we ought to allow our only child to drown.5

There are various moves consequentialists can make in value theory to minimize this result, but because this result is an implication of the structure of consequentialism, these moves do not eliminate the problem. Consequentialists might say that there is something worse about a parent leaving her own child to drown than in an unrelated person leaving his child to drown. They might even say that such an abandonment is so much worse than any other kind of evil that no accumulation of other evils could ever be as collectively bad as one instance of parental abandonment to death. Even a view of

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value as extreme as this one allows the result that sometimes a parent ought to abandon her child to death; one parental abandonment must always be outweighed by two parental abandonments, so any case in which a parent may, by first abandoning her child, prevent two other parents from abandoning their children, will always be a case in which that parent ought to abandon her child.6

This first criticism concludes that, in the end, consequentialism cannot accommodate the intuition that morality must allow us to save the lives of our loved ones, even if saving them costs others dearly. As a result, consequentialism cannot accommodate at least one particular way in which partiality is central to lived moral experience and, hence, ought to be rejected.

The second argument is more sophisticated. Its point is not that consequentialism cannot accommodate or explain any particular intuitions about what actions are permissible or impermissible. Instead, it claims that the modes of thinking about one's own central projects that are required of a consequentialist alienate consequentialists from those central personal projects.7

One of the major tenets of standard forms of consequentialism is that we must weigh the impacts on those affected from each of the relevant actions in the current circumstance and pick the action for which the calculations come out most positive. Such an approach requires that the consequentialist treat the projects of each person as considerations of a certain size weighing in a certain direction. In particular, even the most important projects of the agent herself around which the life of the agent has been

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6 Ibid., 153.
constructed must be treated in this way. But to treat projects that are sufficiently central to one's life as just another consideration to be weighed, similar to many other considerations, is to lose grasp of the role they have played in the development of the agent's life so far. As Bernard Williams, a major proponent of this criticism, says, “It is absurd to demand of such a man, when the sums come in from the utility network which the projects of others have in part determined, that he should just step aside from his own project and decision and acknowledge the decision which utilitarian calculation requires. It is to alienate him in a real sense from his actions and the source of his action in his own convictions.”

This point comes to bear most clearly on questions of partiality when one considers projects that consist, in part or entirely, in relationships with others. Consider Peter Railton's example of a deeply committed intimate relationship. John shows a deep and abiding concern for his wife Anne through his words and actions. When a friend notes the extraordinary character of John's concern for Anne, John responds by explaining that, really, it is no trouble at all; his emotional connection to Anne means that making sure she is happy makes him happy, and, moreover, because they are so close, he knows which things will make Anne the happiest, and the world is better off when people who are in that kind of position leverage it to make their loved ones happy. In this case, it seems like John is acting in a way that clearly embodies a consequentialist approach to morality, but at the same time is displaying a certain emotional distance from his relationship with Anne that seems odd. We might expect that Anne would be unhappy that John's relationship with her has such an indirect effect on the way John makes

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8 Ibid., 49.
decisions or that his motivations for acting on her behalf are always mediated by considerations of impartial value. We may even wonder whether someone such as John could ever really enter into an intimate relationship of the kind that plays such an important role in a satisfying life, since his putative emotional connection to Anne has so little impact on his decision-making. It seems that part of the significance of these relationships is that they impact our decision-making directly and strongly. If John lacks such a central marker of the significance of these relationships, perhaps we ought to be skeptical of the thought that the relationship plays the other significant roles we might expect it to play. Moreover, those relationships are two-way streets, and the people with whom he might enter into these relationships could be seriously deterred by his attitude.

If it is true that someone living by what seems to be such a paradigmatically consequentialist way of making decisions must thereby miss out on such a crucial part of the good as intimate personal relationships, that might be a reason to take consequentialism less seriously. As Railton puts it, “If we were to find that adopting a particular morality led to irreconcilable conflict with central types of human well-being—as cases akin to John's... have led some to suspect—then this surely would give us good reason to doubt its claims.”

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10 Ibid., 139.
Railton's Sophisticated Consequentialism

However, consequentialists have presented some responses to these criticisms. Railton himself has offered an influential account of what he calls 'sophisticated consequentialism' that he takes to answer these kinds of criticisms. Railton generalizes the John-type alienation problem in the following way: it seems that some methods of decision-making frustrate the attainment of certain kinds of value. The paradox of hedonism illustrates this kind of difficulty. It seems plausible that focusing on becoming happy above all other ends will prevent one from becoming truly happy because happiness is often strictly a by-product of the pursuit of other ends. A person who is attempting to achieve happiness directly will inevitably miss many, if not all, of the best ways to accomplish that goal. Such a hedonist, Railton argues, would be well-served by sincerely adopting other, non-happiness, ends. By doing so, the hedonist is more likely to become happy.

In order to apply this lesson to the context of consequentialism, Railton proceeds to make a distinction between subjective and objective consequentialism. Subjective consequentialism asserts that one should make every decision by assessing which of the available options will lead to the best outcome. Objective consequentialism, by contrast, says nothing about how we should make our moral decisions. It simply asserts that “the criterion of the rightness of an act or course of action is whether it in fact would most

11 John Stuart Mill specifically notes the issue of the paradox of hedonism in *Utilitarianism* (Longmans, Green, Reader, and Dyer, 1871), chap. 2 paragraph 19.
promote the good of those acts available to the agent.”

These views are logically separate: in particular, objective consequentialism prescribes no particular decision procedure, while subjective consequentialism requires a traditional consequentialist decision procedure. What's more, objective consequentialism assesses decision procedures in the same way it assesses anything else: the best decision procedure is the decision procedure that, when followed, maximizes value. Railton uses the phrase 'objectively consequentialist act' (or 'life') to refer to the act or life (a life being a composite of many courses of action) that brings about the most value of all those acts or lives available to the agent.

A person could be committed to both objective and subjective consequentialism if she also believed that the traditional consequentialist decision procedure in fact produced the most value. However, the traditional consequentialist decision procedure might fail to maximize value if following it prevented the achievement of certain kinds of value, in the way Williams's argument shows that it might prevent access to the value of friendship. Another decision procedure could involve making some individual decisions that fail to maximize value but nonetheless achieve more value overall than the traditional consequentialist decision procedure in virtue of having access to the value of friendship. Railton calls a person committed to objective consequentialism who holds no particular view (at least initially) on which decision procedure in fact maximizes value a

13 Ibid., 152–153; Railton specifies that these categories of theories in terms of actual outcomes, but thinks that similar moves can be made in terms of expected value; see Railton’s note 24.
14 Traditional formulations of act consequentialism or direct consequentialism seem to conflate subjective and objective consequentialism. Many times the strict formulations refer only to claims about the rightness of the acts, but the discussions assume a decision procedure very similar to the one associated with subjective consequentialism.
sophisticated consequentialist.\textsuperscript{16}

Railton's central insight is that, if Williams says that thinking like a consequentialist does not maximize value, then so be it; we need not think like consequentialists. We can instead think like friends and family members and thereby actually maximize value.\textsuperscript{17} Railton develops this line through the example of Juan and Linda that correlates to a sophisticated consequentialist version of the John and Anne case. When a friend comments on Juan's deep commitment to and concern for his wife, Juan responds that he loves his wife and that their relationship is so important and long-standing at this point that doing things for her just comes naturally. But this response puzzles the friend a little, given the kind of person Juan is; it is good that Juan and Linda have such a close relationship, but couldn't Juan help so many more people, people in much greater need than Linda, if Juan turned his attention and resources to helping them?\textsuperscript{18} Railton has Juan say in response:

“'It's not easy to make things work in this world, and one of the best things that happens to people is to have a close relationship like ours. You'd make things worse in a hurry if you broke up those close relationships for the sake of some higher goal. Anyhow, I know that you can't always put family first. The world isn't such a wonderful place that it's OK just to retreat into your own little circle. But still, you need that little circle. People get burned out, or lose touch, if they try to save the world by themselves.'”\textsuperscript{19}

By taking this line, Railton provides a kind of answer to both of the objections

\\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., 152–153.
\textsuperscript{18} Railton, “Alienation, Consequentialism, and the Demands of Morality,” 150.
\textsuperscript{19} Ibid.
that we have considered. To the first objection, that consequentialism cannot endorse a sufficiently strong prohibition on causing the deaths of those closest to us when by doing so we prevent greater harm to others, sophisticated consequentialists cannot directly deny the claim that saving your child in that circumstance would be wrong. Sophisticated consequentialists, and Railton, are still act-consequentialists, and the structural point that this objection highlights still holds true of Railton's view as a result.

Railton can say, however, that the parent ought to be motivated to save her child, even at severe cost to others. It would still be the case that this is a motivation to perform a wrong action, but nonetheless, a parent having the motivation to save her child at almost any cost is a requirement for their having the very close, intimate kind of relationship that enriches both of their lives.

We can understand Railton here as denying that the relevant desideratum on moral theories is that they must endorse saving one's child under such tragic circumstances as morally right; leaving the precise outlines of the desideratum vague, Railton merely says that it suffices for the purposes of that desideratum that the moral theory justifies having the motivation to save one's child no matter what, regardless of what the theory says about the rightness of that action.

To the second argument, Williams' criticism from alienation, Railton can also provide a response. That argument turns on the agent having a certain attitude to her own major projects, including relationships, namely the attitude of having to weigh the importance of those projects against a variety of other considerations before acting. But Railton denies that a consequentialist really has to weigh anything in that way; only
someone following the traditional consequentialist decision procedure must do that, and
Railton's central insight is that a consequentialist need not follow that decision procedure
precisely because doing so does not maximize value. An agent, per Railton, ought to
decide, not as a traditional consequentialist would, but as a friend or partner would,
because doing so prevents alienation and the bad consequences associated with
alienation.

**Criticisms of Railton**

However, sophisticated consequentialism has its own problems that are still
related to the issues Railton was attempting to solve. Of the three criticisms of Railton I
will present here, the first comes originally from Michael Stocker. His claim is that if
an agent follows a theory that requires that agent be motivated by different considerations
than those the agent values, the agent is thereby robbed of one of life's major goods:
psychological coherence. He took it to apply to most or all contemporary ethical
theories; whether most contemporary moral theories fall prey to this criticism or not,
Railton's sophisticated consequentialism most certainly does.

The centerpiece of Railton's theory is the claim that sophisticated
consequentialists need not be motivated by the reasons that they think, in the end, justify

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21 Stocker moves between using the language of 'schizophrenia' and 'disharmony,' but I will use 'incoherence.' I intend no difference in meaning to follow this difference in terminology.
their actions. Stocker’s point is that this situation poses a problem for the agent. There are two sets of considerations the agent thinks are important: there are the relationship-based considerations and the consequentialist considerations, and in relevant cases they are inconsistent. There is no good reason to think that these sets of considerations will tend to support the same action, and as a result, the sophisticated consequentialist faces two challenges. First, it is not clear how she is to decide between doing what she is motivated to do, as endorsed by the theory, and doing what the theory directly says to do. Second, the sophisticated consequentialist seems to be under an enormous amount of psychological stress from the need to adjudicate between her own motivations and the direct dictates of her moral theory.

Even if the agent gets lucky and both sets of considerations endorse the same action, there is still the question of which set to use, which set should actually appear in the head when trying to determine what to do. If the answer is the consequentialist reasons, then it is no longer clear why the relationship reasons—that ought to motivate, according to the moral theory—are important, or how it is that the agent avoids alienation. In any case, this is not the option Railton’s view endorses.

Instead, Railton’s innovation is that the sophisticated consequentialist need not pay any attention, in the moment, to consequentialist reasons. These reasons need not serve any motivating purpose at the moment of decision-making and, often, ignoring these reasons results in the sophisticated consequentialist bringing about the best consequences. But for Stocker, it is important to realize that the consequentialist reasons

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22 Stocker argues that this option leads to a much impoverished life, lacking much of what makes life worth living. See “The Schizophrenia of Modern Ethical Theories,” 460–461, among other places.
still have force for the agent. If we are to make sense of the sophisticated consequentialist's commitment to consequentialism, it had better mean something to the agent that one action or another maximizes value. Psychologically, it seems difficult to imagine an agent who is really committed to a particular criterion of rightness, but for whom considerations relating to that criterion do not enter into any decision of how to act. How is the sophisticated consequentialist to make sure that the new, non-consequentialist, relationship-based reasons are in fact still keeping in line with consequentialist ends?

Railton says that the sophisticated consequentialist should abide by a counterfactual condition: she would not act as she does if doing so were not compatible with leading a life that is morally defensible from a consequentialist perspective. But this condition gives no particularly good direction to the sophisticated consequentialist about how she is to accomplish this end. It seems the sophisticated consequentialist must have two sets of reasons: mostly, the sophisticated consequentialist abides by a common, everyday set of reasons, but she sometimes makes reference to a higher-order regulative set of reasons. How can the sophisticated consequentialist keep these sets of reasons apart? When ought the sophisticated consequentialist subject her life to consequentialist assessment? Attempting to integrate these competing sets of reasons into one life undoubtedly causes serious psychological stress: one must be committed to consequentialist aims while rarely actually considering consequentialist reasons. “It is bad enough to have a private personality, which you must hide from others; but imagine

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having a personality that you must hide from (the other parts of) yourself.”

For Stocker, the sophisticated consequentialist believes that, in the end, consequentialist considerations are all that matter, but she must never act on that belief.

Up until now, we have been trying to determine what the decision process looks like even when the two sets of reasons agitate, in the end, for the same act. The pressure on the agent from the differing sets of reasons becomes even stronger when we consider the possibility that the sets of reasons might produce different answers about what to do. Given what has been said so far, there is good reason to believe a sophisticated consequentialist's relationship-based reasons will pull away in the end from her consequentialist reasons. Indeed, we might plausibly think that by taking the good of our loved ones into account directly, we thereby make it much more likely that we might give those considerations too much weight in deciding how to act. If this does happen, with which set of reasons does the agent side? She can side with the assessment grounded in her deepest moral beliefs, or she can side with the assessment based on those people whose place in her life is most central. Perhaps that decision can be made, but doing so would be a struggle and to be avoided, if possible.

A defender of Railton might respond that the agent need not know that the two


25 Note that, while part of sophisticated consequentialism is to de-emphasize assessment of particular actions in favor of assessments of things like lives, the point here is about the psychology. The pressure comes from the agent's recognition that taking the action endorsed by the relationship-based reasons will sacrifice some good compared to the action endorsed by the consequentialist reasons, and from the agent's commitment that it is the consequentialist reasons that really matter morally. That pressure will occur at all levels of assessment where the two sets of reasons differ.

26 It is interesting to note that the structure of the criticism from incoherence is exactly analogous to that of the criticism from alienation. Both argue that following a consequentialist moral theory prevents an agent from experiencing one of the major goods of life. The difference is that the major good that the criticism from alienation is concerned with is intimate relationships, whereas the criticism from incoherence is concerned with psychological unity.
sets of reasons conflict: the agent ought to abide by the relationship-based reasons, not the consequentialist reasons, and if the agent does not know, then there is no psychological turmoil. However, this response gives strength to the earlier description of the divided mind. Perhaps Stocker's quote about private personalities sounds over-dramatic; perhaps it was not entirely clear why the sets of reasons must be kept so harshly apart. Now, however, it seems that in order to prevent the internal struggle described above, the agent must be very careful to isolate the consequentialist reasons from the relationship-based reasons, lest they be seen to conflict. Stocker argues that such isolation creates a significant gap in the mental life of the agent. Such a sophisticated consequentialist might say: “Consequentialist reasons are the reasons that matter, because consequentialism is the true moral theory. But nevertheless I ought to pay no attention whatever to those consequentialist reasons, or they might truly tell me that I ought not to act as I am motivated to act…” Even so stringent a step may be insufficient. There still must be some consequentialist check that makes certain that the agent's life abides by the counterfactual condition. This check may easily conflict with the relationship-based reasons and can produce internal conflict.

Railton's defender has another, more drastic, move to make. Perhaps people ought not to be consequentialists; perhaps they ought instead simply to act in a manner approved of by consequentialism, so that there is no psychological tension whatever. People should merely be motivated by the reasons objective consequentialism endorses, and they should believe these are the only relevant reasons. Railton himself is at pains to mention this possibility when he considers Bernard Williams' argument that one way we
can see the weakness in consequentialism is that it may require itself to be “usher[ed]... from the scene.”

This is to have the radical defender of Railton say: one way to eliminate the psychological incoherence between the two sets of reasons, the consequentialist reasons and the relationship reasons, is to keep people from ever considering the consequentialist reasons. People should act on the reasons that consequentialism endorses; they should do the things that a consequentialist would have them all do, but not themselves believe that consequentialism is true.

But how would such a system reliably track consequentialist assessments? How would such a society actually maximize value? Over time, it is likely that circumstances will change. Without some consequentialist check, the system will likely fail.

One way to keep a consequentialist check would be to allow consequentialism to become an esoteric morality: some few people in positions of power know the consequentialist truth and use their authority to make sure that, despite changing circumstances, the society continues to maximize value. But, then, at least these people, believing consequentialism to be true, must either be alienated (if they take consequentialist reasons to always govern) or psychologically incoherent (if they attempt to create different motivating reasons by which to live).

What's more, there is a second problem with this line of argument, beyond the fact that it does not entirely avoid the criticisms from alienation and incoherence. One might think that part of what it is for a theory to be a moral theory is for it to be action-guiding,

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27 Railton, “Alienation, Consequentialism, and the Demands of Morality,” 154. On the following pages, Railton argues that the possibility of its being ushered from the scene is a strength of the view, not a weakness. The putative criticism demonstrates that objective consequentialism keeps distinct the notions of truth conditions and acceptance conditions.

28 I am indebted to Piers Turner for this suggestion in conversation.
in the sense that it provides reasons for us to act on. By taking the line of allowing itself to be ushered from the scene, there is a serious question about whether or not consequentialism still fulfills this condition. For, at this point in the dialectic, it would be best from the consequentialist perspective if no one acted on any consequentialist motivations. Consequentialism has given up on fulfilling the proposed desideratum on moral theories: it is no longer in the business of providing reasons to agents, but instead merely providing success conditions for acting morally while it is the case that no person ought to accept those success conditions.

