

# CHAPTER 1

## Understanding Ethics

### Table of Contents

Chapter Summary and Learning Outcomes	1-2
Learning Outcomes	1-2
Frontline Focus: “Doing the Right Thing” Questions	1-2
Learning Outcome 1	1-3
Learning Outcome 2	1-3
Learning Outcome 3	1-5
Learning Outcome 4	1-6
Learning Outcome 5	1-6
Life Skills	1-9
Progress ✓ Questions	1-9
Ethical Dilemma	1-12
Frontline Focus: “Doing the Right Thing—Maya Makes a Decision” Questions	1-14
Key Terms	1-15
Review Questions	1-16
Review Exercises	1-17
Internet Exercises	1-18
Team Exercises	1-20
Thinking Critically	1-21

## **Chapter Summary**

This chapter begins by defining ethics and how people decipher between “right” and “wrong” or “good” and “bad” behavior. It explores how people live their lives according to a standard of “right” or “wrong” behavior and how their personal set of morals are formed. Society plays a role in the traditions and customs that shape the standards or moral set that people adopt. Common standards shared among individuals can be called values or a values system. Some people have different definitions of ethics, such as personal integrity, rules of appropriate individual behavior, and rules of appropriate behavior for a community or society, and some define ethics as simply “doing the right thing.” The Golden Rule—do unto others as you would have them do unto you—is also a goal of living an ethical life by some. There are also some ethical theories discussed, which are divided into three categories—virtue ethics, ethics for the greater good, and universal ethics. The chapter concludes with a discussion on ethical relativism, applied ethics, ethical dilemmas, and how to resolve these situations.

## **Learning Outcomes**

After studying this chapter, the student should be able to:

1. Define *ethics*.
2. Explain the role of values in ethical decision making.
3. Understand opposing ethical theories and their limitations.
4. Discuss ethical relativism.
5. Explain an ethical dilemma and apply a process to resolve it.

## **Extended Chapter Outline**

### **Frontline Focus**

#### **“Doing the Right Thing” Questions**

1. What would be “the right thing” to do here? How would the “Golden Rule” relate to Maya’s decision?

The “right thing” to do here would be to run the Wilsons’ application through the standard procedure and approve their application, pending everything in the background check returns as acceptable. The Golden Rule—do unto others as you would have them do unto you—applies to Maya’s decision because she wouldn’t want someone to deny or purposely delay her application because of her ethnicity.

2. How would you resolve this ethical dilemma? Review the three-step process in “Resolving Ethical Dilemmas” for more details.

First, Maya needs to analyze the consequences. If she listens to Kate, she will hinder the Wilsons' chances of getting an apartment. If she goes against Kate, she will jeopardize her job but will do the “right thing” with respect to the Golden Rule by not discriminating. Second, Maya should analyze possible actions. Listening to Kate would be unethical, whereas disobeying Kate would be the honest, fair, and “right thing” to do. Finally, Maya must make a decision.

3. What should Maya do now?

Maya needs to make a decision. She needs to approach Kate in a professional manner and have a discussion on her ethical point of view. The ethical decision would be to follow through with the Wilsons' application in the standard procedure just the same as any other family.

### **Learning Outcome 1: Define *Ethics*.**

- **Ethics** is the manner by which we try to live our lives according to a standard of “right” or “wrong” behavior—in both how we think and behave toward others and how we would like them to think and behave toward us.
  - How people arrive at the definition of what’s right and wrong is a result of many factors, including how they were raised, their religion, and the traditions and beliefs of their society.
    - **Society** is a structured community of people bound together by similar traditions and customs.

### **Learning Outcome 2: Explain the Role of Values in Ethical Decision Making.**

- Moral standards are principles based on religious, cultural, or philosophical beliefs by which judgments are made about good or bad behavior.
  - **Culture** is a particular set of attitudes, beliefs, and practices that characterize a group of individuals.
- Beliefs can come from many different sources:
  - Friends
  - Family
  - Ethnic background
  - Religion
  - School

