



Understanding ethics

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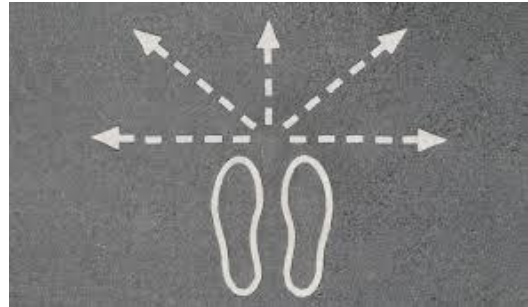
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Agenda

- Ethics defined
- Ethical Paradigms/Principles
- Ethical Fitness Model
- Challenges to Ethical Thinking
- Resources



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Learning Objectives

After this session, participants will be able to:

1. Define ethics
2. Explain the four ethical paradigms
3. Apply the ethical fitness model to a real world scenario
4. Provide examples of challenges to ethical thinking in organizations

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Ethics Defined

Critical components:

- Between people and other people and living creatures
- Minimize harm, maximize good



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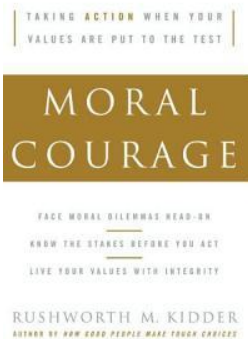
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Ethics Defined

Common Global Values

Justice	Loyalty
Honesty	Compassion
Respect	Altruism
Freedom	Fairness

The only difference is in ranking of importance



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Ethical examples


- Going beyond what is obligatory to improve the lives of others – generous, charitable
- Relating to people in ethically appropriate ways – polite, courteous
- Relating to people in commendable ways – friendly, kind
- Acting out of concern to behave ethically – honorable, scrupulous
- Dealing with people objectively – impartial, equitable, fair
- Being forthright and honest – truthful, trustworthy
- Being willing to forgive to alleviate suffering – absolve, merciful
- Acting out of concern for the feelings of others – sympathetic, considerate

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Ethical Paradigms

Moral Choices versus Ethical Dilemmas

Value	Value	Right versus wrong	Right versus right	Ethical Dilemma
Honesty	Dishonesty	X		No
Fairness	Unfairness	X		No
Four Dilemma Paradigms: when two values collide in one of the following ways:				
Truth	Loyalty		X	Yes
Individual	Community		X	Yes
Short term	Long term		X	Yes
Justice	Mercy		X	Yes

Help us get to the  of the matter
Common patterns in business, policy, strategy decisions

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Ethical (Resolution) Principles

- Ends – teleological - consequentialism, utilitarianism – greatest good for greatest number in the end
- Rules – deontological – duty, obligation (justice)
- Care – Golden rule, compassion (mercy)



<https://ethicaldecisions.net/how-to-analyze-an-ethical-dilemma/>

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Ethical Fitness Model

Nine step process for developing a reasoned course of action

1. Who are the actor(s)?
2. What are the facts?
3. Is this a moral issue (right versus wrong) or an ethical dilemma?
4. If right versus right, assign one or more of the four dilemma paradigms
5. Apply resolution principles (ends, rules, care)
6. Identify alternative courses of action
7. Does a trilemma or third option exist?
8. Make the decision
9. Reflect on the decision

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Bill is the chief financial officer of a small liberal arts college that is under economic pressures. Among the small staff of administrators with whom he worked closely was Maude, a single woman in the comptroller's office whose loyalty to the school knew no bounds.

In twenty years of service, she had held a number of different positions. Yet she never quite proved suited to any of them. Bighearted with her colleagues and careful in her tasks, she was nevertheless a slow, deliberate worker, unable to grasp the newer technologies and easily flustered by changes in routine. Bill had several conversations with her about her work, each ending in tears on her part.

He knew that six years away from retirement, she had little accumulated savings and no family. Her life seemed completely wrapped up in the school. Bill was also aware, however, that with increasing costs and a leveling of enrollments, he had to make adjustments to his staff. It was clear to all involved that Maude's work could be nearly eliminated by new computer equipment. It was also clear that there was no obvious position into which she could be moved, and that her salary was a significant drain on the budget.

Case source: http://faculty.polytechnic.org/gfeldmeth/27_dilemmas

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Ethical Fitness Model

Who are the actors?

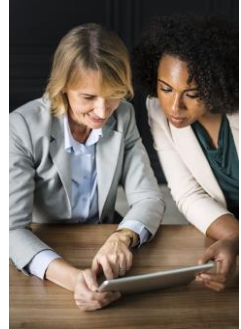
What are the facts?

Is this a moral issue (right versus wrong) or an ethical dilemma?

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Loyal employee/Budget cuts

- Actors:
 - Maude
 - Bill, College Trustees
 - Maude's Colleagues
- Facts
 - Maude is loyal, somewhat productive, close to retirement
 - Her job could be eliminated and replaced with technology
 - The college has budget pressures
- Moral issue – right versus wrong?