Whether this move is acceptable depends on how compelling one finds the proposed desideratum on moral theories. I do not intend to settle this question here. The point of this digression is to demonstrate that making consequentialism an esoteric morality has significant theoretical costs. I hope I have done enough to show that this line requires defense that no one has yet seen fit to offer and that without that defense, it is not a promising line.29

Williams' criticism from alienation and Stocker's criticism from incoherence therefore form a dilemma for the consequentialist. Either she must act directly on consequentialist motivations and be alienated from her intimate relationships, or she takes Railton's approach: she is motivated directly by her friends and is thereby made incoherent. The only other option is to go the esoteric morality route, which both does not entirely escape the dilemma and pays the high theoretical cost of giving up on a plausible desideratum on moral theories.

29 Elinor Mason assesses the possibility that consequentialism could be self-effacing in “Do Consequentialists Have One Thought Too Many?,” *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 2, no. 3 (1999): 243–61. Mason considers the esoteric morality line too unattractive to take seriously.
Railton offers the Juan example to make his account more plausible, but there is no clear picture of how Juan's decision-making actually works. Railton puts in Juan's mouth both the claims that family must not always come first and that responding to Linda's needs and desires are "almost a part of [him]," but we have no idea how it is that Juan balances those considerations. Indeed, it seems that if he does ever explicitly balance those considerations, he is on the path to alienation. Railton does note that some alienation is inevitable, but there is no explanation of how it is to be balanced against other considerations.31, 32

The criticism from incoherence and the dilemma it forms with the criticism from alienation is the first argument I offer against Railton. The second is another traditional criticism of consequentialism that applies to Railton's view, a version of what has been called the demandingness objection.33 The general demandingness objection against consequentialism is that morality simply cannot require so much of us as consequentialism does. The version that has particular force against Railton asks the question of whether consequentialism is too strict to allow us to spend resources sustaining personal relationships in the way Railton endorses instead of helping the worst off.

In order for sophisticated consequentialism to work in the way Railton describes,

31 Ibid., 146–148.
32 See chapter 2 for an account that may help Railton here.
it has to be the case that value is maximized if agents pay attention to relationship-based reasons rather than consequentialist reasons. That's to say, Railton is granting that by becoming a sophisticated consequentialist in the mold of Juan, there is value we are giving up by being motivated to spend resources on our intimates rather than on the most needy. But should we think that the value gained by allowing the relationship between Juan and Linda outweighs the value given up by Juan spending resources on Linda instead of on the most needy? As a matter of fact, there are many charities which have been set up in such a way that they very efficiently transfer resources donated to them to those people who are the worst off. If Juan is dedicating significant amounts of resources to Linda in order to keep the motivations that make the relationship viable, it seems implausible to suppose that the world is actually better off with Juan and Linda together instead of Juan being by himself, donating more money.

Railton offers a possible reply when he discusses a relevant example concerning Juan and Linda. Suppose Juan and Linda have a commuting marriage and they see each other once every other week. One week, Linda seems much more stressed and depressed than normal, and so Juan decides to spend some extra money to visit her that week. If he did not spend that money, he could donate it to Oxfam and thereby a well would be dug and clean water supplied to an impoverished village. Counting all consequences of the acts, including the impact on Juan and Linda's relationship, donating to Oxfam would produce more value. But if Juan were the kind of person who would not go to visit his wife when she was depressed, he might very well be someone whose overall contribution to the world would be lower, “perhaps because he would become more cynical and self-
In order for Railton to solve the demandingness problem in this way, however, he needs it to be the case quite generally that things work out the way he supposes they might at the end of that example. If they do not end up that way, if instead it turns out that agents can have a bigger positive impact on the broader world by not committing to relationships that require the use of those resources, then sophisticated consequentialism does not save intimate relationships for consequentialists after all.

This, of course, involves a complicated empirical question, and so perhaps it seems unfair to require such an explanation from Railton. But so much of the power of the view depends on this empirical question. In order to defend the claim that sophisticated consequentialism really does solve these problems, Railton also needs it to be true that being a person like Juan really will maximize value. However, this empirical claim just seems implausible given the massive amount of good that efficiently-distributed resources can do in the world as it is currently situated.

Finally, Railton has a third problem. Even if we were to grant that there is some course of action that maximizes value by giving up value from some individual decisions and thereby gaining the value of some intimate relationships, how is it that a sophisticated consequentialist will find and follow that particular set of actions? Surely not every course of action that is consistent with following relationship-based reasons is better than every course of action that follows consequentialist reasons directly; it is possible to sacrifice too much value by paying too much attention to one's loved ones. As Railton's Juan says, “Anyhow, I know that you can't always put family first. The world centered.”

isn't such a wonderful place that it's OK just to retreat into your own little circle."35

The problem is that it seems Juan does not have the right resources to determine what the correct balance is. He cannot tell what the right balance is by assessing all the options; he risks alienation by trying to weigh the full implications of his choices. But if he cannot pay attention to the consequentialist reasons because of alienation, how can he possibly find the right balance?

If it turns out that the only way to gain the value of close relationships is to not pay attention to consequentialist reasons, and the only way to maximize value involves the value of close relationships, but also that in order to figure out which precise course of action involving the value of close relationships maximizes value we must pay attention to consequentialist reasons, then Railton is in a bind. Either paying attention to consequentialist reasons prevents the agent from having the friendships that will allow the agent to maximize value, or not paying attention to consequentialist reasons prevents the agent from knowing what precise course of action will maximize value. Either the agent knows what to do to maximize value, or the agent can do it, but not both.

### The Positive Proposal

Partiality and, in particular, friendship pose a serious problem for even the best contemporary consequentialist moral theories. My project in what follows is to present a dispositional account of the consequentialist significance of friendship that both solves

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35 Ibid., 150.
the problems that motivated Railton's sophisticated consequentialism and provides answers to the criticisms to which sophisticated consequentialism falls prey. I will argue that not only can a consequentialist account answer these criticisms, but that, in the end, a consequentialist account of friendship is the best overall account of friendship, one that ought to be accepted by anyone who accepts any plausible moral theory.

I do need to clarify a few issues about the full project. The first of these is precisely what I mean by 'friendship'. I am interested here in a certain kind of relationship that plays an important functional role in our lives and is significant both morally and personally. For convenience, I am going to call this kind of relationship ‘friendship,’ but I do not concern myself here with defending the adequacy of any particular account of the concept of friendship. Given that my project is not one of conceptual analysis, trying to present necessary and sufficient conditions is unnecessary and not, perhaps, desirable. The central social relationships of our lives are more complex than allows for the existence of a single determinative characteristic. As a matter of fact, I think this kind of relationship is a paradigm example of the concept of friendship, but nothing important for my purposes here hangs on this claim. Later, I will present a causal account of precisely which relationships I am discussing, but here I want to give a preliminary description of what these relationships are like. As before, my remarks here are not to be understood as providing necessary or sufficient conditions; they are, instead, aimed at providing general markers that are helpful both in picking out particular relationships as being the kind I care about and in gaining a general understanding of what category of relationships I am discussing. Two such markers are
especially important to me.

The first comes from Aristotle's description of friendship. Aristotle begins by saying that friendship is mutual and mutually-recognized goodwill to the other for the sake of the other.\textsuperscript{36} Relationships characterized by goodwill in this way will tend to have greater significance, both moral and personal, than those lacking such goodwill. The kinds of relationships I can have with someone who fails to care at all about how my life goes tend toward purely instrumental interactions, based on accomplishing an external goal. Moreover, it tends not to matter for the people in those interactions who it is that is fulfilling the other end. For example, the relationships between customers and merchants fit this description. They are focused on accomplishing the exchange of goods and money, and it does not matter much to either person exactly who fills the other role, just so long as the goal is accomplished. Such relationships may in various indirect ways have moral significance but would surely be unlikely to be important to us personally.

The second marker I want to mention has to do with the types of interactions the people involved have with each other. Most of the time, the people involved will enjoy each other's company and seek it out. The friendships will serve a social purpose; the friends will be a significant part of each other's life simply through presence. I take it that social interactions tend to serve as an outlet for a variety of desires; the company of friends gives us pleasure and supports our self-esteem by showing us that others think we are worthwhile.

\textsuperscript{36} Aristotle, \textit{Nicomachean Ethics} (Courier Dover Publications, 2012), bk. VIII, section 2. Though Aristotle seems to be giving a necessary and sufficient condition, in the end his view is that mutual and mutually-recognized goodwill is something more like a central feature. In Book VIII section 6, Aristotle considers the case of sour people who bear goodwill to each other and would aid each other in need, but fail to count as friends because they do not have the greatest markers of friendship, those of spending time together and gaining enjoyment from each other.
One might note that these two markers apply to an enormously wide range of relationships, from relatively casual relationships with a buddy at work to life partnerships around which lives are constructed. This is intentional; the phenomenon I am picking out is one that includes relationships both of greater and lesser significance. My account will explain both the ways in which all of these relationships are alike, and what it is about them that makes some of them more important than others.

I offer a consequentialist account of the moral implications of friendship. That is to say, I intend to show that consequentialist considerations exhaust the moral considerations that are relevant exactly in virtue of our being friends. Accepting such an account is not only an option for global consequentialists. Given the central role questions of friendship play in our lived moral experience, some account of the moral implications of friendship will be required of any moral theory. I will defend both the claim that, contrary to the received view, consequentialists have a way of handling friendship effectively (an account of friendship like mine) and the claim that my account, which is consequentialist, is the best available account of the moral implications of friendship.

This means that any moral theory that handles friendship the right way will also give significant weight to consequentialist considerations in at least some realms, but I think that most plausible moral theories already give some weight to consequentialist considerations. What is surprising about my account is not that consequentialist considerations have moral weight, but that the best way to think about the moral implications of friendship is in a consequentialist way.
Chapter 2: The Dispositional Account of Friendship

The previous chapter was devoted to presenting some major friendship-centric arguments against consequentialism. In this chapter, I focus on presenting my own dispositional decision procedure for consequentialists to follow in order to access the value of friendship while still maximizing value.

The dispositional view requires two major pieces of theoretical machinery: first, I consider various types of psychological dispositions and conclude that one in particular is best suited for my purposes, and second, I offer a causal account of both which specific relationships I mean by 'friendships' and how those relationships come to be. Once I have explicated those theoretical resources, I will use them to describe the structure and content of a specific disposition that people should have. The remaining sections of this chapter are dedicated to explaining the decision procedure that someone with the disposition I defend would use in the relevant circumstances. I will not argue in this chapter that my central disposition is, all things considered, a disposition one ought to have within a consequentialist framework, or argue that the disposition I defend is better than rivals; that must wait for a later chapter. But in this chapter, I will both explicate what disposition I will—later—defend and explain how it is to be applied in a wide range of cases.
Psychological Dispositions

A successful response to the first criticism of Railton would involve a method of decision-making that fulfills two desiderata: first, it needs to avoid alienation, and second, it needs to avoid incoherence. I have already said something on these points; roughly, avoiding alienation involves a direct appreciation of the significance of certain valuable things, with that appreciation being unmediated by considerations of abstract overall value, whereas it would at least suffice for a consequentialist to be psychologically coherent if it could be shown how her relationship-based reasons and her consequentialist reasons do not conflict in the way Stocker presents as objectionable. But both of those descriptions of what would suffice to avoid the criticisms are still rough glosses; my approach will be to argue that the method of decision-making meets the challenges posed by the critiques from alienation and incoherence through an exploration of exactly what the agent would do in a range of cases.

I think the best way of understanding the kind of decision-making procedure that could possibly offer a solution to this dilemma is through the concept of psychological dispositions. I will defend the claim that a certain kind of decision-making procedure, to be specified, in fact does allow for a consequentialist to thread the needle between incoherence and alienation, and I will describe that decision-making procedure in terms of psychological dispositions, but I will not here defend the choice to describe the
procedure in terms of dispositions, though I will begin by saying enough, I hope, to explain what I mean by 'psychological dispositions'. I will next proceed to distinguish a variety of different kinds of psychological dispositions in order to test which might offer hope for a solution to the dilemma.

Types of Psychological Dispositions

In contrast to the examples of physical dispositions, like that of a fragile vase to shatter when struck, I am concerned with claims of the type of “Robert smokes after dinner,” or “He tends to use his turn signal,” or “She feints to her left before she returns cross-court.” Whatever a disposition turns out to be, claims like these involve dispositions. While standard discussions of dispositions focus on dispositions explicated in physical or metaphysical terms, I am here interested in psychological explications of dispositions. One might answer “Why does Robert smoke after dinner?” with a physical explanation in terms of the basic particles that make up Robert and the exact mechanics of how they cause him to smoke in circumstances like those after dinner, or with a complicated modal conditional, the antecedent of which involves circumstances like those after dinner and the consequent involves Robert's smoking. Given the nature of the challenge of incoherence and alienation, it is hard to see how any response of either of those two types could show that there is a way for a sincere consequentialist to both avoid

38 Or perhaps how they move so as to constitute his smoking after dinner.
alienation and be psychologically coherent. In pursuit of showing that there is some way to avoid both those problems, I will be concerned with dispositions explicated in terms of various psychological concepts. I also do not concern myself here with exactly where the distinction lies between psychological and other kinds of concepts; the force of the point is merely that I am concerned centrally with testing various kinds of dispositions to see whether they can assist in solving the dilemma formed by the criticisms from alienation and incoherence, and I have thereby chosen to describe the dispositions at a level of abstraction that best serves that concern.39

One possible type of psychological disposition is a fully deliberative one: when confronted with similar situations, the agent performs a full deliberation of all the relevant considerations and comes to the same answer as in all the other cases. Such dispositions would be very rare, I think; having assessed all the relevant considerations in a similar situation many times before, we would expect most agents to use some kind of deliberative short-cut to come to the same answer. Nonetheless, for example, we can imagine an agent who, every time upon arriving at a Chinese restaurant, seriously considers the benefits of ordering a wide range of dishes before settling on ordering the beef with broccoli, each time picking that particular dish for more or less the same reasons.

Fully deliberative dispositions like that one are unlikely to be helpful for my purpose. A fully deliberative disposition would involve carefully counting up and weighing all the reasons on both sides. Therefore, a consequentialist agent whose

39 Philip Pettit calls this type of explanation, at this level of abstraction, rational explanation in “Three Aspects of Rational Explanation,” Protosociology 8 (1997).
relationship-related decision-making was mostly based on fully deliberative dispositions
would be very likely to be alienated, given that such an agent would largely be using the
traditional consequentialist decision procedure.

On the other end of the spectrum are the reflexes. Whereas fully deliberative
dispositions involve much cognitive activity, reflexes are the result of no thought at all.
Whether it is a knee kicking in response to a blow to a specific nerve-cluster, or the gag-
reflex responding to a blocked throat, reflexes are simple responses to stimuli that are,
biologically speaking, deeply set in humans. Whereas fully deliberative dispositions
were vulnerable to alienation, the problem with reflexes is a little different. Reflexes, for
the most part, do not respond to rational effort. Because of the nature of their deep roots
in biology, there is not much I can do to shape my reflexes. I can, perhaps, give myself a
a strong antipathy for certain foods by making myself ill while eating them, but I can do
nothing to shape my reflexes in a way that would be broadly relevant to problems
associated with anything so abstract as relationships, and so it seems unlikely that there is
a plausible way to usefully leverage them. Even if we could mold our reflexes in more
specific ways, the implications look odd and not necessarily positive. Consider Refi, a
sincere consequentialist who helps her friends purely out of biological reflex. Refi has
something akin to the alienation worry, though from the other side; if she really is just
acting reflexively, there is an important sense in which the relationship is still not playing
a significant role in the agent's decision-making, because she is not making a decision.
The contrast with the alienation worry is that there, the relationship is not playing the
right role in the agent's decision-making, but because the decision-making is too abstract
and insufficiently concrete: the relationship itself is seen as insufficient to justify action. At the same time, there is something attractive about the tendency to help one's friends being so thoroughly ingrained.

What to say about Refi and the incoherence worry also seems quite complicated. Incoherence is centrally concerned with the various sets of reasons to which an agent responds, but reflexes are perhaps the best example of a case where someone is not responding to any reason at all. Reflexes do not reflect any commitments or reasons of the agent. As a result, in an important sense Refi’s odd reflexes cause no incoherence at all; Refi might be responding, if at all, only to consequentialist reasons. However, a reflex that caused an agent to (loosely) “act” immorally might be a source of serious stress. All things considered, there are interesting implications from the Refi thought experiment; let us move on to a type of disposition that shares some important features with reflex while being substantially more rationally malleable.

Consider the case of a service return in tennis. I await the serve, not knowing where it will go. When it does come, it moves so fast that there is no time for thought, but nonetheless I move to where the ball is going and strike it cleanly (one hopes). In the moment, during the return, I am making no decisions about how to return, though I may have decided before the serve that, e.g., if it came to my forehand I would return cross-court. While I could stop myself from making the return, the way in which I make the return is relatively automatic, and I have spent time training myself to act in this way. Many cases of muscle memory seem to follow this pattern.

Bill Pollard calls these kinds of dispositions 'habits'—I will call them 'brute
habits’. According to Pollard, the properties that identify the actions produced by these kinds of dispositions, are that they are repeated, automatic, and yet still properly the product of the agent's action, for which the agent is responsible. 'Repeated' in this context means that the agent has behaved in similar ways many times in the past, and 'automatic' means that there is no deliberation about whether to act in the circumstances in which the disposition activates. \[40\] Pollard thinks that an action can be both automatic, in his sense, and still the type of thing for which the actor is responsible, if the actor can intervene to prevent the action. In such cases, there would likely be some deliberation involved in the intervention, but in the standard operation of the brute habit when it produces action, there is no deliberation.

Brute habits do very well on the alienation test; brute habits involve having internalized the motivation to help one's friends to a degree that makes the distance that seems necessary to produce alienation unlikely or impossible. With respect to incoherence, consider a case where a brute habit is active, despite the reasons for the action in question not being present. Imagine a person driving a car early in the morning on a deserted street. Despite the total lack of any other traffic and an obvious explanation for that lack—the driver currently travels a business district that is active only during the day—the driver uses the car's turn signals before changing lanes. Assuming that it really is obvious that there are no other cars around, it is hard to see what reason there could be to use the turn signal. If asked to reflect on why she used her turn signals, the agent might reasonably admit “I don't know. I just did.” The agent was not paying attention to

her use of the turn signals; it just happened, given the brute habit with which she had been inculcated—likely had inculcated in herself.