- The media—television, radio, newspapers, magazines, or the Internet
- Personal role models and mentors
- One's personal set of morals—*morality*—represents a collection of all these influences as they build up over one's lifetime.
- Standards of ethical behavior are absorbed by osmosis as an individual observes the examples (both positive and negative) set by everyone around the individual—parents, family members, friends, peers, and neighbors.
  - When individuals share similar standards in a community, the terms *values* and *value system* are used.
  - The terms *morals* and *values* are often used to mean the same thing—a set of personal principles by which you aim to live your life.
    - A **value system** is a set of personal principles formalized into a code of behavior.
- A person's values can be said to have a specific “worth” for them. That worth can be expressed in two ways:
  - An **intrinsic value**—the quality by which a value is a good thing in itself and is pursued for its own sake, whether anything comes from that pursuit or not. For example, happiness, health, and self-respect.
  - An **instrumental value**—the quality by which the pursuit of one value is a good way to reach another value. For example, money is valued for what it can buy rather than for itself.
- The impact of a person's or a group's value system can be seen in the extent to which his or her daily lives are influenced by those values.
  - The greatest test of any personal value system comes when an individual is presented with a situation that places those values in direct conflict with an action. For example:
    - *Lying is wrong*—but what if you were lying to protect the life of a loved one?
    - *Stealing is wrong*—but what if you were stealing food for a starving child?
    - *Killing is wrong*—but what if you had to kill someone in self-defense to protect your own life?
  - It is this grey area that makes the study of ethics so complex.
- If individuals asked their friends and family what ethics means to them, they would probably arrive at a list of four basic categories:
  - Simple truth—right and wrong or good and bad.
  - A question of someone's personal character—their integrity.
  - Rules of appropriate individual behavior.
  - Rules of appropriate behavior for a community or society
- The first category—a *simple truth*—also may be expressed as simply *doing the right thing*.

- The second category—*personal integrity*, demonstrated by someone’s behavior—looks at ethics from an external rather than an internal viewpoint.
- Rules of appropriate individual behavior represent the idea that the moral standards people develop for themselves impact their lives on a daily basis in their behavior and the other types of decisions they make.
- Rules of appropriate behavior for a community or society remind people that they must eventually bring their personal value system into a world that is shared with people who will probably have both similar and very different value systems.
- Each category represents a different feature of ethics.
  - On one level, the study of ethics seeks to understand how people make the choices they make—how they develop their own set of moral standards, how they live their lives on the basis of those standards, and how they judge the behavior of others in relation to those standards.
  - On a second level, people then try to use that understanding to develop a set of ideals or principles by which a group of ethical individuals can combine as a community with a common understanding of how they “ought” to behave.
- For some, the goal of living an ethical life is expressed by the **Golden Rule**—*do unto others as you would have them do unto you, or treat others as you would like to be treated*.
  - The danger with the Golden Rule is that not everyone thinks like you, acts like you, or believes in the same principles that you do, so to live your life on the assumption that your pursuit of an ethical ideal will match others’ ethical ideals could get you into trouble.

### Learning Outcome 3: Understand Opposing Ethical Theories and Their Limitations.

- Ethical theories can be divided into three categories—virtue ethics, ethics for the greater good, and universal ethics.
- **Virtue ethics** is a concept of living your life according to a commitment to the achievement of a clear ideal—*what sort of person would I like to become, and how do I go about becoming that person?*
  - The Greek philosopher Aristotle’s belief in individual character and integrity established this concept.
  - The problem with virtue ethics is that societies can place different emphasis on different virtues. In addition, the concept of virtue ethics does not address how someone’s actions could affect others or how different factors beyond an individual’s control can affect a person’s ability to develop certain virtues.
- *Ethics for the greater good* is more focused on the outcome of an individual’s actions rather than the apparent virtue of the actions themselves—that is, a focus on the greatest good for the greatest number of people.
  - Originally proposed by a Scottish philosopher named David Hume, this approach is

also referred to as **utilitarianism**—ethical choices that offer the greatest good for the greatest number of people.

- The problem with this approach to ethics is the idea that the ends justify the means.
  - If all an individual focuses on is doing the greatest good for the greatest number of people, no one is accountable for the actions that are taken to achieve that outcome.
- Originally attributed to a German philosopher named Immanuel Kant, universal ethics argues that there are certain and universal principles that should apply to all ethical judgments.
  - **Universal ethics** refer to actions that are taken out of *duty* and *obligation* to a purely moral ideal rather than based on the needs of the situation, because the universal principles are seen to apply to everyone, everywhere, all the time.
  - The problem with this approach is the reverse of the weakness in ethics for the greater good.
    - If all an individual focuses on is abiding by a universal principle, no one is accountable for the consequences of the actions taken to abide by those principles.