<https://www.pxfuel.com/en/free-photo-49010>

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Ethical Fitness Model

If right versus right, assign one or more of the four dilemma paradigms

Apply resolution principles (ends, rules, care)

Identify alternative courses of action

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Loyal employee/Budget cuts

Ethical dilemma paradigms (right versus right)

- Individual versus Community
 - Maude's needs versus college's budget needs
- Short-term versus Long-term
 - Can Bill keep her for 6 more years? What if it was 2 years? Or 10 years?
- Justice versus Mercy
 - Are there HR policies that require performance evaluations, with required courses of action? Is there room to make exceptions?
- Truth versus Loyalty
 - Is there an expectation that loyal employees are given the benefit of the doubt?



<https://www.flickr.com/photos/59937401@N07/5857654560>

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Loyal employee/Budget cuts

Resolution principles

- Ends (most good for most people)
 - Maude is one person, the college serves many people, including its own employees
 - Will firing Maude damage morale? Or free up budgets to give others deserved raises?
- Rules (Justice)
 - Is Bill treating Maude as he would treat all his employees?
 - Is he following the written guidance/organizational norms?
- Care (Mercy)
 - Is Maude's loyalty valuable to the organization?
 - Will losing her job cause her irreparable harm?

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Possible courses of action



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Ethical Fitness Model

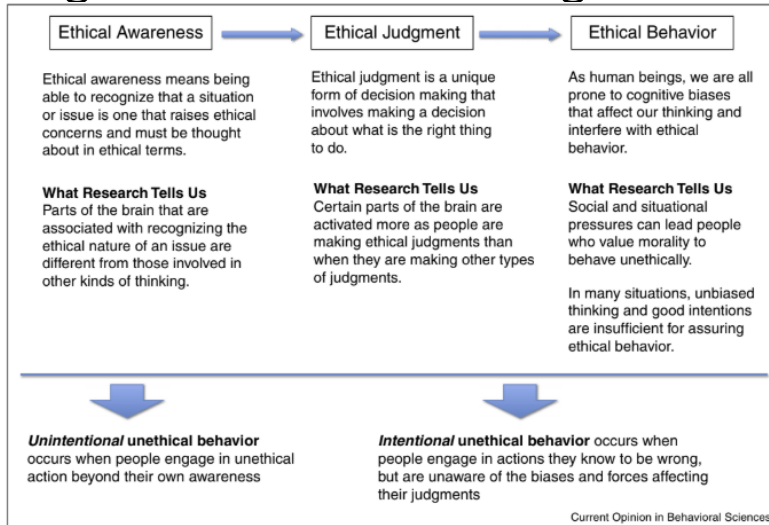
Does a trilemma or third option exist?

Make the decision

Reflect on the decision

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Challenges to Ethical Thinking



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Challenges: Moral Myopia

- Unintentional unethical behavior – can't even see the ethical issue.
- Intentional unethical behavior – use rationalization to minimize true nature
 - Individual – cheating on expense report
 - Organizational – enforcing laws that harm innocent people
 - Societal – reinforcing stereotypes (wife is the boss)

1 – Legality is not a sufficient test
 2 - Trusted advisors OUTSIDE of the organization

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Challenges: Obedience to Authority

Special form of Rationalization – act to please others

- Becomes more intense over time
- Power dynamics
- Extreme – unintentional unethical behavior (unaware)
 - Fails to meet ethical integrity, fairmindedness



1. Be on the lookout for ethical issues
2. Have a questioning mind
3. Develop ethical integrity, fairmindedness, courage

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Challenges: Ethical Fading

Unintentional unethical behavior

- We react **emotionally**, before thinking through **reasonably**.
- Use rationalizations to explain reason for past behavior
- Morally disengage when it serves our needs (clothing made by child labor)

1. Be vigilant – look out for ethical issues
2. Develop ethical traits – courage, integrity, perseverance

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Recap

1. Define ethics
2. Explain the four ethical paradigms
3. Apply the ethical fitness model to a real world scenario
4. Provide examples of challenges to ethical thinking in organizations



<https://www.maxpixel.net/Humanity-Justice-Arrow-Credibility-Morality-Ethics-2110610>

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<https://www.maxpixel.net/Thank-Calligraphy-Sign-Pen-Symbol-Thanks-You-2658504>

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Resources

- Edgar, P. 2002. Resolving Ethical Dilemmas: Applying the Institute for Global Ethics' Ethical Fitness' Model to Occupational and Environmental Health Practice Issues, *AAOHN Journal*, 50(1) 40-7.
- Giving Voice to Values: Ethics Unwrapped, <https://ethicsunwrapped.utexas.edu/series/giving-voice-to-values>
- Jones, T. 1991. Ethical decision making by individuals in organizations: An issue-contingent model. *Academy of Management Review*, 16(2) 231-48.
- Kidder, R.M. 2005. *Moral Courage*, Harper Collins.