There were good reasons to inculcate that habit: if she had to remember to use her turn signal every time she turned or change lanes, she would rarely use it because she would often forget. By training herself into having the habit, she increases her use of the turn signal in the cases when it is very important to use it to communicate the future movements of her car to other drivers. But those good reasons for developing the habit do not translate to every case. If the agent took a moment to consider the question, she would know that there is no good reason to use the turn signal on a deserted street. However, she does not deliberate about whether to use her turn signal, because in at least some important cases, she is busy thinking about the relative positions of other cars and all the facts important to driving well. Once she's trained herself not to think about whether to use her turn signal in those cases when she is very busy, it becomes automatic even in other cases, when, if she wanted, she would have time to consider whether to use it.

Of course, this kind of case is a far cry from the kinds of incoherence that seemed particularly objectionable before; this case is not the stress of conflicting reasons felt strongly, but merely the reality of imperfect training. Brute habits seem to be most appropriate precisely in those circumstances where lack of temporal and cognitive resources mean that instant action is more important than perfect action. The imperfection of the training means that it is also important that performing the action when it is inappropriate needs to cause no serious problems. The major question
concerns the generality of application of brute habits. The examples where the structure of brute habits seems most appropriate tend to be those where the activation conditions for the disposition are the most concrete; it makes sense that one can train oneself to (almost) always use a turn signal when changing lanes, or move one's feet and hands in the right way when returning serve, but training oneself to act with that degree of automaticity in cases where the activation conditions and the action called for by the disposition are both described quite abstractly, as would be the case in training oneself to help one's friends, seems something entirely different. We can do better; let us look at one more possibility.

**Weakly Deliberative Dispositions and Reasons as Features of the World**

In order to consider a disposition in between reflexes and brute habits, first consider a certain mode of decision-making. In most cases, the reasons to which an agent directly responds, the reasons which appear in the head at the moment of action, as she performs an action do not exhaust the reasons that the agent believes are relevant to the performance of that action. Quite often, the reasons that are relevant are many, varied, and complicated, and holding them in mind would make acting difficult. One might reasonably think, for example, that which way I ought to walk to the office today depends on the weather, how quickly I need to get to the office, and whether I might run into a friend of mine going one way rather than the other, among other such considerations. But
in general, I am rarely paying attention to more than one of these considerations when I make the decision of which way to walk to work. One might say that I am just paying attention to the reason that is decisive that day, but we need to be careful about over-intellectualizing. It certainly is not the case that I think I am only paying attention to the subset of the relevant reasons that is decisive; I am just thinking about how nice a day it is, or how I am running a little behind, and making my decision on that basis. In order for me to think that the reason to which I am paying attention is the decisive one, I would need to do at least some assessment of the reasons as a whole, and I am not consciously doing that.

We need to be careful about precisely what it is that the agent is paying attention to in these cases. I've described them as singular 'reasons,' but when I think about the pleasant weather and make my decision on that basis, what I've paid attention to is a feature of the world. Now, I want to stay neutral here on what precisely constitutes a reason, but I do think that features of the world are the kind of thing that show up in the mind at the moment of decision in at least a lot of cases. They form at least a kind of reason; call it a 'minimal reason'. One might think there's another kind of thing that is relevant: in addition to features of the world, there are also explanations of why those features are important. Call the combination of a minimal reason and an explanation for why that minimal reason is morally relevant a 'full reason'. My argument is precisely that these explanations need not be present in the mind at the moment of decision-making.

Features of the world are simple, concrete, and direct, even when the best explanation of

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41 See Mark Andrew Schroeder, *Slaves of the Passions* (Oxford University Press, 2007) for a more detailed discussion of this distinction, and both Schroeder and Nomy Arpaly and Timothy Schroeder, *In Praise of Desire* (OUP, 2014) for developed accounts of acting and responding to reasons.
the relevance of those features of the world, what the agent might endorse on reflection, is much more complex.

There are, then, two things I want to highlight about this mode of decision-making. First, it involves paying attention only to some subset of the relevant reasons, and second, it involves paying attention only to the features of the world that are relevant and not to the explanations for why those features of the world are relevant. This mode of decision-making is important because it allows for agents to make decisions under conditions of limited cognitive resources. The considerations this mode of decision-making allows us to ignore are, in virtue of their complexity, not suitable for having in mind during action because of the cognitive demands they make on an agent who has them in mind. Call this mode of decision-making 'weak deliberation.'

We can see that the features of the world to which we are paying attention in the moment are distinct from the larger set of reasons which are relevant by considering a case. Imagine a new father who decides to quit school in order to support his family. However, in fact, he is only a semester from graduation and the mother of the new child has a job of her own. While things will be hard for a few months before the father enters the workforce, his earning potential will be much higher if he finishes his degree, and it will just be a matter of cutting luxury items until a second income is added to the family. As soon as the father reflects on his situation and considers his reasons, he should see that he will be able to ensure that his family's basic needs are met much more reliably if he stays in school. There is still a sense in which the father would support his family in the short term by quitting school and getting a job, but as soon as he gets clear on the details

42 For more discussion of this point, see chapter 4.
of what supporting his family would require, it is obvious that the full set of reasons does not support his quitting school. If the father failed to do that more substantial deliberation, he would act in error.

This case is one where substantial deliberation would assist in making the correct decision. But sometimes, of course, we need to act quickly and decisively. Imagine a lifeguard whose training was years ago and who is rarely confronted with an emergency. When she is presented with a floundering swimmer, we might reasonably understand the foremost thought in her mind to be that a swimmer is drowning. The explanation of why that feature of the world is relevant certainly has to do with the swimmer's family and why it is that death is a harm, but in the moment, the lifeguard is not thinking about any of those things, and if she were, it would get in the way of doing the things that need to be done.

People ought to use weak deliberation in the cases where a fuller understanding of the reasons involved, both understanding all of the reasons and understanding why the relevant features of the world are important, would take up too many cognitive resources to effectively handle the situation as it occurs. As a matter of fact, I think people make many decisions in this way, but that claim is not necessary for my argument here.

I believe that this decision-making process is intimately bound up with dispositions. We know from the discussion above that weak deliberation involves some subset of the reasons the agent believes are relevant, because attending to all of them would be too cognitively demanding. What does that subset of reasons look like? It might be that, for each decision, there's nothing more to say but that those reasons
happened to occur to the agent and that there is no reliable pattern between decisions. I think, given agents' capacity to act similarly in similar circumstances, that we can say more. Agents have stable dispositions to notice particular kinds of features of the world in particular kinds of circumstances and to treat those features of the world as reasons. To treat features of the world as reasons is to incorporate them into the decision-making process as possible motivations.

Part of what it means that these reasons are only possible motivations is that these dispositions would not always generate the appropriate action. In some cases, the agent will be aware of other reasons than those to which they are disposed to pay attention, for example because of other dispositions or someone explicitly bringing such a reason to the agent's attention, and these other reasons may well be more significant than the reason to which the agent's disposition draws attention. If the situation is constructed such that the agent who is disposed to act kindly to her friends must either be kind to a friend or save an epileptic child from drowning, the disposition does not guarantee that the agent will choose to be kind to the friend; having the disposition just means that most of the time, under normal circumstances, the agent will note and appreciate the significance of the fact that some of the relevant people are her friends. She might well go on to save the epileptic child, if she judges that acting in that way is supported by more weighty reasons.

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43 “Under normal circumstances” here means excluding certain kinds of obscuring factors. If the agent is drunk or distracted, for example, she may not find the reason salient despite having the disposition to do so. I borrow the concept from Justin D’Arms and Daniel Jacobson, “Demystifying Sensibilities: Sentimental Values and the Instability of Affect,” in The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Emotion, ed. Peter Goldie (Oxford University Press, 2010), 585–613 who apply it to sensibilities. They specifically deny that sensibilities are merely dispositional but instead partially normative, but nonetheless I think the concept is applicable here, not least because weakly deliberative dispositions have a tinge of the normative about them due to involving the recognition of reasons.
This is all at a very high level of abstraction because the kind of disposition I have in mind here is applicable to a very wide range of decision-making contexts. Following the mode of decision-making it embodies, I call this type of disposition a 'weakly deliberative disposition'. To formalize a definition: a \textit{weakly deliberative disposition} is a disposition to find salient some type of feature of the world, specified per disposition, under circumstances without obscuring factors and including the condition that the type of reason bears on the circumstances, that condition to be specified in more detail per disposition, and weigh that feature of the world as a reason, agitating in favor of some type of action to be specified per disposition, when deciding how to act in those circumstances.\footnote{There is of course much more to be said about the process of weighing reasons. I have nothing general to say about this complicated question, though I do say some things below with respect to the particular disposition that is relevant to my project here.}

My explication of weakly deliberative dispositions is itself constructed in terms of dispositions, but there is no objectionable circularity here. I do not seek to offer an account of dispositions broadly understood, but instead to offer a psychological explication of certain kinds of human dispositions. By explaining these dispositions to act in terms of a disposition to recognize and respond to certain kinds of reasons, I offer a better understanding of what is involved in some agent having a disposition of that kind. This approach does assume that we can profitably explain some dispositions in terms of responding to reasons, but I think this is a plausible assumption, in part because others have offered views on what it is to act on a reason.\footnote{See, e.g., Arpaly and Schroeder, \textit{In Praise of Desire}, chap. 3.} I do not here offer an account of what it is to act on a reason; I intend to stay neutral on this point.
Weakly Deliberative Dispositions and the Dilemma

Now, let us return to questions of alienation and incoherence. A consequentialist agent who is using weakly deliberative dispositions to make her decisions with respect to her friendships will, I argue, avoid alienation. In the moment, unreflectively, the agent is acting directly for the friend, because of the friendship, or some similar gloss. Reflectively, of course, the agent has an explanation available as to why that feature of the world is relevant, but that fact shouldn't cause alienation because the friendship itself (or something very much like it) is still playing a significant direct role in the agent's decision-making. One issue that does arise with weakly deliberative dispositions is that the friendship-based reasons will be overruled relatively often, whenever the agent is aware in the moment of a reason more weighty than the relationship-based reason that her weakly deliberative disposition makes salient. Partly, this is due to the thought that part of a commitment to consequentialism is a sensitivity to weighty consequentialist considerations.

Just as one can be alienated from relationships when those relationships play no substantial role in one's decision-making, so one might be alienated from a belief in consequentialism if that belief plays no substantial role in one's decision-making. I therefore think a commitment to consequentialism involves that consequentialism playing
an important role in the agent's decision-making, and this role is exhibited partially through internalizing the value theory involved in that consequentialism. Such internalization results in a weakly deliberative disposition to notice particularly weighty consequentialist considerations. Parsing out exactly what that disposition involves is beyond the scope of this piece, but my discussion of the decision procedure at the end of this chapter will help to explain through application to a variety of examples.

The fact that sometimes the friendship-based reasons will be overruled is no serious problem for the consequentialist. The central examples where it is important that, in order to avoid objectionable alienation, the agent acts directly for her friend's good are those smaller, less significant decisions where the relationship-based reason is substantially less likely to be outweighed. If I were to fail to immediately agree to quit my job and move to another city for a moderately close friend of mine who needs a roommate and some company, that might illustrate some degree of alienation, but that would certainly not constitute so radical an alienation from my loved ones that I would have trouble forming serious friendships. If, on the other hand, I had to stop to perform consequentialist calculus before comforting a bereaved friend, this might be evidence that I do not take that relationship seriously. But it is precisely this second action, the comforting, that a weakly deliberative disposition will reliably tell a sophisticated consequentialist to do immediately, without a second thought, simply because it is her friend. This immediacy follows from the fact that in cases like these, there are no important countervailing reasons; if there were, more detailed deliberation would be more justified—and less alienating—as in the moving to another city example.
This is a very general argument that weakly deliberative dispositions will allow agents to avoid alienation, but below, I describe the specific decision procedure I endorse in more detail.  

Of those types I have considered, weakly deliberative dispositions most thoroughly address the criticism from incoherence. This is because the structure of weakly deliberative dispositions establishes a specific kind of coherence between the reasons on which the agent acts in the moment, unreflectively—simply the features of the world—and the reasons the agent would endorse upon reflection, which include an explanation of the relevance of those features of the world. The consequentialist's commitment to consequentialism directs them to pay attention to the consequentialist reasons, and weakly deliberative dispositions pick out a subset of consequentialist reasons—in this case, friendship-based reasons. The important feature is that among the reasons the moral theory picks out are the friendship-based reasons. The explanations to be offered on reflection, consequentialist explanations, justify paying attention to the features of the world that the weakly deliberative disposition directs the agent to pay attention in the moment.

Of course, the consequentialist agent can still make errors due to obscuring factors or just cognitive error. Perhaps other features of the world are relevant and more important. Nonetheless, in that case, the explanation still justifies paying attention to the features of the world the agent in fact pays attention to; there are just other, more important features of the world to which the agent should have paid attention but failed.

46 I also discuss how this view avoids alienation in Chapter 3.
47 More will be said about this in the last section of this chapter.
Consequentialist agents with these dispositions are paying attention to the (dis)valuable things. Their theory would vindicate paying attention to those features of the world because their theory says the morally important things are the valuable and disvaluable.\textsuperscript{48} In contrast, acts driven by brute habit will sometimes be out of place, as the turn signal example shows. The agent who uses her turn signal when it is unnecessary does not think that specific action did anything good. That particular action was merely a side effect of a good pattern of behavior.

The fact that the reasons a consequentialist would be acting on are characteristically consequentialist in that they are the valuable or disvaluable features of the world means that not only is there no incoherence between the consequentialist's sets of reasons, but that there is positive coherence. The deep reflective commitment to consequentialism partially determines the structure of the reasons the agent acts on in the moment.

\textbf{Causal Picture of Friendship}

Now, with a clear idea of the kind of disposition that provides a way of threading the needle between alienation and incoherence, we can turn to my account of friendship. I present my discussion of friendship through exploration of a paradigmatic example. I offer a causal story of how it is that a friendship of personal and moral significance can

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{48} Agents can still make errors, and I have said nothing to explain why it is that the particular disposition in question will actually maximize value. For this discussion, see chapter 3.}
develop. By doing so, I lay the groundwork for explicating both how the friendship-centric criticisms of consequentialism can be avoided and what is involved in the moral role that friendship plays in our lives. It is worth noting that relationships embodying a variety of levels of interest or intimacy will fit my causal picture.

William takes a new job in a new city. On his first day on the job, he meets his colleague Scott. Upon meeting, they exchange smiles and pleasantries. Over the first week, they engage in small talk; if one gets up to get coffee, he offers to bring some for the other. They start to go out for dinner and drinks after work. As they get more comfortable with each other, they spend more time together and they become more accustomed to each other's idiosyncrasies. As the relationship develops, each becomes more likely to make requests of the other: Scott needs a ride to work when his car is in the shop, or William is going out of town for the weekend and needs someone to take care of his cats. As the relationship becomes more intimate over time, each person feels comfortable making more significant requests of the other.

The friendship begins only because of the minor interactions that occur between William and Scott from their first meeting. Scott's smile and the jokes they exchange the first day communicate to each that there is a possible social relationship here, and that relationship itself partly consists in these interactions. If neither person had made those first gestures, the relationship would not have developed in anything like the same way.

These interactions constitute a kind of implicit commitment. The interactions that begin the friendship and those that continue it are, obviously, voluntary on both sides. Scott could have decided not to smile and reach out the first day; William could have
responded coldly. These actions are often interpreted as invitations or as signals of commitment; when Scott smiles, William takes it as evidence that Scott is interested in interacting with him. As the relationship develops, the interactions communicate increasingly significant commitments. When I am in some difficulty and ask a friend for assistance, I do so assuming that, given all that has happened between us so far, in normal circumstances the aid will be forthcoming. Progressive, historical development of this type picks out the kind of relationship in which I am interested.

We need to be careful not to overstate the significance of these implicit commitments. It is unlikely that William or Scott made any kind of serious assessment of what to do before acting as they did. In all likelihood, Scott did not consider his options and then implement a plan to smile at the newcomer. The communications certainly lack the overt intentions to commit oneself that one finds in more explicit commitments, like promising. Moreover, we tend to take these very informal commitments relatively casually; while we might expect a new acquaintance to say yes to an invitation to coffee, we would not take their friendly overtures as already committing them to come.49

The notion of weak deliberation helps to explain the actions of Scott and William. Scott did not perform a full assessment of all the reasons relevant to how he ought to greet William. Instead, he saw the new guy and, acting on a combination of standing disposition and possibly some appealing facts about William, smiled and began a conversation. During that first encounter, William and Scott are only thinking of very simple, surface considerations. As the relationship develops, the motivations for doing

49 I do not mean to commit myself here to any view about what precisely constitutes a commitment. My point is simply that these kinds of rough commitments do not look anything like the formal commitments we take most seriously.
the favors each requests of the other, though more substantial and considering a variety of practical matters, still do little more than refer to the friendship growing between them.

Scott and William show us, first, that friendships develop through the exchange of implicit commitments and the increasing intimacy that comes along with those implicit commitments, and second, that weak deliberation can make sense of responses to the requests that friends trade. We are now in a position to appreciate my central normative claim about friendship.

**Dispositions and Friendship**

Because of the value that friendship brings to our lives, people will maximize value by having the weakly deliberative disposition _to find salient the fact that someone is their friend under circumstances when the status of the friendship is, to a greater or lesser extent, at stake, and weigh that friendship as a reason to follow through on the loose expectations they create through the interactions that ground the back-and-forth development of friendships_. People ought to have that disposition because having it maximizes value. Call this weakly deliberative disposition 'D'.

One question about D is whether people can generally have the capacities it entails. Note that I do not need that in fact people do have those capacities: I need only

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50 I use italics to denote the content of a disposition.