#### **Learning Outcome 4: Discuss Ethical Relativism.**

- When faced with the requirement to select a model of how we ought to live our lives, many people choose the idea of ethical relativism.
- **Ethical relativism** is the concept that the traditions of an individual's society, the individual's personal opinions, and the circumstances of the present moment define the individual's ethical principles.
- The idea of relativism implies some degree of flexibility as opposed to strict black-and-white rules.
  - It also offers the comfort of being a part of the ethical majority in a person's community or society instead of standing by the person's individual beliefs as an outsider from the group.

#### **Learning Outcome 5: Explain an Ethical Dilemma and Apply a Process to Resolve It.**

- **Applied ethics** is the study of how ethical theories are put into practice.
- The basic assumption of ethical theory is that a person as an individual or community is in control of all the factors that influence the choices that he or she makes.
- **Ethical dilemma** is a situation in which there is no obvious right or wrong decision, but rather a right or right answer.
- Any idealized set of principles or standards inevitably faces some form of challenge.

- For ethical theories, that challenge takes the form of a dilemma in which the decision people must make requires them to make a right choice knowing full well that they are:
  - Leaving an equally right choice undone
  - Likely to suffer something bad as a result of that choice
  - Contradicting a personal ethical principle in making that choice
  - Abandoning an ethical value of their community or society in making that choice
- In reality, the “answer” to an ethical dilemma is often the lesser of two evils, it is questionable to assume that there will always be an acceptable answer—it’s more a question of whether or not you can arrive at an outcome you can live with.
- Two distinct approaches to handling ethical dilemmas can be identified:
  - One is to focus on the practical consequences of what people choose to do.
  - The other is to focus on the actions themselves and the degree to which they were the right actions to take.
- The following is a three-step process for solving an ethical problem:
  - Step 1—*analyze the consequences*
  - Step 2—*analyze the actions*
  - Step 3—*make a decision*
- Arthur Dobrin identified eight questions people should consider when resolving an ethical dilemma:
  - *What are the facts?*
  - *What can you guess about the facts you don't know?*
  - *What do the facts mean?*
  - *What does the problem look like through the eyes of the people involved?*
  - *What will happen if you choose one thing rather than another?*
  - *What do your feelings tell you?*
  - *What will you think of yourself if you decide one thing or another?*
  - *Can you explain and justify your decision to others?*
- The application of these steps is based on some key assumptions:
  - There is sufficient time for the degree of contemplation that such questions require; second
  - There is enough information available for people to answer the questions
  - The dilemma presents alternative resolutions for people to select from
- When people are attempting to resolve an ethical dilemma, they follow a process of ethical reasoning.
  - **Ethical reasoning** is a process of looking at the information available to us in resolving an ethical dilemma, and drawing conclusions based on that information in relation to our own ethical standards.

- Lawrence Kohlberg developed a framework that presents the argument that people develop a reasoning process over time, moving through six distinct stages (classified into three levels of moral development) as they are exposed to major influences in our lives:

- Level 1: Preconventional—at this lowest level of moral development, a person’s perception of right and wrong is initially directly linked to the expectation of punishment or reward.
  - Stage 1: *Obedience and punishment orientation*—a person is focused on avoidance of punishment and deference to power and authority, i.e., something is right or wrong because a recognized authority figure says it is.
  - Stage 2: *Individualism, instrumentalism, and exchange*—as a more organized and advanced form of stage 1, a person is focused on satisfying their own needs, i.e., something is right or wrong because it helps the person get what they want or need.
- Level 2: Conventional—a person continues to become aware of broader influences outside the family.
  - Stage 3: *“Good boy/nice girl” orientation*—a person is focused on meeting the expectations of family members, i.e., something is right or wrong because it pleases those family members. Stereotypical behavior is recognized, and conformity to that behavior develops.
  - Stage 4: *Law-and-order orientation*—a person is increasingly aware of their membership in a society and the existence of codes of behavior, i.e., something is right or wrong because codes of legal, religious, or social behavior dictate it.
- Level 3: Postconventional—at this highest level of ethical reasoning, a person makes a clear effort to define principles and moral values that reflect an individual value system rather than simply reflecting the group position.
  - Stage 5: *Social contract legalistic orientation*—a person is focused on individual rights and the development of standards based on critical examination, i.e., something is right or wrong because it has withstood scrutiny by the society in which the principle is accepted.
  - Stage 6: *Universal ethical principle orientation*—a person is focused on self-chosen ethical principles that are found to be comprehensive and consistent, i.e., something is right or wrong because it reflects that person’s individual value system and the conscious choices they make in life.
- Kohlberg’s framework offers us a clearer view into the process of ethical reasoning—that is, that someone can arrive at a decision, in this case the resolution of an ethical dilemma—on the basis of a moral rationale that is built on the cumulative experience of his or her life.
  - Kohlberg also believed that a person could not move or jump beyond the next stage of their six stages.
    - It would be impossible for a person to comprehend the moral issues and dilemmas at a level so far beyond their life experience and education.

