

# ETHICAL DILEMMAS

Dealing with Ethics in the Scouting Context

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## What is Ethics?

- Ethics (from Greek *ethos*)
  - The study of how people ought to live: "Oughtness"
  - Discipline that studies the moral life to provide guidance and perspective for making decisions and forming character.
  - A systematic study of right and wrong, good and bad, justice and injustice, virtue and vice, with a view toward application to our lives.
  - Christian and Biblical Ethics

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## What is Morality?

- Morality (from latin *mos, moris*)
  - Concerned with what people actually do—the practices and beliefs by which people live.
  - Good and right actions people actually display in the midst of vocations, families, churches, communities, cultures, societies, and personal interactions (Hollinger).

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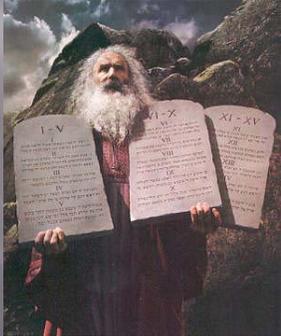
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## Ten Commandments



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## Real Ten Commandments

1. 1. I am the Lord thy God...No other gods before me.
2. No graven image
3. 2. Don't take Lord's name in vain.
4. 3. Remember the sabbath day.
5. 4. Honor thy father and thy mother.
6. 5. Thou shalt not kill.
7. 6. Thou shalt not commit adultery.
8. 7. Thou shalt not steal.
9. 8. Thou shalt not bear false witness.
10. 9. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife.
10. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods.

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## Boy Scout Law

- 1. **TRUSTWORTHY**
  - A Scout tells the truth. He keeps his promises. Honesty is part of his code of conduct. People can depend on him.
- 2. **LOYAL**
  - A Scout is true to his family, Scout leaders, friends, school, and nation.
- 3. **HELPFUL**
  - A Scout is concerned about other people. He does things willingly for others without pay or reward.
- 4. **FRIENDLY**
  - A Scout is a friend to all. He is a brother to other Scouts. He seeks to understand others. He respects those with ideas and opinions other than his own.
- 5. **COURTEOUS**
  - A Scout is polite to everyone regardless of age or position. He knows good manners make it easier for people to get along together.
- 6. **KIND**
  - A Scout understands there is strength in being gentle. He treats others as he wants to be treated. He does not hurt or kill harmless things without reason.
- 7. **OBEDIENT**
  - A Scout follows the rules of his family, school, and troop. He obeys the laws of his community and country. If he thinks these rules and laws are unfair, he tries to have them changed in an orderly manner rather than disobey them.
- 8. **CHEERFUL**
  - A Scout looks for the bright side of things. He cheerfully does tasks that come his way. He tries to make others happy.
- 9. **THRIFTY**
  - A Scout works to pay his way and to help others. He saves for unforeseen needs. He protects and conserves natural resources. He carefully uses time and property.
- 10. **BRAVE**
  - A Scout can face danger even if he is afraid. He has the courage to stand for what he thinks is right even if others laugh at or threaten him.
- 11. **CLEAN**
  - A Scout keeps his body and mind fit and clean. He goes around with those who believe in living by these same ideals. He helps keep his home and community clean.
- 12. **REVERENT**
  - A Scout is reverent toward God. He is faithful in his religious duties. He respects the beliefs of others.

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### What Society Expects

**Some of Ten Commandments:**  
 Thou shalt not kill. (nor murder, nor harm)  
 Thou shalt not steal. (nor envy, nor covet)  
 (but envy and coveting are basis of advertising)  
 Thou shalt not bear false witness.  
 (nor lie, nor gossip)

**With a little bit of scouting thrown in:**  
 TRUSTWORTHY, LOYAL, HELPFUL, FRIENDLY,  
 COURTEOUS, KIND, OBEDIENT, CHEERFUL

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### Delineating Important Terms

- ❑ **Conduct:** the doing of a moral or ethical act
- ❑ **Character:** "basic moral orientation that gives unity, definition, and direction to our lives by forming our habits and intentions into meaningful and predictable patterns that have been determined by our dominant convictions" (W. Willimon)
- ❑ **Values:** ideals and beliefs that move us to action, to particular kinds of behavior and lifestyles. Better used as verb.
- ❑ **Virtues:** habits or inner dispositions to perform acts considered morally and theologically excellent; character traits deemed morally praiseworthy
- ❑ **Integrity:** correspondence between belief and deed; the coherence and consistence of convictions to actions.
- ❑ **Worldview:** basic and fundamental attitude toward and understanding of ultimate reality

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### 4 Key Terms that Define Ethical Acts

- ❑ **Motive:** the emotion or motivational factor which drives someone to act in a situation
- ❑ **Means:** the method one goes about achieving his or her end
- ❑ **End:** the desired result of an act
- ❑ **Consequences:** what actually happens as a result of an act.

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### What Makes an Act, Decision, or Person Ethical or Moral?