51 It is important to note that this is a claim about what the best dispositions and decision procedures are. I intend this 'ought' to be consistent with act consequentialism; the point is merely that the way forward to achieve the most value involves the disposition D. For justification of the claim that D maximizes value, see Chapter 3.
that they generally can. The capacities required are recognizing when a friendship is, to a
greater or lesser extent, at stake and understanding the expectations in a particular context
and their strength. Insofar as I have specified friendships in terms of the expectations
they create, our ability to recognize when a friendship is at stake is derivative of our
capacity to understand the expectations in a particular context as those expectations are
partially constitutive of the relationship. I consider the latter capacity in chapter 3, the
section titled “Why Disposition 'D'?” but I will say a little now about identifying the
strength of the reason.

To be clear, D is not an open commitment to doing whatever our friend would like
us to do. The reason recognized is defeasible. Its strength is hard to specify in any
principled way but, insofar as we can recognize what the expectations are and how strong
they are, pending argument in chapter 3, the strength of that reason would vary both with
the importance of the relationship and with the degree to which this particular action will
tend to sustain or deepen the relationship.

This and the following sections are dedicated to explaining in some detail how it
is that someone with D would make decisions, and to explain that decision procedure in a
way that clarifies how it is that such a person would avoid incoherence. My approach
will be to explicate what dispositional response D would require of us through discussion
of a variety of specific examples.

Given the understanding of the development of relationships exemplified by the
William and Scott example, we can see how this kind of disposition will cause us to
sustain our friendships. This is a disposition to do precisely that thing that I have
previously claimed is partially constitutive of the important relationships I am calling 'friendship.' Because the exact breadth of the expectations depends extensively on negotiation and the context of the friendship and its idiosyncratic contours and circumstances, I cannot specify the details of the expectations in a principled way, though I hope my discussion of cases will help explain how the relevant notion of expectation functions. I can say that, as I have described the relationships, the expectations that each friend has of the other track closely those actions which would tend to sustain and deepen the relationship, and it is this fact that makes the expectations significant.  

Part of the goal of the following section is to show that having disposition D would mean that an agent would follow through on the expectations generated through friendship often enough, in the right cases, to sustain the agent's friendships, while at the same time explicating in some detail the circumstances under which such an agent would fail to act in support of her friendships.

**The Standard Case**

Consider the following example, which I will call the ‘standard case’. William asks Scott to feed his cats because Scott is a close friend of his and can be counted on in a pinch. Scott agrees to feed William's cats because William needs him to, and the favor is small compared to the value of their friendship. If Scott has D, then he will agree to

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52 For more about why it is the expectations that matter and related epistemic issues, see chapter 3, the section titled “Why Disposition 'D'?”
William's request, and through exchanges like this one, Scott's friendship with William is maintained and strengthened. If Scott were not there when William needed him, then the friendship, a significant good, would be undercut.\footnote{There is a complication here. One might argue that what matters is that Scott tends to be, or reliably is, there for William, not that Scott is there on every particular occasion. Even if this is so, that still justifies Scott's having the general disposition.} Going on any particular weekly joint ten-minute walk over lunch might not be seen as particularly important to sustaining the relationship, whereas a failure to offer emotional and logistical support during an emergency might hurt the relationship substantially more.

In the standard case, the reasons in the world justify acting in accordance with the agent's disposition \( D \), and the agent's explanation of her reasons accurately portray the reasons in the world. In the standard case, there are no other salient reasons and so the agent acts directly on the friendship. There are some complications with regard to the relationship between the minimal reasons and full reasons in cases for which a full assessment may not recommend the same action as the pro-friendship disposition. To demonstrate these complications, I present a series of cases.\footnote{I have tried to make it clear in what follows that I am discussing only one disposition, the weakly deliberative disposition to follow through on the expectations generated through interactions with a friend. In any case when it is not clear what disposition I am discussing, I should be understood to be discussing that one.}
Opening Thoughts for the Cases

There may be borderline cases in which it is not clear whether the reasons that support acting against the disposition are obviously stronger than the reasons supporting acting according to the disposition. In cases like this, acting in a variety of ways would be consistent with having disposition D. One possibility is that the agent will act according to her disposition and move on. Upon reflection, she can say that it is hard to assess cases of this kind and that generally following her disposition will tend to maximize value, but because this is a borderline case, it is not clear to her that the reasons in question are sufficient to justify her reliance on her disposition as a decision procedure. But because this is a true borderline case, the agent might instead attempt to make a fuller assessment and act according to the outcome of that assessment. Whether this is a good idea will depend on the details of the case. In cases like this, having disposition D is not enough to determine how a person would act.

What I will do in the following sections is try to leverage a variety of considerations to minimize the number of cases that fall in this gray area. Genuinely borderline cases are a problem because if the area of genuinely borderline cases is too large, then the stability of the disposition is threatened. Having the disposition to follow through on the expectations one creates through the process of friendship will only be effective in sustaining friendships if in the relevant cases, the agent actually will follow through on the relevant expectations. If too many cases are borderline, the agent will not be able to reliably follow through on the expectations, and as a result, the relationships
will lack a major part of what makes them important and the agent stands open to alienation.

**Cases with Extreme Requests**

Sometimes a friend will ask more than he ought to expect of us. In an extreme case, we can imagine Willy asking Scotch to murder Willy's mistress. Even if Scotch has D, he need not simply follow through with the request on the basis that Willy is his friend. The action requested by Willy has significant and long-lasting repercussions for everyone involved. No friendship could justify unquestioningly granting such a request in the way a close friendship might justify feeding cats for a weekend. The weakly deliberative disposition D is simply not active, because murdering Willy's mistress is not a loose expectation Scotch has created through the standard development of their friendship. A closer look at the situation, and perhaps a full assessment of all the reasons, would be consistent with Scotch having D. Perhaps it might turn out that murdering Willy’s mistress is right, though it seems unlikely in this example, but following through immediately simply on a friend's say-so seems entirely out of place. In this case, because what is being requested is so far distant from the context of the friendship, there are no well-formed expectations, so the disposition to follow through on expectations is not relevant.

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One could describe this case differently, however. Consider Willy*, who really does have the expectation that Scotch* should murder Willy*'s mistress. Scotch* thinks this is an unreasonable expectation and as a result we have a situation where there is a disconnect between the agents' expectations. The way in which these expectations are generally negotiated implicitly or, more rarely, explicitly by the friends means that in some cases, there will be a difference of opinion about what the expectations are. Many times, when these differences of opinions become apparent, further negotiation will occur until the friends no longer differ about what the expectations are. Such cases then become similar to the standard case. Sometimes, either the difference of opinion does not become apparent, the context does not allow for further negotiation, or further negotiation does not produce consensus. When the difference of opinion does not become apparent, there is no problem for the agent's decision procedure; the agent in that case does not know anything is amiss and proceeds as in the standard case, in accordance with his own understanding of the expectations.\footnote{Cases like this do pose questions about why to focus on expectations and not, say, directly on the actions that sustain or deepen a relationship. I answer those questions in chapter 4.}

The other two cases, where the difference of opinion becomes apparent but negotiation either does not happen or is not fruitful, can be handled together. The interesting case is when the difference of opinion is of the structure where one friend expects the other friend to do more than the other friend thinks is reasonable, as in Willy* and Scotch*. That is the interesting case because that is the case where the two options each offend some party; either Willy* thinks he is being denied a service he should expect, and Scotch* believes he is being asked more than it is reasonable to expect. In
these cases, there is no longer a univocal answer to the question of what action will sustain or deepen the relationship. Instead, one action will sustain or improve one friend's attitude toward the relationship, and another action will sustain or improve another friend's attitude toward the relationship. When considering what to do, the agent must consider the impact either action will have on both participants in the relationship.

If Willy* keeps this expectation even under pressure from Scotch*, Scotch* still need not murder Willy*'s mistress. If Scotch* has D, all that means in this case is that Scotch* recognizes that his friendship with Willy*'s weighs in favor of killing Willy*'s mistress. Scotch* can also, consistent with having D, recognize that killing Willy*'s mistress at Willy*'s behest would be bad because (among other reasons) it would hurt Scotch*'s attitude toward the relationship between the two, though D does not itself bring this second recognition about.57

A related type of case arises when there is a choice between securing some major benefit for one's friend and securing some even more significant benefit for others. Consider the specific case of an agent being forced to choose between a train running over a friend and the train running over five other individuals. Call this the trolley case. Such a case has some very general similarities to the Scotch and Willy case. Both are cases in which D does not directly apply. I do not think that we ever have friendships that generate expectations for actions so extreme as murder or the sacrifice of several other lives.58 Cases like the trolley case are so unusual, and the reasons involved of such magnitude, that the agent would not act just according to disposition, and would instead

57 Of course, it is likely that Scotch*'s attitude toward his relationship with Willy* has been hurt simply by Willy* making the request.
58 It is, of course, possible for some other kinds of relationships, as in the military.
likely perform a full assessment. Of course, most plausible moral theories will say that
one option is much better than the other in the case of the five lives versus the life of the
single friend, and as a result, the agent might reasonably conclude that she ought to
sacrifice her friend in such a case.

The difference between the Scotch and Willy case and the trolley case is in how
an agent with appropriate dispositions will motivationally react to facing these situations.
We would not expect Willy's request to cause Scotch any serious conflict about what to
do; barring some complicated story, few people would decide to kill Willy's mistress.
Scotch, at being presented with Willy's murderous request, would likely react with horror
and revulsion. The fact that Willy makes such a request of Scotch might reasonably
make Scotch wonder whether Willy is a worthy friend, and all of this can be perfectly
true of Scotch even if he has D quite strongly.

But the reaction of an agent placed in the trolley case is different. D, as we've
described it, has, for the vast majority of people, emotional implications. Being tuned to
someone else's expectations and being disposed to directly respond to the fact of a
friendship you share with that person establishes, in the kind of case we're describing, an
emotional connection. An agent with the right disposition will respond to the choice
between the life of a friend and five other lives with grief and enormous emotional
conflict. Given the emotional connections to her friend that the agent has and her
understanding of what it would be to cause the deaths of five people who have lives and
friends of their own, it will be very difficult for the agent to make a decision. This
internal struggle seems exactly appropriate to the awful situation in which our agent finds
herself. The agent will likely judge that she ought to sacrifice her friend, but it is not obvious which way the agent will actually decide. Her decision will depend on details of her psychology and her relationship with the friend in question, and it is quite possible she will be unable to bring herself to do what she believes is the right thing. By presenting her with the trolley case, the world has put the agent in a nearly unbearable position, and being torn is the appropriate response. The fact that she responds by being deeply torn is an advantage of the account, which dictates that she ought to be the kind of person who we should expect to have the appropriate response.

Case Where D is Active, but Outweighed

A different kind of problematic case is where there are real expectations for how to act in the situation—unlike the trolley case—but the reasons that actually exist in the world justify acting against D. In this kind of case, there are two relevant ways the agents could be epistemically situated with respect to the relevant reasons in the world. In the first, it is very obvious to the agent that the reasons in the world do not justify acting according to the disposition. As a result, the agent would not act according to the disposition. Imagine that Bill asks Scotty to watch his cats over the weekend, but Scotty is a surgeon who has scheduled life-saving surgeries that must take place that same weekend. Call this the surgeon case. In the surgeon case, Scotty's disposition is not absolute. Scotty would not say 'yes' immediately as per his disposition, but instead would
likely regretfully refuse the request. It is entirely consistent with Scotty's having D that, in this situation, he would know this is the kind of thing he would normally do for Bill but he is aware of other reasons in favor of acting against his disposition and believes that these reasons justify acting against his disposition. Scotty is responding to some minimal reason—perhaps “My patients need me,” or “They'll die if I don't help them,”—that could be fully explained by the fact that acting as he does may save some lives, and his full reasons include this fact. In the surgeon case, Scotty, because of D, recognizes that he has a friendship-based reason to watch Bill's cats, but also recognizes he has another type of reason to act against his friendship-based reasons and, moreover, judges that his non-friendship based reasons are more important than his friendship-based reasons.

**Cases Where D is Active, Outweighed, but the Agent is Mistaken**

It is also possible, however, that the reasons that exist in the world justify not acting according to this disposition, and if the agent were ideally positioned epistemically she would judge that she ought not act according to her disposition, but because the agent has some particular epistemic failings, she does not so judge. There are two relevant epistemic conditions that are fulfilled in the surgeon case: first, the agent is aware of the reasons that weigh for acting against her disposition, and second, the agent believes that these reasons justify acting against her dispositions. If either of these conditions fail to hold, then, from the agent's perspective, she ought to follow her disposition. I now
consider several cases in which these conditions fail to be fulfilled in various ways.

It is important to remember that on my account of the standard relationship between full reasons and minimal reasons, the full reasons are not in the mind of the agent during the time of action. Much of my discussion of the two cases that follow will be a discussion of the full reasons that would be accessible to the agent upon reflection and how they cohere with the minimal reasons that do come to mind in the moment.

The first case is the one in which the agent is simply unaware of the reasons that in fact justify acting against her dispositions. Consider Scotty* and Bill*. Bill* has asked Scotty* to take care of Bill*'s cats for the weekend. Unbeknownst to either, there will be a medical emergency at the same time that Bill* is requesting Scotty*'s presence to take care of Bill*'s cats. Scotty*'s presence at this medical emergency would save a life. If Scotty* knew that he could save a life instead of taking care of Bill*'s cats, he would decide to be present at the medical emergency. Bill* would likely agree with the decision. Call this the unknowing surgeon case. In cases like the unknowing surgeon case, the agent recognizes the reasons that his disposition makes salient, and he acts on them. Scotty* agrees to watch Bill*'s cats, and then he does. The minimal reason that motivates him can be given a full explanation; it just so happens that in reality, there are other, stronger reasons to act otherwise of which the agent is ignorant. This kind of case is psychologically identical to the standard case; it is only the world that fails to cooperate.

If the second epistemic condition is not fulfilled, the agent is aware of the reasons that justify acting against her disposition, but she does not believe that these reasons
justify acting against her disposition. The agent might mistakenly judge that the reasons in favor of acting against her disposition are not as strong as those in favor of acting for her disposition.

Cases of a simple mistaken judgment are relatively uninteresting. The agent judges that the reasons supporting acting according to the disposition outweigh the reasons for acting against the disposition. As a result, the agent acts according to her disposition, and the case is then like the unknowing surgeon case and the standard case. Unlike the unknowing surgeon case, the obstacle is an error in judgment instead of ignorance. The fact that these errors are possible is no serious problem with the account. The only way to avoid the issue of mistaken judgments is to fail to require people to make judgments.

Agents rarely have to make serious assessments in the moment. Either it is obvious what to do because the agent is aware of a reason much stronger than the general reasons to follow her disposition, or it is not obvious and the agent acts according to the disposition.

I have argued that in the majority of cases, and particularly in the cases which are most important to avoid alienation, someone with disposition D will be in a position to follow through on those expectations. As a result, an agent with disposition D will normally sustain and develop her friendships.
Chapter 3: Challenges to Maximizing Value through Making Friends

Chapter 1 was dedicated centrally to criticizing a standard account of sophisticated consequentialism. In Chapter 2, I offered a new dispositional version of sophisticated consequentialism specifically dedicated to the context of friendship, including an endorsement of disposition D: the weakly deliberative disposition to find salient the fact that someone is their friend under circumstances when the status of the friendship is, to a greater or lesser extent, at stake, and weigh that friendship as a reason to follow through on the loose expectations they create through the interactions that ground the back-and-forth development of friendships. The goal of Chapter 3 is to leverage the resources from Chapter 2 to show why the dispositional account does not itself suffer from the flaws I pointed out in Chapter 1.

In this chapter I reframe the three criticisms of sophisticated consequentialism from chapter 1 into questions that must be answered to defend the dispositional account of friendship. In the first section of this chapter I engage with the first criticism I made of Railton: while sophisticated consequentialism manages to avoid alienation from personal relationships, it does so in a way that leaves the psychology of the agent in question. It does not seem as though the sophisticated consequentialist agent has the resources to keep a sharp psychological distinction between the overarching consequentialist
considerations and the first-order friendly motivations, and so falls prey to incoherence. The first section in this chapter will argue that the dispositional theory—and disposition D in particular—provide an answer to the following question: how can a consequentialist agent avoid both alienation and incoherence?

The second criticism of Railton was a variation on the demandingness objection. Given the terrible conditions under which so many people live, it seems difficult to imagine that a consequentialist is justified in spending the resources necessary on something like friendship. Even if friendship is seen as both an intrinsic and instrumental good, it would be an odd value theory indeed that valued it over the lives that could be saved with those same resources. Therefore, the second section in this chapter answers the question: how is friendship justified at all?

The last major criticism I made of sophisticated consequentialism was the issue of precisely which set of activities would maximize value. After all, there are many ways to act that will allow you to have friends, and very few of them will maximize value. The question for Railton is which specific set of things ought the sophisticated consequentialist be doing, and how can the sophisticated consequentialist come to that conclusion? In particular, it seems like a Railtonian consequentialist is never in the position of both knowing how to act to maximize value and being able to act in that way. If the sophisticated consequentialist does the consequentialist calculus to determine the best course of action, she will be alienated and so unable to access the value of friendship. If the sophisticated consequentialist avoids alienation by avoiding the consequentialist calculus, she will not know which specific path will maximize value.
The challenge for the dispositional theory is a little different. As I have shown in chapter 2, disposition D gives specific direction to the agent; there's no question of how the agent should act under this theory, or, rather, the questions about how to act are all matters of judging the considerations at hand and not really of decision procedure. Nonetheless, the core of the challenge to Railton stays relevant; there are many ways to sustain and further friendships. Of all the options available, why should we think that it is specifically disposition D that maximizes value? The last section in this chapter is dedicated to answering that question.

**How Can an Agent Avoid Both Alienation and Incoherence?**

Of the two horns of the dilemma, alienation is the easier one to avoid. Railton's explanation of the way that sophisticated consequentialism avoids alienation can be more or less imported to explain how it is that disposition D avoids alienation, though more can be said on disposition D's behalf.