## **Life Skills**

### **What Do You Stand For, Or What Will You Stand Against?**

This Life Skills box discusses how one's personal value system is developed. It also talks about how this model helps people make difficult decisions. People's value systems are developed as a child from their parents, friends, society, and often their upbringing. It is unique to each person.

## **Progress ✓ Questions**

1. What is the definition of *ethics*?

Ethics is defined as the manner by which we try to live our lives according to a standard of “right” or “wrong” behavior—in both how we think and behave toward others and how we would like them to think and behave toward us.

2. What is a moral compass, and how would you apply it?

An individual's morality, or personal set of morals, represents a collection of religious, cultural, or philosophical beliefs or influences as they are built up over a lifetime. The standards an individual learns or observes provide a moral compass, which is a sense of personal direction to guide them in the choices they make in their lifetime.

3. Explain the difference between intrinsic and instrumental values.

Intrinsic value is the quality by which a value is a good thing in itself and is pursued for its own sake, whether anything comes from that pursuit or not. For example, happiness, health, and self-respect can all be said to have intrinsic value. Instrumental value is the quality by which the pursuit of one value is a good way to reach another value. For example, money is valued for what it can buy rather than for itself.

4. List the four basic categories of ethics.

The four basic categories of ethics are:

- Simple truth—right and wrong or good and bad
- A question of someone's personal character—their integrity
- Rules of appropriate individual behavior
- Rules of appropriate behavior for a community or society.

5. What is the Golden Rule?

The Golden Rule is do unto others as you would have them do unto you or treat others as you would like to be treated.

6. List the three basic ethical theories.

The three basic ethical theories are:

- Virtue ethics
- Ethics for the greater good—utilitarianism
- Universal ethics

7. Identify the limitations of each theory.

Following are the limitations of each of the basic ethical theories:

- The problem with virtue ethics is that societies can place different emphasis on different virtues so if the virtues people hope to achieve aren't a direct reflection of the values of the society in which they live, there is a real danger of value conflict.
- The problem with the ethics for the greater good or utilitarianism is the idea that the ends justify the means. If all people focus on is doing the greatest good for the greatest number of people, no one is accountable for the actions that are taken to achieve that outcome.
- The problem with the universal ethics approach is the reverse of the weakness in ethics for the greater good. If all people focus on is abiding by a universal principle, no one is accountable for the consequences of the actions taken to abide by those principles.

8. Provide an example of each theory in practice.

Following are examples of each theory in practice:

- An example of virtue ethics would be Christian societies' values based on faith, hope, and charity.
- An example of utilitarianism would be when Adolf Hitler and his Nazi party launched a national genocide against Jews and “defective” people on the utilitarian grounds of restoring the Aryan race.
- An example of universal ethics would be ethically justifying stem cell research because of the potential to cure major illnesses, such as Parkinson's, cancer, heart disease, etc.

9. Define *ethical relativism*.

Ethical relativism is the concept that the traditions of people's society, their personal opinions, and the circumstances of the present moment define their ethical principles.

10. Define *applied ethics*.

Applied ethics is the study of how ethical theories are put into practice.

11. What is an ethical dilemma?

An ethical dilemma is a situation in which there is no obvious right or wrong decision, but rather a right or right answer.

12. Explain the three-step process for resolving an ethical dilemma.

Following is the three-step process for resolving an ethical dilemma:

- Step 1: Analyze the consequences—in this step, people should ask themselves questions like, who will be helped by what they do? Who will be harmed? What kind of benefits and harm are we talking about? And, how does all this look over the long run as well as the short run?
- Step 2: Analyze the actions—in this step, people should consider all the options from a different perspective, without thinking about the consequences.
- Step 3: Make a decision—in this step, people should take both parts of their analysis into account and make a decision.