- There must be a choice that has bearings on right or wrong, good or bad, fit or unfit.
- A real choice requires freedom of the will.
- Three Challenges to Freedom
  - Sociological Determinism
  - Genetic Determinism
  - Theological Determinism

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### What is an ethical dilemma?

A situation in which an individual feels compelled to make a choice between two or more actions that he or she can reasonably and morally justify, or when evidence or an arguments are inconclusive, is called an ethical dilemma (Beauchamp&Childress,2001;McConnell,2002).

One action must be chosen because performing both actions would be impossible.

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### When they arise.

Dilemmas may arise from conflicts between any variety of people. They are usually described in terms of right or wrong, duty or obligation, rights or responsibilities, and good or bad. Ethical dilemmas are commonly identified by the question, "What should be done?"

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## Types

Most moral dilemmas can be identified according to the following classifications:

- ▣ Dilemmas of Beneficence-dilemma that involve deciding what is good as opposed to what its harmful.
- ▣ Dilemmas of autonomy- those that involve deciding what course of action maximize the person's right of self determination.
- ▣ Dilemmas of justice- dilemmas that involve dividing limited health care resources fairly

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## Types

- ▣ Dilemmas of fidelity- those that are involve honoring promises
- ▣ Dilemmas of nonmaleficence- dilemmas that involve the avoidance of harm
- ▣ Dilemmas of confidentiality- those that involve respecting privileged information
- ▣ Dilemmas of veracity- dilemmas that involve telling or concealing the truth

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## Making Ethical Decisions

- ▣ Responsible ethical reasoning is rational and systematic. It should be based on ethical principles and codes rather than on emotions, intuition, fixed policies, or precedent.

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### Types of Decisions

- ▣ Active decisions-ethical decisions and moral judgments that lead directly to actions and bring about changes
  
- ▣ Passive decisions- decisions that deny , delay, or avoid action and maintain the status quo by denying or shifting responsibility to avoid changes

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### Type of Decisions

- Programmed decisions- decisions that use precedents, established guidelines, procedures, and rules to resolve anticipated, routine, expected types of moral dilemmas
  
- Non-programmed decisions- decisions that require a unique response to complex and unexpected moral dilemmas.

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### The Framework Overview

- ▣ Step One: Describe the problem
- ▣ Step Two: Determine whether there is an ethical issue or an ethical dilemma
- ▣ Step Three: Identify and rank the key values and principles
- ▣ Step Four: Gather your information
- ▣ Step Five: Determine the options

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### The Framework, continued

- ❑ Step Six: Select a course of action
- ❑ Step Seven: Put your plan into action.
- ❑ Step Eight: Evaluate the results

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### Step One: Describe the Problem

- ❑ Ethical problems are always embedded in a context.
- ❑ Circumstances impact upon the problem definition (for whom does the problem exist? What is the setting?)

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### Step Two: Determine Whether There Is an Ethical Dilemma

- ❑ "Dilemma" - greek origin  
di- two  
limos-horns,  
"Two horned"

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### Step Two: Determine Whether There Is an Ethical Dilemma

- ❑ X versus Y
- ❑ \_\_\_\_ versus \_\_\_\_
- ❑ "good" versus "bad" options
- ❑ "good" versus "good" options
- ❑ "bad" versus "bad" options

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### Step Two: Determine Whether There Is an Ethical Dilemma

- ❑ Dilemma becomes ethical when the good or bad options seem to have a moral component

(eg. confidentiality vs. prevention of harm, self determination vs. worker's perception of client's best interests, freedom vs. safety)

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### Step Two: Determine Whether There Is an Ethical Dilemma

- ❑ Terms of an ethical dilemma must be ethical in nature, not legal.
- ❑ If something is a law, you then have the ethical choice to follow the law or not.

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### Step Three: Identify and Rank the Key Values and Principles

- ❑ What reasons can you provide for prioritizing one competing value over another?
- ❑ Understand that a resolution to a dilemma which goes against an individual's personal set of values has very little chance of success.

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### Step Four: Gather Your Information

- ❑ Do you have all the known facts?
- ❑ Do you understand the applicable laws or legalities?
- ❑ Do you have all relevant policies available to review?
- ❑ Are you clear about the individual's views and personal values?
  - \* Don't hesitate to seek out consultation.

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### Step Five: Determine the Options

- ❑ List all possible actionable options
- ❑ Weigh the cost/benefits of each option
- ❑ Seek out additional points of view

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### Step Six: Select a Course of Action

- 1) Discard the least desirable option.
- 2) Discard any which you can not put into action.
- 3) Discard any options which violate the values systems of those affected.
- 4) Recognize that your final choice will be impacted by your personal values.

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### Step Seven: Put Your Plan Into Action

- ☐ Reflect on the outcomes with a sense that you have truly approached this ethical dilemma with the best of intentions and to the best of your ability.

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### Step Eight: Evaluate

- ☐ Evaluate the consequences for each person involved (scout, scouter, family members, agency, etc.)

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