Alienation is supposed to be a matter of too many thoughts, of friendship understood only as contributing to some larger value. A consequentialist with disposition D simply is not, in the moment, motivated by any considerations of any larger value beyond friendship. The minimal reason—reasons of concrete, very simple content like “that looks tasty” or “sitting like this is uncomfortable”—in operation in the moment is simply that they are her friend, or that the friend needs her, or some such thing. With that
being the case, the friendship is having a direct impact on the agent's decision procedure; there is no mediation via total value or any other concept.

Of course, this isn't true in every case; sometimes, an agent with disposition D will assess all considerations to figure out what to do, and in some cases not do the friendly thing at all. However, an agent need not always do the friendly thing in order to sustain friendships; most relationships are resilient enough to absorb some failures by either or both participants. This resilience is good, of course, as no one can act perfectly reliably. One way people will fail their friends is just through cognitive failure; some lack of willpower or attention means that the friendly thing just doesn't get done. Consequentialists with disposition D are going to fail in these ways just like others, but less likely to fail from lack of attention. Having D means precisely that the agent is very likely to notice when friendship-based considerations are at stake.

In any case, it is true that it is not required for friendship that the friends always act in the friendly way. What is important is the pattern of behavior: if the friends consistently act in the friendly way, if not always, that pattern will be enough to sustain a relationship, and as per the discussion of the decision procedure associated with disposition D at the end of Chapter 2, D will support an extensive pattern of that behavior.

Neither is it necessary, in order to avoid alienation, that the agent never assess all considerations. There are extreme cases, like Willy's request to Scotch for assistance murdering Willy's mistress, where we at a minimum, think the relationship can survive Scotch taking some time to figure out what to do about the request.59 Some kinds of

59 Of course, it is not clear, barring Scotch and Willy being hardened criminals, that the friendship can
circumstances do demand immediate action if we are to understand the agent as really being a friend and the relationship playing the deliberative role it ought to have. Many of these circumstances are very simple, straightforward ones; if the friend has lost a parent, any deliberation at all would signal a severe disconnect between the agent and the relationship. But it is precisely these easy cases that disposition D gets correct immediately. In that situation, D requires that the agent will see immediately that the friend is in need and will act to comfort. When there is a decision with a lot at stake, to whatever degree deliberation is alienating, it is not objectionably so;\(^{60}\) when there is little at stake, deliberation would mark alienation, but D prevents deliberation in precisely those cases where there is little at stake beyond the friendship.

Incoherence is harder to avoid. To recap, incoherence is a matter of a deep mismatch between the deeply-held reasons that the agent takes to justify his actions and the surface reasons that motivate him in the moment of action. The agent seems to be split: the things that the agent thinks really matter are not allowed to impinge themselves on his consciousness during decision-making, so there is one set of considerations that determines how to act broadly, and another set that determines how to act in the moment, and the one set of reasons, the ones that are understood to be the reasons that actually determine how to act, are barred from whatever deliberation occurs in the moment.

My account allows D to avoid incoherence through making clear the relationship between the in-the-moment minimal reasons and the full reasons the agent that, on reflection, the takes to justify her actions. In the moment, we have insufficient time or

\(^{60}\) For more on cases where alienation may be good or justified, see several passages in Railton, “Alienation, Consequentialism, and the Demands of Morality” e.g. p. 134, footnote 1; p. 146-148; and p. 162.
cognitive capacity to internalize complicated reasons of the type that most moral theories require that we pay attention to, and so the reasons to which we respond in the moment are minimal. These are certainly separate from the reasons a consequentialist thinks justify her actions (when her actions are correct), at a minimum because of their simplicity. But there is no deep disconnect between these two reasons; the simple reason admits of a more elaborate explanation, which the agent could provide on reflection, and this more elaborate explanation is a consequentialist one. As a result, there is a coherence between the motivating reasons in the moment and the reasons that are seen to justify.

In particular, D allows the consequentialist to respect her consequentialism, even in the moment. The considerations that D brings to her attention in the moment—“she's my friend,” “he needs me”—are consequentialist considerations; they are features of the world which matter to consequentialists in virtue of their value. Her moral theory is not telling her “Here are the things that really matter, but when actually making decisions, ignore them.” Her moral theory is telling her which things to pay attention to, and those things specifically are the kinds of considerations her moral theory tells her are the most important. Her deep moral commitments are reflected in the decisions she makes in the moment; there is no felt internal mismatch.

One might note that the details of D are doing little work in this picture; instead, it is the notion of weakly deliberative dispositions on which I rely, and those dispositions seem likely to be very common. As a result, coherence is cheap. The incoherence objection turns on a sharp distinction between the minimal reasons that motivate the

61 But see more on this in Chapter 4.
agent in the moment and the full reasons that the agent can offer on reflection, but the notions of minimal reasons and weak deliberation demonstrate that, at least in some cases and plausibly in many or most cases, that distinction is fuzzy at best, even for someone like a sophisticated consequentialist. Stocker's original version of this criticism is supposed to apply to a wide range of moral theories, but insofar as theories beyond sophisticated consequentialism can allow for weakly deliberative dispositions and the decision procedure they embody, these other theories also have a good response to the incoherence worry.62

How is Friendship Justified at All?

There is a history of arguments that consequentialism fails as a moral theory by simply requiring too much of agents.63 It certainly seems as though maximizing value will require a vast array of sacrifices, given how badly off so many people are. The sacrifices necessary to fulfill what maximizing consequentialism would call our obligations are so large that no one, or almost no one, in fact fulfills those obligations. One might legitimately wonder, as a result, whether making those sacrifices is actually psychologically plausible for standard human agents.

Then, so at least one version of the argument goes, if ought implies can (in the psychological sense of 'can'), then it simply can't be the case that morality requires us to

make those sacrifices. If maximizing consequentialism requires us to make those sacrifices, then either we must give up the claim that ought implies can or give up maximizing consequentialism. Since the claim that ought implies can is taken to be a pre-theoretic basic intuition about the nature of morality, giving up maximizing consequentialism seems to be the better option.

I take no position on whether this form of the criticism is decisive. I do think it is a deep criticism that consequentialists need to take seriously. Instead, the version of the criticism I with which I am concerned here deals specifically with friendship. If the world is so bad and so many people are suffering to such a degree, this version goes, how is it that we are justified in spending the resources necessary to sustain any friendships whatsoever? After all, on my account, following through on the relevant expectations is going to cost a significant amount of both emotional and material resources that could otherwise be used to save lives. While friendship is certainly of great value and even possibly an intrinsic good as well as an instrumental good, it does not seem as though, on any plausible value theory, the value of any particular friendship, or even set of friendships, is going to outweigh the lives that could be saved by reallocating the necessary resources to effective care and treatment of the ill and impoverished.

The strategy I intend to pursue to defend against this purely friendship-based version of the demandingness objection is that the social support provided by friends is actually a crucial part of a system of support that would allow a consequentialist to make the other sacrifices required of her. In this way, the instrumental value of friendship is not purely distinguishable from the value of helping the impoverished, as friendship is
part of the necessary means to making those sacrifices. As a note, this strategy critically depends on some substantial empirical claims.

There is substantial evidence that social interaction plays a crucial role in stress relief and good neurobiological function. There is, in fact, a likely neurological mechanism for this result: the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenocortical (HPA) axis regulates certain hormonal releases that affect general cognitive function. Under continual stress, regulation of the HPA axis substantially ceases, and it continually releases fight-or-flight style hormones that both undercut effective cognitive capacity and push for direct elimination of the stress-causing experiences. Social interaction has been found, across species, to partially nullify this regulation problem under continual stress.

If it is the case that positive social interaction provides this method of regulation of a neurobiological phenomenon that otherwise undercuts cognitive capacity and capability to deal with stress, as the research at a minimum suggests, then positive social interaction will assist consequentialists both in making decisions about what to do and following through on those decisions. The kinds of sacrifices that consequentialism demands of agents are surely stressful, both in making the decisions themselves and in coping with the fallout. Particularly given the specific implications of malfunction of the HPA axis, agents are going to find it increasingly difficult, as a purely practical matter, to


follow through on those consequentialist commitments. Friendship is a central source of emotionally-significant social interaction, and as a result, I claim that a disposition that enables the having of friendships supports the capacity of agents to make the other sacrifices necessary to fulfill those consequentialist commitments.

There is a revised version of the demandingness objection that still survives this move, I think. It seems likely that even if friendships are psychologically necessary for the larger sacrifices consequentialism requires, the details of those necessary friendships are going to vary among people. Some people will require more intense or intimate relationships in order to have the necessary support for making the consequentialist sacrifices, whereas others might be psychologically capable of having less intimate or fewer relationships and still be in a position to follow through on consequentialist commitments. If those kinds of considerations can vary across people, then perhaps they are facts about oneself that are susceptible to focused attempts to change oneself. If that's the case, then it seems like there is pressure for the consequentialist to change herself into the kind of person who can handle major personal sacrifices while having relationships that require fewer resources of various kinds, emotional and material.66 One might wonder about the value, the goodness, of a life in which whether you can have friends, and what kind of friends you can have, is this deeply contingent and dependent on what is in fact necessary. The pressure to become the kind of person who can do without so

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66 This criticism is related to one developed in Dean Cocking and Justin Oakley, “Indirect Consequentialism, Friendship, and the Problem of Alienation,” *Ethics* 106, no. 1 (October 1995): 86–111, doi:10.1086/293779 The argument I suggest above is concerned with how the general disposition to have intimate friends, and what kinds of friends we ought to pursue, is contingent on what is necessary to maximize value. Cocking and Oakley, however, argue that the justified pursuit and support of specific friendships would be contingent on their existence maximizing value, and that this contingency undermines the friendship. For one response, see Elinor Mason, “Can an Indirect Consequentialist Be a Real Friend?,” *Ethics* 108, no. 2 (1998): 386–93, doi:10.1086/233810.

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many or so intimate relationships seems a bad-making feature of a life.

I think there are two things to say about this revised version of the argument. The first is that consequentialists are committed to dealing with the world as it actually is. Hypothetical arguments about what might be are beside the point to a consequentialist; it is this world, not some other possible world, in which we must live. Thus, there is no real criticism in the claim that whether we can have friends is contingent on the kinds of beings humans actually are. Consequentialists were always talking about humans as they actually are, not as we might imagine them to be or as we would wish them to be.

Humans need this kind of social interaction to function well, apparently as a matter of neurobiology. But that fact should come as no surprise; we have always known that humans were social animals, and expecting humans to be able to function well without social interaction is in opposition to that basic insight.

But all of what I've said so far is not quite on point. The force of the criticism is not that we should make ourselves into people who don't need friends, which may very well be impossible, but that we should make ourselves into people who need less significant and fewer friendships in order to save those resources for other purposes. This criticism is based on our need for friendships being a matter of degree, not a binary.

Still, I take the above considerations to be relevant to exactly how fluid the relevant emotional needs are. Certainly, it seems very unlikely that in conditions of stress, people would be able to substantially change what coping mechanisms are most effective to deal with that stress, and so a consequentialist already engaged in making the relevant sacrifices is in a bad position to effect the relevant changes. But even in cases
without stress, the fact that people's social and biological need for companionship is so deeply rooted makes it plausible that this need is not susceptible to substantial change through self-reflection and various indirect attempts at shaping oneself. The details of one's need for companionship are likely to be a function of various extensive historical and genetic facts about oneself, facts that are not easily changed. In any case, even trying to change those facts about oneself, or trying to figure out whether it is a good idea, certainly risks some type of alienation. If one wants to keep the relationships one has, one probably should not try to determine whether it is possible to be the kind of person who could rid oneself of those relationships. All these considerations agitate for the claim that attempting to change the relevant dispositions is likely to fail and also probably a bad idea.

But much of what I've said here is speculative. It is still at least possible that the relevant dispositions are pliable enough that we ought to spend effort reducing our reliance on our friends, and if the dispositions are that changeable, consequentialists should probably be trying to change them. Both of those things are true, and they link up to a larger point about consequentialism and the general demandingness objection. Nothing I've said here answers any part of the larger demandingness objection beyond the fact that consequentialism allows and encourages friendship. If the original objection is that consequentialists are not justified in having friends because of the wasted resources, I take myself to have answered that objection. If the resulting life looks not quite as appealing as it might, then that is an implication of global consequentialism.

It might very well be that maximizing consequentialism encourages us to have
friendships, but only precisely because it helps to psychologically allow us to make the other major sacrifices that consequentialism requires. I take the fact that friendship offers an important kind of emotional support makes it more plausible that those kinds of sacrifices are possible or acceptable. At the same time, what I have said is far from a decisive defense against the various versions of the more general demandingness objection to global consequentialism.

Why disposition 'D'?

One last thing that needs to be established is the way in which D maximizes value. That is, I have already shown that consequentialists ought to have some disposition that will allow them to have friendships, but it is yet to be shown why it is that D, and not some other disposition that will allow friendships, will maximize value. I need to show not only that an agent with D can have friendships, but that of all the dispositions that might allow friendships in that way, D is the particular disposition that maximizes value. My discussion here will center on defending the decision to frame D in terms of expectations. If it turns out that D is incorrectly formulated but that expectations still form the critical piece, I will take the correction with good grace, as the bulk of the account will still be correct.

In particular, I will begin by motivating the decision to focus on expectations before offering some specific advantages associated with focusing on expectations. First,
I will argue that given the kind of relationships under discussion, the strength of the expectations will track the value of the relationships, and as a result, expectations form a convenient shorthand for how much effort is justified to support a particular relationship. Second, I will argue that focusing on expectations both has substantial epistemic advantages and provides an excellent method for enabling coordination between friends.

Having generally motivated the focus on expectations, I then move to considering rival approaches and comparing them to the expectation-centric view. I consider two rival dispositions: first, I argue against a disposition focused directly on taking the action that furthers and sustains the friendship, and second, I consider and reject a disposition centered on intuitions about how to act with respect to friends.

First, I will establish the connection between following through on expectations and generating value. Given the kind of relationship in which I'm interested, there is a clear correlation between the strength of expectations and the value that is gained from following through on those expectations.

The greater the intimacy and development in a relationship, the more value the friends gain from having and pursuing it, as the relationship provides more emotional support as well as practical assistance. The intimacy of the relationship is, in part, marked by the greater reliance each friend has on the other.

It follows from the historical account I've given that those more developed, more intimate friendships will have expectations greater in extent, strength, or both. By the extent of an expectation, I mean the kind of actions that are expected; expectations that are greater in extent require more costly and resource-intensive actions in order to fulfill
them, whereas expectations that are greater in strength are more costly to fail to fulfill, as the other friend is relying more heavily on the fulfillment of the expectation.67

Of course, particular expectations may vary in strength within a single relationship. Moreover, the strength of the expectations will tend to vary with their significance to the relationship. An expectation to come to a regular weekly lunch may be relatively weak in standard circumstances, whereas an expectation to provide emotional and maybe even material support in an emergency or other substantial hardship may be very strong indeed. My specific argument is that in the standard case, there will always be a powerful reason, relative to the intimacy and significance of the relationship, to fulfill expectations that are strong in this technical sense. This powerful reason arises because there is good reason to sustain the relationship, and reliably fulfilling strong expectations is a crucial part of sustaining the relationship. At the same time, in situations other than the standard case, it might be that the extent of the expectations is sufficiently large that the decision to fulfill the expectation is not trivial. However, given the power of the friendly reason, brought to the agent's attention by D, the resources needed in order to fulfill the expectations will have to be substantial in order for that cost to even occur to the agent as a reason not to follow through on the expectation. In that case, it legitimately is not clear whether the agent ought to fulfill the expectation; what decision the agent ought to make will depend on the details.68

In any case, the lesson is that the stronger the relationship, the stronger the reason

67 Some types of relationships, of course, might involve different set of correlations; the relationship between a military commander and a lower-ranking member of the military might involve expectations very strong in both dimensions, but involve very little intimacy. Relationships of those types, however, won't fit the pattern of historical development I describe in chapter 2.
68 But see chapter 2.
to follow through on the expectations that help support and further it. I hope that this relationship between the strength of expectations and the strength of reasons to follow through on those expectations can at least motivate why D, or some disposition like it, is a plausible option for the friendship-enabling disposition that consequentialist agents ought to have. Next, I consider the epistemic and coordination advantages that come with a focus on expectations.

There is a desideratum on any friendship-enabling disposition that the relevant considerations be epistemically available without much deliberation or introspection. There are practical reasons that this is true; many friendly overtures would be ineffective or impossible if not performed immediately and in the moment. But more importantly, if more extensive deliberation were necessary, the alienation worry would recur. Remember, the force of the alienation worry is that you should be acting directly and immediately for the friend; if, in most circumstances, the agent has to work to determine whether or not to act in the friendly way, then we might again wonder if the relationship has the psychological force it should have for the agent.

D fulfills this desideratum admirably. Others’ expectations of the agent are the considerations relevant to D, and people have a variety of ways of determining what others expect of them. For example, we have mental systems dedicated to the task of determining what other people are thinking based on facial expressions and other physical cues, and these systems help us determine, among other things, what other people are thinking specifically with respect to us.69 But there are many other ways; the

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basic interactions we have with other people give us lots of information as to how they expect our future interactions to go, and we respond to that information easily and without serious deliberation. If an acquaintance continually invites us to a bar or restaurant instead of their home, this information affects what we anticipate they are expecting of us. Expectations, particularly in less intimate relationships, tend to be symmetrical for any particular person. That is, most people expect their friends to be willing to do the things they themselves are willing to do and expect (or at least would accept) their friends to be unwilling to do the things they themselves are unwilling to do. This is one source of the kind of information I mean.

At the same time, there is explicit information as well. People discuss what they are willing to do and what they expect of their friends. This kind of discussion is much more common in the more intimate friendships, but nonetheless is an important source of information that is very easily epistemically accessible—you need only remember what your friend has said on the subject.