13. What are the eight questions you should consider in resolving an ethical dilemma?

Following are the eight questions that people should consider while resolving an ethical dilemma:

- What are the facts?
- What can you guess about the facts you don't know?
- What do the facts mean?
- What does the problem look like through the eyes of the people involved?
- What will happen if you choose one thing rather than another?
- What do your feelings tell you?
- What will you think of yourself if you decide one thing or another?
- Can you explain and justify your decision to others?

14. What assumptions are we making in the resolution of a dilemma? What should you do if you can't answer these eight questions for the dilemma you are looking to resolve?

Some of the key assumptions in the application of these steps are:

- There is sufficient time for the degree of contemplation that such questions require.
- There is enough information available to you to answer the questions.
- The dilemma presents alternative resolutions for you to select from.

If the eight questions cannot be answered, then the analysis becomes a question of finding a palatable resolution that people can live with rather than the most appropriate solution.

15. What are Kohlberg's three levels of moral development?

Kohlberg's three levels of moral development are:

- Preconventional
- Conventional
- Postconventional

16. What are the six stages of development in those three levels?

The six stages of development in Kohlberg's three levels of moral development are:

- Level 1: Preconventional
  - Stage 1: Obedience and punishment orientation
  - Stage 2: Individualism, instrumentalism, and exchange
- Level 2: Conventional
  - Stage 3: "Good boy/nice girl" orientation
  - Stage 4: Law-and-order orientation
- Level 3: Postconventional
  - Stage 5: Social contract orientation
  - Stage 6: Universal ethical principle orientation

## **Ethical Dilemma**

### **1.1 – Peer Pressure**

1. In what ways does giving in to peer pressure constitute ethical relativism?

Student responses will vary. In society, individuals and groups often feel pressured by their peers to perform tasks or to participate in other behaviors that they would not normally consider. Giving into peer pressure could constitute ethical relativism, where those traditions of the society, personal opinions, and the circumstances of the present moment define their ethical principles.

2. How could you use your personal value system to fight back against peer pressure?

Student responses will vary. Individuals can choose not to contribute to peer pressure. For example, an individual can draw on their personal opinions, values, or beliefs to define their ethical principles and use those morals or traits to form an opinion against an action that

contributes to peer pressure.

3. How would you communicate the risks of sexting to students who are struggling to deal with peer pressure?

Student responses will vary. Students need to be taught about the negative consequences and tragic incidents that have occurred related to sexting. Inform the students that they have the right to choose how they act or react towards peer pressure. Students need to be taught how to be individuals and how to make decisions that are legal and parallel with the traditions of society, their personal opinions, and their ethical principles.

4. Is a change in the law the best option for addressing this problem? Why or why not?

Student responses will vary. In some cases, a change in the law could be beneficial by helping prosecute those who violate laws against sexting. In some cases, individuals or groups perform acts because they know that it is against the law.

## 1.2 – The Overcrowded Lifeboat

1. Did the captain make the right decision? Why or why not?

Student responses will vary. This was a tough choice, and the captain needed to analyze the consequences of his actions. He did not consider that the lifeboat may have been rescued before anyone died. The lives of innocent people cannot be sacrificed, and the captain does not have the authority to decide who will or will not die.

2. What other choices could the captain have made?

Student responses will vary. The captain could have tried to contact emergency units or other nearby ships. The captain could have kept everyone on the lifeboat until help arrived rather than sacrificing the weak.

3. If you had been on the jury, how would you have decided? Why?

Student responses will vary. Some of them may support the captain's decision because saving the strong makes more sense than indirectly killing the strong because of the weak. Others might oppose the captain's decision by saying that the captain wasn't the one who gave life to the people thus he was no one to decide whom to sacrifice.

4. Which ethical theory or theories could be applied here?

Many of the students will say that the ethics for the greater good theory and the universal ethics theory can be applied to this scenario. Ethics for the greater good theory focuses on the greatest good for the greatest number of people. The captain was trying to save as many people as possible, but in order to do that, he was willing to sacrifice others. Also, according to the universal ethics theory, actions are taken out of duty and obligation to a purely moral ideal rather than based on the needs of the situation and no one is accountable for the consequences of the actions taken. Sacrificing the weak could be seen as ethically justifiable because it saved some lives.