There is a second advantage to focusing on expectations, and it involves a variety of interpersonal coordination problems. There is good reason to want to know what your friends will do with respect to you, in at least the broad strokes and, in many cases, in detail as well. One's friends should be reliable and predictable. Predictability means that it is easy to rely on your friends in a specific way: you have a very good idea of what they will do, so you can yourself act in ways that expect and depend on their acting in the relevant way.70

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70 This is not to say that there is no virtue in some kinds of unpredictability, but just that one needs one's friends to be able to be predictable enough that one can make good decisions about how to act.
Focusing on the expectations that we have created in others tends toward predictable interactions precisely because our friends expect us to act that way. Our friends expecting us to act that way just is their predicting that we will act that way. There are, therefore, two major coordination based advantages to focusing on expectations. First, it allows for both parties to make better decisions about how to act because they can coordinate much more effectively. Being able to predict how the other person will act prevents practical problems like redundant activity and also allows both parties to make generally effective coordinating decisions. Second, it simply makes the relationships operate more smoothly. It is stressful to interact with someone whose actions with respect to you are unpredictable, not least because it's harder to figure out how you ought to act.

Now I move to considering alternative dispositions and comparing them to disposition D. Take F: the disposition to do the thing that one believes will further the relationship the most. The major virtue of this alternative is that it seems to cut away the irrelevancies and directly target the disposition's end goal of sustaining and furthering intimate relationships. Why should we pay attention to the expectations if doing so won't actually further the relationship? Nonetheless, there are a set of problems that come along with F.

First, the question of what will further the relationship the most is a very complicated one. There are an enormous set of considerations that are relevant to that question, most of which are not easily available to the agent. As a result, F is epistemically difficult to follow. Among the set of considerations that are relevant are the
friend's general attitude toward friendship, her specific attitude toward this friendship, her insecurities and vulnerabilities in the context of relationships, and all of these things for the original agent as well. These are considerations people don't have perfect access to in their own heads, much less another's, so any assessment based on these considerations are going to be flawed because of limited access. Such a deliberation is going to get it wrong pretty regularly, and if the point of F was to cut straight to the central question of what will best further the relationship, it fails on its own terms. Similarly, there will be problems with coordination; the complication of the considerations and the way that different people will make different judgments about, e.g., what parts of the other person's psychology are relevant are going to mean that it is going to be very hard to predict what answer we are going to get when we calculate out what we should do. As discussed above, without predictability there is more excess stress in the relationship and a variety of practical decisions are simply harder to make well.

To make matters worse for F, it is not the right kind of disposition to be a weakly deliberative disposition. The problem is that F is inherently comparative: it says to do the thing that will further the relationship the most. Therefore, in order to do any kind of justice to the disposition, a range of options and a range of considerations bearing on those options needs to be considered, and that kind of explicit deliberation is inconsistent with the structure of a weakly deliberative disposition, as a weakly deliberative disposition involves being focused on a single salient consideration, which then directly motivates action.

This more intellectualized, deliberative process brings with it a vulnerability to the
alienation worry. On this picture, if the agent learns that a friend's parent has died, F leads the agent to try to figure out how best to act under those circumstances instead of simply and immediately comforting the friend. It might be a quick deliberation in those circumstances, but nonetheless it must be done. That kind of abstract reasoning in the face of a direct and visceral demand to do well by a friend is a hallmark of alienation. If you have to think about whether comforting a recently-bereaved friend is the best idea, that friendship is simply not playing the role in your decision-making that it ought.

One might think that these criticisms can be overcome by the central insight of sophisticated consequentialism; that's to say, the agent won't directly try to determine what best would further the relationship, but use a variety of deliberative shortcuts. But this move doesn't work in this context, as the relevant disposition is supposed to be the decision procedure for how to act under various circumstances. It might very well be that the best way to further your relationships is to have some disposition like D and not F. If someone really does have F, that means that they will reliably try to determine how best to act by undergoing a full deliberative process, and the point of my account is to avoid a full deliberative process.

A defender of F might argue that, given the problems with coordination and knowing what to do, that F would generally advise the same course of action as D would, only separating from D in the cases where the agent's judgment says to do something else would be better. However, it is not clear to what extent F really would overlap with D, given the range of considerations that are relevant to the assessment for which F calls, and the ways in which those considerations vary by person and circumstance. Even if
there were substantial overlap, and even if the cases where F pulls apart from D really do
favor F—unlikely, given the epistemic issues—still, the alienation worry makes F
substantially worse than D, and F really has no resources to avoid alienation precisely
because this disposition is a decision procedure.

If disposition F does not work because it is so highly intellectualized, perhaps we
ought to go the other direction and try a disposition based strongly on intuitions.

Consider N, the disposition to follow our basic immediate intuitions about how to act
with respect to our friends. N has some substantial advantages over F: it is superior with
respect to epistemic access, as we have direct epistemic access to our intuitions, in
contrast to the wide range of considerations relevant to comparative judgments. It also
fits much better into the weakly deliberative disposition structure, as the disposition's
structure is analogous to D in that it provides a specific set of actions to do without
requiring any comparative judgment. But it still falls short of D, for two reasons.

The first is that N suffers from deep issues with coordination. People's basic
intuitions about how to act with respect to their friends tend to vary between agents—
some people move to what others would consider intimate interactions very quickly,
while others tend to prefer meetings in public places and discussions about mutual friends
and interests to more personal interactions. Some expect relationships to begin with a
central structuring activity, some joint activity or shared interest, whereas others tend to
want their friendships to expand into a variety of spheres very quickly. The central point
is that intuitions about how to act with respect to friends are idiosyncratic with respect to
that particular person, and that idiosyncrasy means that it is going to be quite difficult to
predict how the friend is going to act. Without predictability the previously-discussed
drawbacks come into play: simply being unable to rely on your friend to act in
predictable ways is a stressor on the relationship, making interacting less smooth and
desirable, but also being unpredictable means that it is much more difficult for an agent to
make good decisions about how to act themselves with respect to the friend, as many
such decisions will depend on how the friend will respond. Perhaps counterintuitively,
that unpredictability means that acting directly on our intuitions about how to act toward
our friends will, when compared to acting based on expectations, actually hurt our
friendships.

The second issue is that this disposition is consistently going to err too much on
the side of friendly activity, sacrificing value in the process. I claim that, for D, there are
a variety of novel cases where it does not seem that there are expectations for how a
friend ought to act in the relevant situation. Remember the Scotch and Willy case, where
Willy asks Scotch to help him murder and hide the body of Willy's mistress. It is clear, I
think, that in most cases where Scotch and Willy are not hardened criminals that there is
no expectation at all in such cases; it is too far from normal circumstances for there to be
any established idea of how a friend would act.71 In those cases, the consequentialist is
free to make her own decision about what decision would maximize value. But intuitions
about how to act cover substantially more ground than expectations do; I don't doubt that
there are some circumstances so alien that there are not even any intuitions about how a
friend should act, but they are substantially rarer than the circumstances which are merely
without established expectations.

71 See Chapter 2 for more discussion of this and similar cases.
The implication is that, in many cases, N will lead agents to act in the friendly way when they ought instead be looking to other non-friendship based considerations in order to make the best decision. N allows friendships, certainly, but it does so at too high a cost. Of course, what cost depends substantially on what precisely the intuitions about how to act toward friends are, and as I've already argued, those vary quite widely between people. Therefore, it is to some degree an empirical question what those intuitions are and how closely they line up with what maximizes value. At the same time, it would be a near-miraculous coincidence that any particular agent has come to have precisely the intuitions about friendship the following of which would maximize value. Our intuitions about friendship are shaped by any number of historical facts about us, about the details of the culture and subcultures in which we grew up, about the attitudes of those with whom we interacted. There is no principled reason to believe that those considerations would, with any degree of reliability, pick out even a disposition particularly close to the one that would maximize value.

Now, N can participate in the advantages of a weakly deliberative disposition. In particular, since weakly deliberative dispositions are centrally about salience, they are defeasible in an important way. The fact that the intuitions are salient in a wide range of cases does not mean that other consequentialist considerations are not, or that the intuitions must be the decisive consideration. But leaning on expectations lets us treat the extreme cases differently as a matter of principle: the extreme cases are exactly those for which there are no well-formed expectations. N cannot treat the extreme cases differently, or at least can treat many fewer extreme cases differently, as there will still be
intuitions about how to act in those cases even if there are no expectations. Therefore, an agent with N is relying on other dispositions to make sure that relevant considerations are salient in extreme cases, whereas an agent with D can simply treat extreme cases as special cases and directly figure out what would be best to do. The former approach, I claim, is much more susceptible to error; someone in the grip of N might do terrible things that, if the agent considered from a neutral perspective, he would not do.

However, let us consider the case of Natalie, the excellent consequentialist with N. Natalie has carefully honed other dispositions to make sure that, in these extreme cases, the other important consequentialist considerations are always salient to her. As a result, she is not susceptible to making terrible decisions in the grip of N because her other dispositions can always get in the way.

The problem with Natalie is that N isn't helping her. Her intuitions about how to act with respect to friends are still shaped by a wide range of other considerations that are unlikely to be pointing her in the right direction. The fact that Natalie has other good consequentialist dispositions that are helping her make good decisions does not mean that she ought to have N over D. It just means that some of the problems with N can be overcome with other character traits. But the fact still remains that the basic intuitions agents have about how they ought to act with respect to their friends have no particularly close linkage to value in the way that expectations do. That linkage makes D plausible on the face of things as a way of acting toward our friends and the alternatives suffer in comparison.

The result is that D is the disposition best placed to in fact further our important
relationships while maximizing other kinds of value, and so I take myself to have answered the third challenge.
Chapter 4: What Can I Offer to Nonconsequentialists?

The previous chapters constitute an argument for how consequentialists can secure the good of friendship by steering through the horns of the alienation-incoherence dilemma. In this chapter I aim to consider the issues that arose in that discussion and demonstrate that some of them are relevant to more than consequentialists.

A natural thought with respect to friendship is that the existence of a friendship between two agents provides—creates?—reasons for each friend to act in certain ways toward the other. What I can offer to the nonconsequentialist is an account of those reasons we have in virtue of being friends, the reasons that we wouldn't have if we weren't friends. Sometimes I will call these reasons friendship-based reasons. An account of friendship-based reasons is what I mean by the moral significance of friendship. Friendship is a major good in our lives, one of the things that makes life worth living. This fact is reflected, I argue, in the friendship-based reasons we have. Therefore, I will argue for the value-promotion thesis: all friendship-based reasons are reasons of value promotion.

The consequentialist nature of the moral significance of friendship has been not

72 It's important to note that we can have reasons with respect to our friends that are not friendship-based reasons. We might have reasons to make our friends better off, and we have might reasons to fulfill promises we've made to our friends, but those reasons could easily be the kind of reasons we have with respect to everyone: quite generally, we should make people better off and we should fulfill promises. We don't need to be friends with someone to have those reasons.
merely overlooked but understood to be obviously false. The accepted wisdom is that friendship is a problem consequentialism has to explain away. I will argue that the only reasons of friendship are consequentialist ones.

As a last terminological note, as before, I talk in terms of 'friends' and 'friendship', but by those I mean the relationship I have specified previously—the kind of relationship that develops over time and involves slowly-increasing expectations on both sides.

**The Value-Promotion Thesis**

Because the value promotion thesis engages directly with first-order normative questions, some will have commitments such that the value promotion thesis will hold no appeal for them. If you think that consequences, and the goodness thereof, don't matter matter morally, then the value-promotion thesis has nothing for you. Theories that really take no account whatsoever of consequences, that say whether some person or other is made better or worse off is entirely irrelevant to the action that causes that outcome, will never allow moral reasons of value promotion in the first place. I will not defend here the claim that consequences matter morally, but I take it to be prima facie plausible.

If you think that friendship isn't valuable, that though there are consequences that matter the existence and health of a certain kind of relationship is not among them, then I cannot help you either. Though I think friendship is both instrumentally and intrinsically valuable, a position I have defended elsewhere, you need not buy in to a claim even that
specific. For the value promotion account to be relevant for you, I merely need that you
grant that friendship is valuable in some way or other, including the possibility of its
being merely instrumentally valuable, and thus provides reasons of some kind or other to
promote it.\footnote{See chapter 3, section 3, for some arguments as to why friendship is instrumentally valuable.}

The last, and possibly most controversial, claim I need is that moral assessment
can be done in terms of reasons—that is, what we ought to do morally is the action that
has the greatest weight of reasons in its favor. I take this claim to be prima facie
The position I will defend in this section is that, if you are willing to grant those three claims, then you ought to think
that all friendship-based reasons are reasons of value promotion.

Before I defend that claim, however, I need to clarify some of my terminology. I
will use 'consequentialism' as a shorthand for the view that the only morally relevant
considerations are consequences, and that other considerations hold no moral weight.\footnote{This is a very broad definition of consequentialism, and includes, e.g. theories which imitate side
constraints by making some values lexically prior to others. It also allows for agent-relative
consequentialist reasons, the existence of which is controversial in the literature. See, e.g. David
McNaughton and Piers Rawling, “Agent-Relativity and the Doing-Happening Distinction,”
\textit{Philosophical Studies: An International Journal for Philosophy in the Analytic Tradition} 63, no. 2
Baron, P. Pettit, and M. Slote (Blackwell, 1997). A further discussion of agent-relative and agent-
neutral reasons occurs below.}
I
will use 'nonconsequentialism' and 'nonconsequentialist theories' as a shorthand to refer
to theories that deny the above consequentialist thesis. In particular, the kind of
nonconsequentialism I am mostly concerned with here is the view that while
consequences do matter morally, they do not exhaust the morally relevant considerations.
I take this usage to be to some degree idiosyncratic.

While I do hope to stay as neutral as possible on the nature of reasons, I have been tossing about the phrase “reasons of value promotion” and I want to get clearer on what precisely those are.

Consider two possible accounts of consequentialist reasons: according to one, at any point and with respect to any choice, there can be only one consequentialist reason, and that reason is that the action in question maximizes value (or is tied for maximizing value). I think this account is unattractive for a variety of reasons, though I will not argue for its unattractiveness here, and so will say no more of it. 76

According to the other account, there is a consequentialist reason associated with each good-making feature of the world that counts in favor of bringing about that good-making feature, and a consequentialist reason associated with each bad-making feature of the world that counts against bringing about that bad-making feature. Both of these reasons are what I mean by the phrase “reasons of value promotion;” they are reasons that weigh in favor of bringing about goodness and against bringing about badness. 77 Therefore, the stance I take is that friendship-based reasons are entirely and only reasons to bring about the goodness of friendship. 78

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76 As an example of one way in which it is unattractive, it cannot distinguish between suboptimal actions that promote value to a greater or lesser degree. For example, consider one person who fails to maximize value by not spending enough time at soup kitchens and instead spending that time raising pets, and contrast with another person who fails to maximize value by not spending enough time at soup kitchens and instead spending that time as a serial killer. According to this account of consequentialist reasons, because both of these actions fail to maximize value, the same weight of reasons agitates in favor of each.

77 I take it that nothing depends on this variance in terminology.

78 This account of consequentialist reasons lines up nicely with the discussion in previous chapters about features of the world and explanations for why those features are relevant. The relevant features are the good-making features, whatever they are, and they are relevant to moral decision-making precisely because they are good.
I do need to say, I think, that according to the latter account, the most plausible consequentialism—call it “maximizing consequentialism”—says we ought to act in accordance with the greatest weight of reasons. I stay neutral with respect to how to weigh various reasons. Another way of stating the distinction between consequentialism and nonconsequentialism is that, according to consequentialism, consequentialist reasons are the only reasons there are, whereas nonconsequentialism says that while there may be consequentialist reasons, there are also nonconsequentialist reasons.  

If I am granted these claims—that consequences matter morally, that friendship is valuable, that moral assessment can be described in terms of reasons—then the value-promotion thesis follows. Remember, the value-promotion thesis is consistent with the existence of nonconsequentialist reasons; it merely states that all reasons we have in virtue of being friends are reasons of value promotion. Other reasons, those we have in virtue of other things, might well be nonconsequentialist.

There are three parts to my argument for the value-promotion thesis. I will present some positive reasons to endorse the value promotion thesis, then consider and respond to some particular objections to the value promotion thesis. Last, I will consider some rival views.

There are two major positive arguments in favor of the value-promotion thesis—that is, the view that all friendship-based reasons are reasons of value promotion. They are, first, its theoretical simplicity and, second, the way it aligns with the lived experience.

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of friendship as a part of the good life. I take these in turn, but as will become obvious, they are closely related.

One of the major virtues of this account of the moral significance of friendship is that it explains the special role friends and friendships play without any additional moral principles or basic moral facts. If one is independently committed to the relevance of reasons of value promotion to morality and to the thought that friendship is a moral good, then I add no additional complications to the picture. Friends and friendships play a special role in how we live because of how good it is to have friends. On my account, that's the end of it. The reasons we have in virtue of being friends are just a special case of a much broader group of uncontroversial reasons.

The moral principle that undergirds the value-promotion thesis already exists: that value should be promoted. Value promotion does the work of explaining and justifying what friendship requires of us. Any further justifying principle seems superfluous, needs explanation, if we can get what we want without it. Any theory that can't reduce friendship-based reasons to more general reasons is going to need a further explanation for why friendship in particular is so special as to necessitate its own moral principle.

One might wonder whether simplicity of this kind is a virtue at all. There are two kinds of arguments one might give for this claim; I take them in turn.

The first is entirely general: why think that simplicity is a theoretical virtue at all? Why think moral theories with fewer moral principles are thereby better than moral theories with more moral principles? The first thing to say in response is that this is a big
question, one to which a thorough answer is substantially outside the realm of my concerns here, but I can at least gesture at a reason to take simplicity seriously as a virtue of moral theories. Other things being equal, fewer principles mean better explanations. Arguing for fundamental moral principles is infamously difficult; by explaining as much as possible in terms of one moral principle I thereby reduce the number of fundamental moral principles I need, and thereby can offer better explanations of why friendship is morally significant.

The second argument against simplicity is more specific. A concern one might have about explaining many things with a single general principle is that one might thereby lump together dissimilar things as though they were similar. In this way, one might argue that I have gotten things importantly wrong. To some degree, I take it, we want our friendships to be special, and in particular, to have a special connection to us. If lumping together friendship with other moral considerations thereby loses this important facet of friendship, I am missing out on one of the factors that makes friendship-based moral reasons distinctive. Moreover, it might seem as though I really am making a mistake like this: by reducing reasons of friendship to a certain kind of reasons of value promotion, I am making them perfectly general. Everyone has reasons to promote value, and so everyone has reasons to promote friendship. In fact, everyone has reasons to promote all friendships, both their own and others'. On this account, it therefore seems that other people's friendships give us the same kind of reasons as our own do. Where is the distinctive relationship one holds to one's own friendship?

80 I consider the possibility that things might not be equal in my discussion of the second large argument against simplicity.
It is true on my account that other people's friendships give us the same kind of reason as our own do: reasons of value promotion, a reason to support and bring about the good-making features of the world, including friendships, ours and others'. But I can nonetheless explain the disanalogy between our own friendships and others'. While the moral facts are the same in both cases, the psychological responses we ought to have to them vary dramatically. The things we need to do to support our own friendships are radically different from what we need to do to support other friendships, and so our psychological attitudes toward our friendships need to differ from our attitudes toward others'. Moreover, I can explain the ways in which our attitudes toward our own friendships ought to differ from our attitudes to others': we have reasons to be disposed to follow through on the expectations we create in our friends, whereas it is hard to see how there are any analogous dispositions that could assist in the development of friendships between others.81

The response I've just given, that the difference is in the psychology not the morality, seems to make the obligations we have in virtue of friendship to some degree contingent on how people actually are.82 One might worry that the moral role of friendship is no accident of chance; it's a deep fact about morality that friendship plays the role it does. Imagine some not-quite-human creatures that differed from us in some significant, though perhaps not crucial, ways. If, on my view, one such creature were justified in treating their own friendships no differently than friendships between others, I

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81 This is the disposition that in chapter 2 I claim consequentialists ought to have with respect to their friends; whether nonconsequentialists should have it will depend on the details of the nonconsequentialist parts of their theory. The larger point is simply that we have resources to leverage to assist our own friendships that we do not have to assist others', and this has psychological implications. Much of my discussion is relevant, particularly ch. 3.
82 I discuss a related contingency worry in chapter 3.
would thereby be ascribing a contingency to the morality of friendship that is ill-placed.

I think this example does not show that I rely on any objectionable contingency. The difference between how we ought to treat our own friendships and how we ought to treat others' is dependent on contingent facts, yes, but the relevant facts are modally robust in that, if they were different, a very wide range of facts about the world would be changed. The things that would have to change would be deep social facts about how we relate to other people, and they would have to change in ways that would reverberate down the causal chain. These beings would have to be such that supporting their own friendships required no more of them than supporting the friendships of others. Such beings would have, as a result, radically different social dynamics than we do. To such beings, the ways they treat others' friendships would have to be as important to those friendships as the ways they treat their own friendships are to their own friendships. One's friendships, then, would heavily depend not only on one's own actions and attitudes, but the actions and attitudes of agents not involved in the relationship. It is hard to imagine exactly how such a society would function—maybe individuals are deeply dissociated from their relationships, or perhaps instead the society is so tight-knit that any interactions between any two members has serious implications for every relationship in the society—but in any case it is far distant from the way that humans work. The fact that my theory has odd implications for such a society is no serious drawback; that society is so different from our own that importing our judgments about social interactions seems an error.

There are other issues with this argument as well. One is that those to whom my
view has any appeal already believe that consequences have some moral significance. To
the degree that one does buy into the moral significance of outcomes, a certain
contingency is inevitable. We ought to push one button precisely because it is
contingently connected to the door that lets the patients into the hospital, and we ought
not to push a second button because it is contingently connected to the launch of nuclear
weapons. All outcomes are dependent on highly contingent causal chains; on my view,
many of the important facts are social, psychological, and contingent, but they are
contingent on deep facts about the human experience, not on anything that could be
changed without substantially affecting the larger picture.

The last thing to say, of course, is that at the ground level my picture is as modally
robust as one could hope. We ought to bring about the good and prevent the bad;
friendship is part of the good. The first claim may very well be necessary; insofar as the
second is contingent, it is contingent on the nature of humanity as social animals.
Contingency on the sociality of humanity strikes me as acceptable.

The second positive argument for the value-promotion thesis deals with the lived
experience of friendship as part of the good life, and how the value-promotion thesis
explains and underlies this intuition, specifically with respect to the trade-offs we make
every day. Friendship is part of the good life; it is one of many things that are valuable
and we treat it as such. To get the phenomena right, we need to think that friendship-
based reasons are only reasons of value promotion.

As a case study, consider the issue of defeasibility. There are many goods in the

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83 The requirement that moral assessment needs to be able to be done in terms of reasons is important
because of this discussion of trade-offs.
good life; there is wealth, reputation, family, friends, and so on. In many cases these come into conflict and we have to choose between them. We have to decide that one of these goods, in some situation, is better than another of these goods, that it is worth giving up one for another. Sometimes we ought to act against our friends' wishes, and sometimes we ought to end friendships.

The value-promotion thesis explains these facts. Reasons of value promotion are necessarily outweighable. For whatever feature of the world that is at stake, you ought to give it up if more is to be gained on the other side.\(^{84}\) Therefore, according to the value-promotion thesis, there is already a method for figuring out when you ought to act against your friends and when you ought to end friendships. You ought to act against your friend when what is at stake is more important than the harm to the relationship, and you ought to end friendships that have become disvaluable.\(^{85}\) The latter is still a dramatic move for a close relationship, because most close relationships provide a variety of psychological goods, and to the degree they don't that is reason to be wary of them. Friendship-based reasons that aren't value promotion reasons interfere with this simple picture because value is precisely the sort of thing which is most amenable to the tradeoffs that we in fact make with respect to relationships. Consider, as a concrete example, dysfunctional relationships.

Dysfunctional friendships are a phenomenon that moral theories ought to take seriously, and the value-promotion thesis explains what they are, why they're bad, and

\(^{84}\) In particularly odd value theories that give massive value to particular features, the case might have to be rigged carefully so that the value on the other side is more of the exact same kind of value. See Jeske and Fumerton, “Relatives and Relativism.”

\(^{85}\) There are complications here; see Cocking and Oakley, “Indirect Consequentialism, Friendship, and the Problem of Alienation”; Mason, “Can an Indirect Consequentialist Be a Real Friend?”
why we ought to get out of them. Relationships like these are no longer the kind of thing that is a part of the good life; they no longer contribute to the well-being of their participants. Insofar as there is no longer any value to be promoted, we have, according to the value-promotion thesis, no friendship-based reasons with respect to that relationship. If there are friendship-based reasons that are not reasons derived from value, those reasons would exist even if the relationship was no longer valuable. But this is to say that we have reasons to continue dysfunctional or abusive relationships that in some way or other no longer serve the needs of those in it, and I deny that we have such reasons. When we act well, we end those relationships precisely because they no longer are valuable.

It is important to emphasize that not only does the value promotion view say that friendship-based reasons are defeasible, it also says why. The notion of trade-offs is deeply embedded in our concept of value; good things are outweighed by better things and bad things outweighed by worse. The notion of tradeoffs is relevant to friendships precisely because friendship-based reasons are only reasons of value promotion. This explanation is simple, but no less powerful for it.

86 I say 'derived from value' because one might think they are derived from value, but not in a promotional way. I consider this kind of view later on.
Objections to the Value Promotion Thesis

The first objection I will consider is that, even combined with a nonconsequentialist overarching moral theory, the value-promotion thesis is objectionably revisionist. To put it another way, nonconsequentialists might see a substantial cost to adopting my view if doing so involved contradicting intuitions about specific cases. I will argue, however, that my view is not substantially revisionist in this way. I cannot perfectly address all intuitions people might have about friendship, but I will make a general argument that this account does not import any counter-intuitive results about friendship, traditionally associated with consequentialism.

The first thing to remember is that I have spent substantial portions of chapters 2 and 3 arguing that consequentialism, understood as adhering to the dispositional account of moral decision-making, does not suffer from friendship-based counterexamples to nearly the extent that has been understood. Because it is necessary to limit the realm of reasons in order to make decisions effectively under circumstances of limited resources, it would be out of place for a consequentialist to sacrifice a friend without the presence of obvious and dramatic countervailing reasons. Nonetheless, as discussed in chapter 3, one might think that under the dispositional account there still would be reasons for agents to develop the disposition to be less reliant on friends and more capable of acting well and staying stable without those friends. This result is clearly counterintuitive, but derives not from the structure of the account but from the connection to consequentialism. It is the demandingness of broad consequentialism that produces this implication, and when

87 See Jeske and Fumerton, “Relatives and Relativism” for a clear statement of these counterexamples.
we allow nonconsequentialist reasons to balance against the consequentialist reasons to maximize value by, for example, spending more time in soup kitchens, the pressure on agents to be more independent from their friends lessens. Note that, regardless of the status of friendship-based reasons, any hybrid view of the kind I have been calling nonconsequentialist has to cope with the demandingness worry somehow, perhaps by giving special weight to the pursuit of personal projects or other commitments. The larger point is that the degree to which a theory struggles against this issue depends on the resources it has available to handle the larger demandingness question and not on whether it accepts the value promotion thesis.

Nonetheless, one might still be worried that somehow counter-intuitive implications might follow from the focus on value promotion. Here's a few types of counter-intuitive implication about which one could worry.

There is a certain kind of apparently deficient relationship I mentioned above that requires more discussion. Consider the value-asymmetric relationship. This kind of relationship is one that is bad for one participant and good for the other. It seems that a relationship of this kind, where the benefit is so imbalanced, is a bad one, or at least that its benefit imbalance is a bad-making feature. It seems, then, that we might have relationships that do more good for one person than it does bad for the other. If we merely add up the values on either side, it comes out positive, but all the positive is on one person and all the negative is on the other. It seems as though, given that the net consequentialist assessment is positive, we need non-value promotion reasons to make sense of what's wrong with these relationships. Can the value promotion thesis really
criticize these relationships appropriately, given that they seem to produce more good than bad?

Part of the complexity of the question lies in the vague description of the relationships. Some kinds of relationships are apparently value-asymmetric in that one person is constantly taking care of and doing things for the other, and the other entirely relies on this fact to continue functioning; such a picture would be an archetypal codependent relationship. My inclination is to believe that such a case is not actually a value-asymmetric relationship, but instead one that is bad for both people in different ways. One person is forced to use all their emotional and physical resources supporting the other, where the other is in a position where the development of further resources is unlikely or impossible. The thing to say is that it would be best for both to leave the relationship, even at a short-term cost of physical well-being. This judgment is entirely consistent with the value promotion thesis; according to the value promotion thesis, such a relationship produces no reasons to keep it around and plausibly there are many reasons to break up the relationship.

Nonetheless, it seems as though it really is possible for there to be a relationship that is good for one person and bad for another, but these are more complex cases than the codependency described above. It seems in these cases that the loose way I've been speaking so far of a relationship being simply good is no longer apt. Friendships, when good, are always good for some person or other. To put it another way, relationships that are good for no one are not good. The value of friendship lies in its value to people,

88 I leave it open whether or not there are any types of value that are not good-for; I merely claim here that friendship is always good for someone, if good at all.
to how well their lives go. I've argued that it's instrumentally valuable, but it might also be intrinsically valuable, as a constitutive part of well-being. In that case, any friendship is going to have at least something going for it: namely, that it is part of what it is for one's life to go well. But some relationships, like the codependent one described previously, clearly won't even rise to the level of being counted as a friendship in the relevant way. Those aren't the really complicated ones in any case.

The really complicated ones are those where the clearheaded judgments of each person are, for one, that the costs of the relationship are just too high to justify the value they receive, whereas the other is perfectly happy with the advantages given the costs. The value promotion thesis does not itself determine what reasons there are in a case like this; it depends partially on the value theory that goes along with it, and my claims with respect to the right value theory are relatively limited. If friendship is not intrinsically valuable, then in this case there are some friendship-based reasons to keep and further the relationship that are bound up with one participant's well-being, and some reasons to break off the relationship that are bound up with the other's well-being. Both of these sets of reasons ought to be salient to both participants, since some are reasons of self-interest and some are reasons associated with a (putatively friendly) relationship. These cases are not going to be simple to judge from afar. The details of the cases and the importance of the various costs are going to play an important role in determining how we ought to act. However, these cases are intuitively complicated; this result is not a bad one. The apparent problem with value-asymmetric relationships is bound up with

89 See chapter 3.
90 Among the complications with this position I won't touch here is the necessity for a clear statement of what relationship it is that is partially constitutive of well-being.
intuitions about the codependency case, and once we're clear that such a relationship really is bad for both, the more complex situations lose their bite.

Here's a second kind of possible counterexample to the value promotion thesis, one using a very standard structure for counterexamples to consequentialist theories. Imagine a friendship therapist. Her job is precisely to meet with and teach groups of friends what they can do to feel and be closer to each other. She's very good at her job; her clients become more intimate friends with each other, gaining greater understanding of, and value from, their relationships. In fact, the change in her clients' relationships is more than the change in the therapist's relationships would be if she spent that time with her friends. We could even suppose that if she spent all her time at her job and entirely eschewed personal relationships of her own, that would produce more friendship-value in the world than her having a fulfilling personal life. If we cannot call on non-value promotion reasons to explain why the therapist gets to prioritize her own relationships, it seems as though we're going to have a hard time explaining why the therapist should spend any time with her friends. The value promotion thesis seems to produce the result that our friendship therapist, according only to friendship-based reasons, ought to maximize friendship value by spending all of her time with her clients and none with her actual friends.

If the value promotion thesis produced that result, I would take that result to be a serious problem. However, it does not. The value promotion thesis is about what kinds of reasons we have in virtue of being in our friendships. It says nothing about what reasons we have toward others' friendships. It is entirely consistent with the value
promotion thesis that the reasons we have toward promoting our friendships are special and do not generalize to others' friendships.

It's common ground between consequentialists and nonconsequentialists that we have reasons with respect to our friends that we do not have with respect to others. The value promotion thesis offers an explanation of that common ground that does not need to call on non-value promotion reasons. Whether we have reasons with respect to others' friendships is not common ground in the same way.

Nonetheless, this putative counterexample might still worry one. Here's an attempt at explicating that worry. The value promotion thesis says that we have friendship-based reasons in virtue of the value of that friendship. Plausibly, if our friendships have value, then others' friendships have value. Therefore, others' friendships produce reasons in virtue of their value.

First, note that this argument undercuts part of what was compelling about the original case in the first place. Part of what seems so bad about the therapist case is that there seems to be a special tension; it's precisely the friendship-based reasons that are telling her to ignore her friends. But this explication makes it clear that her friendship-based reasons, the reasons she has with respect to her own friends, are still pushing her to spend time with them. It's just that there are other external reasons that weigh against those reasons. Second, note that this argument depends on a univocal notion of value. People who adopt agent-relative notions of value can plausibly deny the move since our friendships will have value-for-us and others' friendships will have value-for-them.\footnote{There are different ways of understanding the notion of agent-relative reasons, but I follow Philip Pettit, “Universality Without Utilitarianism,” \textit{Mind} 72, no. 381 (1987), doi:10.1093/mind/XCVI.381.74 in thinking that agent-relative reasons are reasons that cannot be fully specified without reference to the person for whom it is a reason. Agent-relative value is just value that produces only agent-relative}
One might reasonably deny the plausibility of agent-relative value. If you tie the value promotion thesis to a commitment to the existence of only agent-neutral value and to the plausible view that all value produces reasons to promote it, then we have a consequentialism of friendship that follows the structure of global consequentialism and seems to fall prey to its weaknesses.

But if we have now produced a consequentialism of friendship, we have access to the resources consequentialists use to respond to such general criticisms. In particular, I don't think things work out the way they are described above. What would actually maximize friendship value? It seems implausible that the therapist could be the kind of person who really does help other people with their personal relationships while having none of her own. One would think that a person who could empathize enough to identify what could bring a relationship closer would need more personal experience and actual relationships on which to draw. Perhaps however, the opponent can just respond by saying “Sure, things could happen that way, but I'm describing them this way.” Perhaps it is conceivable that a therapist could help others with their relationships even though she spends no time on hers, and maybe conceivable is enough.

However, there's a second response available. As I argued in chapter 3, friendship is instrumentally valuable in providing the stability necessary to make the sacrifices consequentialism requires of us. A very similar argument can be made here. The picture is now that the time the therapist would usually spend with her friends is instead spent working. Given how much time people usually spend socializing, we are now imagining reasons of value promotion. The contrast is agent-neutral reasons, which are all reasons that are not agent-relative.

92 In fact, I am inclined to go this route, but my reasons for doing so are unrelated to the value promotion thesis.
someone working many, many hours a week, and she is doing so without any substantial social support network. It is too far, I think, to imagine that she could keep up that pace indefinitely. Unless she is a saint or an alien, she needs, just like the rest of us, a certain level of social interaction and support. If she really is a saint or an alien, then I don't feel too bad about the judgment that she should sacrifice her own relationships. Different standards apply.

There is a second objection to the value promotion thesis. Even if the reasons to promote friendship are outweighed, even if when all things are totaled up one ought to act against a friendship, something important has gone wrong when we do act against the friendship. Perhaps we ought to feel regret or guilt, or make reparations, even in the case where, all things considered, we really morally ought to act against the friendship. It looks as though the value promotion thesis can't explain this moral remainder.

The easy task is to explain why we ought to feel regret or guilt when we act against a friendship. Reasons to feel regret or guilt are not reasons to act, and the value promotion thesis is entirely about reasons to act. That means a wide variety of accounts of why we ought to feel regret or guilt are consistent with the value promotion thesis.

Nonetheless, something can be said. The value promotion thesis implies that we have a significant reason to act for our friends, even when, on balance, we ought not to. That means there is value in the world that we could have that we are instead abandoning—for good reason, in this case, but abandoning nonetheless. Feeling regret when we fail our friends makes sense because there is an important reason that, due to circumstance, we should act against. Imagine the prudential case, a paradigmatic case of reasons only
of value promotion: one has a choice of two jobs, one with a better salary, the other with better medical benefits. Whichever one chooses, it is natural to imagine sometimes thinking wistfully of the advantages of the other. “I know I get better medical care this way,” one might think, “but that extra spending money would really be nice about now.” One might think this even if one still agreed with the decision to give up that extra spending money. Non-value promotion reasons are then unnecessary to explain why we should feel regret or guilt in these cases.

Explaining why we should make it up to our friends is more difficult, partially because it depends on the details of the case. One reason we might have to make up a failure of ours to a friend is that she is hurt by our failure and the possible attitudes toward her it represents. In that case, we are in a specifically good situation to make her feel better; our obvious regret and actions to try to make it up help to reinforce that our failure in this instance is not indicative of a general attitude toward her. This kind of action will tend to support the friendship itself and the value it provides, not just the welfare of the friend.

The case that seems harder is the case where our friend is hurt by our actions, but nothing we can do will make them feel better about it. I feel the pull of the thought that we still should do what we can, and the value promotion thesis has something to say about the case when we really should make reparations in the case where our making reparations to our friend won't in fact help. The point is simple: it might be that we can't make the friend feel better—can't make them feel less bad about the actions in question. But we might nonetheless be able to make them feel better about the relationship. It
might be that nothing one can do can change a friend's mind about whether the actions in question were the right thing to do, but that trying will make them feel better about the relationship. Perhaps nothing can replace what is lost, but we can make clear to our friends that we regret the loss as well, as in the prudential case.

Even if that does not seem like the right kind of case, I can explain why we have the intuition that we should make reparations.

Consider another kind of case. Imagine that we fail our friend but she is totally unaffected by it; she completely understands the situation and she laughs it off without any ill feelings whatsoever. It does not seem to me that we need to make reparations in this case; they would seem unnecessary and out of place. The difference between this case and the case where the friend is hurt but nothing we can do will help is that in one, there is a bad-making feature of the world that ought to be particularly relevant to us: a hurt friend. There is no hurt friend, no equivalent feature of the world to draw the eye in the other.

We are moved to make it up to our hurt friend because they're hurt, and we care about them. To be clear, this is a psychological claim about how we are moved, not about what the normative reasons are. As a result, it is entirely consistent with the value promotion thesis. Any psychological facts at all are consistent with the purely normative claims the value promotion thesis makes.
Rivals to the Value Promotion Thesis

Consider other possible theories of friendship-based reasons. I take one possible such rival to be the commitment view of friendship. On this view, by entering into a relationship we have thereby made an ongoing commitment to our friend to behave in the various friendly ways. What kind of commitment?

Well, that's the rub. I claim that there is no standard model for the kind of commitment we have in friendships that is not functionally identical to the value-promotion thesis.\(^93\) One kind of model we might consider is the promise model. Promises, however, have specific success and failure conditions; we can keep or break a promise. Promises are made at a particular time and hold force until they are released or fulfilled. If friendships were open-ended promises that involved doing friendly things, then we should not end friendships except by more or less explicit mutual agreement. The example of the dysfunctional relationship seems relevant here; if one member realizes that no good is coming from a friendship, they ought to end it and the promissory picture cannot explain or justify that action. Moreover, friendships come in degrees along a spectrum; we don't cross thresholds that have anything like explicit requirements on them, and explicit requirements are generally alien to friendships. The point of promises has much to do with their explicitness and the expectations you create as a result; this is entirely the wrong feel for friendships. Friendships are much looser, with neither specific requirements nor beginning and endpoints. Explaining friendships on the

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\(^{93}\) The discussion of promising and gratitude that follows is inspired by and includes some of the discussion in Mark Bernstein, “Friends without Favoritism,” *The Journal of Value Inquiry* 41, no. 1 (September 26, 2007): 62–65, doi:10.1007/s10790-007-9061-0.
promising model would involve as many differences as similarities.

Perhaps something less formal is called for, then, something like gratitude. Gratitude is out of place first because it's unidirectional. One is grateful to another because of the good turn one was done. Friendships need not start with either person having done the other a good turn, and if a friendship did start that way it would not imply that one person was more of a friend than the other. Moreover, gratitude does not imply any future mutual obligation; if a stranger changes your tire, you can give a heartfelt thanks and the stranger is not required to reciprocate in any specific way. If friendship were something like mutual gratitude, it might be because each person is continually doing good things for the other, and thereby somehow accruing continual owed gratitude from the other. But the acts of a friend are not owed the way gratitude is; part of its appeal and virtue is that it is granted freely, that you chose each other and not merely act because you are required to. To the degree that model makes sense, it very closely resembles the picture I present in chapter 2 of friendship as slowly developing over time as each person does more friendly things for the other, and the differences between that model and the gratitude model seem to tell against the gratitude model.

If it's not promising, or anything more formal than that, like contract, and it's not gratitude, there's a serious question as to what kind of commitment it is. In an important way, of course, friendship is a commitment to take seriously our friends' interests and act on their behalf, but the value-promotion thesis can include and accept all of that. The explicit, limited, and unidirectional nature of most specific models of commitment make them unsuited for helping to explain friendship. If friendship is a commitment, not only
is it a sui generis one, I take myself to have explained what kind of commitment it is, and its impact on what we ought to do with respect to our friends can be captured in the value-promotion thesis.

Consider a separate view, recently propounded by Niko Kolodny. According to this view, the reasons we have in virtue of being friends are basic. By “basic,” Kolodny means that they are reasons that cannot be reduced to instances of a more general normative principle that does not itself explicitly involve partiality. In particular, Kolodny defends an account of reasons of partiality based on what he calls “resonance,” by analogy with reasons for reactive emotions. However, my arguments here are sufficiently general that they deal with any account that makes reasons of friendship basic in Kolodny's sense, and possibly any nonreductive account, so I do not specifically address his nonetheless-interesting version.

In order to show that my account is superior to the basic account, of which Kolodny's account is an example, I will do two things. I will first consider Kolodny's arguments against reductionism and second, explore the specific advantages the value-promotion thesis has over basic accounts. One note: Kolodny's account is a general one of all reasons to be partial, but part of that means that it is an account of reasons to be partial to one's friends, and reasons to be partial to one's friends are among the reasons the value-promotion thesis explains, and so Kolodny's basic account of reasons of partiality and the value-promotion thesis are rivals in that they give different explanations.

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95 Kolodny's notion of basicness is slightly more complicated than this in that it also includes not depending on a transmission principle, but since I am defending perhaps the most famous form of reductionism, the details are irrelevant here.
for some of the same phenomena. I consider the fact that the value-promotion thesis explains other reasons when I consider advantages the value-promotion thesis has over basic accounts.

Kolodny makes three arguments against reductionist accounts: they don't explain why we have reasons of partiality to the people we do, that they do not offer the kinds of reasons to which we in fact respond in the real world, and they do not explain partial emotion.96

While some reductive accounts may have problems with Kolodny's arguments, the value-promotion thesis does not. First, the value-promotion thesis does explain (at least) why we ought to be partial to friends. Kolodny's first example is that we might not be particularly well-suited to promoting the welfare of our friends compared to how well strangers can promote our friends' welfare. Consider, Kolodny says, a senile mother. “If my mother became senile, it might not matter to her whether I or a stranger cared for her, and it might be clear enough to a stranger what her care required.”97 Similarly, Kolodny says, we might be just as good at promoting strangers' welfare as we are at promoting our friends' welfare: “Some children are much worse off materially than my daughter, and a deranged stalker might be no less emotionally vulnerable to me than my wife.”98 99

My answer to these arguments is the same. The value-promotion thesis says that not only does the welfare of our friends matter, but that the relationship we have with our friends matters. The relationship I have to a senile friend might still be important to me

97 Ibid., 173.
98 Ibid.
99 Kolodny uses examples of relatives in both cases, but I take it we can easily substitute friends for the relatives and get similar arguments.
and might still contribute effectively to my life even if it no longer contributes to my friend's. I am in a special place to promote the relationship between myself and a friend in a way that I am not with respect to a deranged stalker. In fact, it's quite possible that nothing I can do with respect to a deranged stalker will help that relationship turn into a positive for both people; the relationship between stalker and victim seems exactly an example of the kind of dysfunctional relationship that my theory argues we should end. Kolodny does not realize that the relationship itself can be valuable, not merely the welfare of the people involved, and the value of the relationship justifies acting partially toward our friends. Kolodny's nonreductive reasons are unnecessary.

The other two arguments Kolodny offers both concern the psychology of friendship. How does a reductionist account provide the type of reasons we in fact are responding to? “When moved to do something for my daughter or my wife, for example, it would be oddly estranged to view her claim on me as merely that of a stranger whose well-being I could promote, or whose expectations I have raised.”\textsuperscript{100} It's important to distinguish the value promotion thesis from any account of how it is we psychologically respond to the reasons of friendship.\textsuperscript{101} Because the value promotion thesis is a claim only about what reasons there are, it does not require that we display any attitude that demonstrates estrangement. It is, for example, entirely consistent with the value promotion thesis that when one is moved to do something for his daughter that he is focused simply on the feature of the world that she is his daughter. Nothing in the value promotion thesis requires that the agent view acting for a daughter as similar to acting for

\textsuperscript{100}Kolodny, “Which Relationships Justify Partiality?,” 174.
\textsuperscript{101}Previously, of course, I do offer such an account specifically for consequentialists, and as a result nothing here depends on that account.
a stranger, and in fact the value promotion thesis specifies that the agent has a reason to act well toward his daughter that he does not have to act toward a stranger: namely, the value of the relationship between the agent and his daughter.

There is a similar answer to Kolodny's last question. How can a reductionist account explain our reasons to feel partial emotion? This is not a question about how we ought to act. This is a question about how we ought to feel, or about what kind of emotionally-responsive person we ought to be. The consequentialist has many resources to accommodate these kinds of questions; see the previous chapters for an example of one developed theory. But which precise account you like is no part of the value promotion thesis, which is entirely about the reasons we have to act partially toward our friends.

The value promotion thesis is not trying to answer this question, but there are answers to this question that are consistent with the value promotion thesis.

The value-promotion thesis has two major advantages over basic accounts. The first is that the value-promotion thesis is simpler than basic accounts. The last is that the value-promotion thesis answers more questions than a basic account.

Much of what there is to be said about the advantages of simplicity have already been said. Basic accounts explicitly either need a specific partiality principle or they need an account of how we can have reasons without more general principles. Kolodny's resonance account is an example of the second method, but both suffer from multiplying moral machinery. The value-promotion thesis simply does not need any additional mechanisms for producing reasons, whether principles or otherwise; we already believe that consequences matter, so we need not add even a single moral principle to our moral
world. We need merely to apply an existing principle in a sophisticated fashion.  

The other advantage of the value-promotion thesis over basic accounts is related to simplicity and explanation. The value-promotion account simply answers more questions than a basic account does. Kolodny is very clear that his goal is not to justify why we are partial at all, but to justify who we should be partial to. He puts it in terms of the big list of partiality: we know, says he, that we ought to be partial to some.  

The question is simply whom we ought to be partial to. That is certainly a serious question, and it is one to which the value-promotion thesis provides a limited answer. We ought to be partial (sometimes) to those with whom we have serious friendships that add to our welfare. But the value-promotion thesis, as can be seen from my discussion of defeasibility, also tells us when we ought not to be partial to those people, and offers an explanation of why we ought not to be partial to them. A basic theory is going to have much more trouble with this issue because it is unclear how to weigh reasons that arise from new moral mechanisms, whereas weighing reasons of value is already well understood. At minimum, this is a request for more explanation: a basic account needs more resources to explain these further questions. The problem is that the more resources the basic account needs, the simpler the value-promotion thesis is in comparison. The value-promotion thesis comes with all of this explanation in one tidy package.

But, of course, there is more yet the value-promotion thesis can offer. Kolodny is clear that his goal is not to justify why we should be partial at all; instead, he merely

\[\text{See above for some reasons why we ought to care about this kind of simplicity.}\]


\[\text{One might wonder about whether partiality to others besides friends is justified, and Kolodny’s account provides a general answer to that question. I do not here defend a value-based account of any kind of partiality but that to friends, though I do note that on my account, friendship encompasses a very wide range of relationships.}\]
wants to justify why we ought to be partial to some people and not others. But the value-promotion thesis *does* explain why we ought to be partial at all: doing so makes our lives better. The package is expansive.

I do want to address a broader kind of view of which Kolodny's may be an example. Consider a value pluralism according to which there is a wide range of values and a wide range of possible responses to value. This view might hold that friendship holds value, but that the appropriate response to its value is not promotion, but respect, even though the response to some kinds of value is promotion.105

To respond to this kind of view, I need to be careful about several distinctions. One is the difference between the value of well-being and other kinds of value. As I've argued in chapter 3, friendships have at least instrumental value in that it tends to make people better off. In addition, well-being is perhaps the most plausible example of a value the appropriate response to which is promotion.106 It would be particularly odd if the value pluralist thought friendship was purely a matter of well-being and nonetheless it was a kind of value that ought to be respected instead of promoted. Consider another value pluralist rival to the value promotion thesis, on the other hand, that holds that friendship is, in addition to its relationship to well-being, of intrinsic value in a way that does not contribute to well-being but is instead a free-standing good.

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105Exactly what is meant by “respect” here is a matter of some dispute even amongst theorists who think some types of value do demand respect instead of promotion. It is enough for my purposes that “respect” is here a generic term for a variety of responses one might have to friendship; perhaps respecting friendship means deferring to the friend, as in Dean Cocking and Jeanette Kennett, “Friendship and Moral Danger,” *The Journal of Philosophy* 97, no. 5 (2000): 278–96, doi:10.2307/2678396. For more general discussion about respecting versus promoting value, see Philip Pettit, “Consequentialism and Respect for Persons,” *Ethics* 100, no. 1 (1989): 116–26; McNaughton and Rawling, “Honoring and Promoting Values.”
106McNaughton and Rawling, “Honoring and Promoting Values” straightforwardly claim that there is no relevant notion of respecting, instead of promoting, well-being, though they talk of happiness instead.
I wonder, in the end, about the plausibility of such a view. The first thing to say is that it would seem odd to say that friendship would be good even if there were no people it was good for. I can easily imagine a view on which friendship is an intrinsic part of well-being—I tend that way myself—but on that view the appropriate response, as above, seems to be promotion. But even if we grant the implausible premise that friendships can be good even if they're good for nobody, there are problems.

Consider one obvious way of understanding respecting friendship in contrast to promoting it. On this picture, the point isn't to make as many and as good friendships as we can, but instead to exhibit the important features of friendship. In particular, consider Cocking and Kennett's view, on which we have friendship-based reasons to exhibit a “special receptivity of friends to each other's direction and interpretation.”107 On their view, in at least some cases, friendship calls on us to accede to our friends' requests, even against the other reasons we have. The extended example they use is of Carl asking his friend Dave to bury a body; they claim that the friendship-based reasons in that situation call for Dave to help Carl with his grisly task despite other reasons Dave might have, and that to the degree that Dave fulfills Carl's request, Dave is a—perhaps especially—good friend. Dave respects Carl's friendship not by promoting the friendship, but by doing what Carl asks of him, regardless of what it is.108

The major issue with this way of understanding friendship-based reasons is that assessments of trade-offs are going to become difficult. Trade-offs in the realm of value

107Cocking and Kennett, “Friendship and Moral Danger,” 293. I note that for Cocking and Kennett, friendship-based reasons are not necessarily moral reasons, but I consider here a closely related view on which all the relevant reasons are moral reasons, or at least can be relevantly compared to moral reasons.
108Ibid., 279–280.
promotion are easy; with some exceptions, we can compare various kinds of value in a straightforward way. We do it constantly, as when we decide whether to cook and eat a nice dinner or pick up takeout to have time for a movie. But what strength do our reasons to be specially receptive to our friends' direction have? Here are two answers, and why neither of them work.

The first is the easier one to discard. It is the thought that, for at least a sufficiently intimate friendship, our reasons to respect friendship and follow our friends' lead is virtually absolute. There can be negotiation, of course, as we decide on Asian versus Mediterranean, but we must follow through on considered requests. I take it this result flies in the face of the way most of us live our lives; we are entitled and in some cases required to—regretfully—deny some requests our friends make of us. Any view that says we must drop our closest personal projects in order to help a friend move has just gotten the data wrong.

But the more plausible variation, and the view that I think Cocking and Kennett indeed adopt\textsuperscript{109}, is that the strength of the reason to be receptive is not absolute but instead varies with the intimacy of the friendship and similar considerations. Closer friendships create stronger reasons and actions more important to the friend create stronger reasons. But now this view is posed with another problem. We can see how these friendship-based reasons compare to each other pretty effectively in the way described, but it is more puzzling why they have the strength they do relative to other kinds of reasons. But the value promotion thesis provides a clear answer. They have the

\textsuperscript{109}The particular example they use, of Carl, Dave and the body, supports the thought that they don't think the reason is always absolute.
strength they do because they involve promoting a certain kind of value to a certain
degree, and that's the kind of comparison we are used to making. The value promotion
thesis provides a principled justification for the strength of the friendship-based reasons.

To be clear, we do have reason to be specially receptive to our friends. Burying
the body when they ask when we wouldn't, barring their request, bury the body sustains
and furthers the friendship we have, and so their request gives us special reason another's
request would not. I imagine few things would further a friendship more, in fact, than
collectively getting one friend out of trouble by burying a body. Cocking and Kennett
and I agree on the first-order normative facts about what we should do; we simply
disagree on where those facts come from, and my theory has more explanatory power
than theirs.

Relatedly, we might understand the pluralist as, instead of respecting the value of
friendship, really promoting the value of friendship, just in an agent-relative rather than
agent-neutral way. On this picture, we act well by picking the option with the best
outcome, but what counts as the best outcome varies by person. Instead of having one
objectively most valuable outcome, there is a most-valuable-for-me outcome associated
with each person. If that's the best way of understanding the view, and this way really is
distinct from the respecting-value view, then there is no disagreement. Someone who
thinks that all friendship-based reasons are reasons of agent-relative value promotion
thereby thinks that all friendship-based reasons are reasons of value promotion, and so
endorses the value promotion thesis. The value promotion thesis rules out that there are
friendship-based agent-relative reasons that are not reasons of value promotion. I expect
many of my arguments in this chapter will work to rule out that case.

The end is simple. Not only does consequentialism have no deep problem with friendship, but the best moral approach to friendship borrows substantially from consequentialism, and anyone who takes consequences as morally relevant needs to take that claim seriously.
Bibliography