## **Frontline Focus**

### **“Doing the Right Thing—Maya Makes a Decision” Questions**

1. Did Maya make the right choice here?

Maya did make the right choice by approving the Wilsons’ application. As stated in the text, had Maya followed Kate’s instructions, this would have been discriminatory and could have resulted in legal threats. Giving the apartment to the Wilsons will eliminate any guilty feelings Maya would have felt if she had followed Kate’s instructions. Dealing with Kate will be much easier than potential lawsuits.

2. What do you think Kate’s reaction will be?

Student responses will vary. Kate could be very understanding or very angry with Maya. If she feels that she has something to prove as the new boss then Kate will most likely be angry and reprimand Maya for not following instructions.

3. What would have been the risks for Oxford Lake if Maya had decided not to rent the apartment to the Wilsons?

Student responses will vary. If Maya had listened to Kate and buried the Wilsons’ file, Oxford Lake could have been brought into a legal situation for discriminatory action. Also, Oxford Lake’s reputation was on the line with Maya’s decision. A lawsuit could have ruined the company’s image and hurt their relationship with potential applicants/clients.

## **Key Terms**

**Applied Ethics:** The study of how ethical theories are put into practice.

**Culture:** A particular set of attitudes, beliefs, and practices that characterize a group of individuals.

**Ethical Dilemmas:** Situations in which there is no obvious right or wrong decision, but rather a right or right answer.

**Ethical Reasoning:** Looking at the information available to us in resolving an ethical dilemma and drawing conclusions based on that information in relation to our own ethical standards.

**Ethical Relativism:** Concept that the traditions of your society, your personal opinions, and the circumstances of the present moment define your ethical principles.

**Ethics:** The manner by which we try to live our lives according to a standard of “right” or “wrong” behavior—in both how we think and behave toward others and how we would like them to think and behave toward us.

**Golden Rule:** Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

**Instrumental Value:** The quality by which the pursuit of one value is a good way to reach another value. For example, money is valued for what it can buy rather than for itself.

**Intrinsic Value:** The quality by which a value is a good thing in itself and is pursued for its own sake, whether anything comes from that pursuit or not.

**Society:** A structured community of people bound together by similar traditions and customs.

**Universal Ethics:** Actions that are taken out of duty and obligation to a purely moral ideal rather than based on the needs of the situation, because the universal principles are seen to apply to everyone, everywhere, all the time.

**Utilitarianism:** Ethical choices that offer the greatest good for the greatest number of people.

**Value System:** A set of personal principles formalized into a code of behavior.

**Virtue Ethics:** A concept of living your life according to a commitment to the achievement of a clear ideal—*what sort of person would I like to become, and how do I go about becoming that*

*person?*

## **Review Questions**

NOTE: Some questions allow for a number of different answers. Below are some suggestions.

1. Why do we study ethics?

Student responses will vary. Individuals and groups study ethics to learn how and why people make right and wrong decisions.

2. Why should we be concerned about doing “the right thing”?

Student responses will vary. There are many laws and morals related to doing “the right thing.” Individuals learn to do the right thing to avoid going to prison or breaking the law.

3. If each of us has a unique set of influences and values that contribute to our personal value system, how can that be applied to a community as a whole?

Student responses will vary. Students can discuss the Golden Rule and how the greater good should be applied to community. Students should recall that in universal ethics, universal principles are applied to everyone. Individuals who have good personal value systems implement positive social change in their community.

4. Is it unrealistic to expect others to live by the Golden Rule? Explain your reasoning.

Student responses will vary. Some students may respond that it is realistic to expect others to live by the Golden Rule—do onto others as you would have them do unto you.

5. Consider how you have resolved ethical dilemmas in the past. What would you do differently now?

Student responses will vary. Students should recall what they did to resolve an ethical dilemma in the past. Students should note the three-step process for resolving an ethical dilemma and how the outcome might have changed the resolution of the dilemma.

6. What would you do if your resolution of an ethical dilemma turned out to be the wrong approach and it actually made things worse?

Student responses will vary. Many of them may say that they would learn from the situation

and try to take a different decision the next time such a situation arises.

## **Review Exercises**

1. You buy an energy drink at the store and pay the cashier with a \$5 bill. You are mistakenly given change from a \$20 bill. What do you do?

Student responses will vary. Some of the students may feel that they should tell the cashier that they paid with a \$5 bill because after analyzing the consequences they should realize that the cashier's money drawer would be short that night and the cashier would probably be reprimanded. Also, following the virtue ethics theory discussed in the chapter, telling the cashier is the honorable and fair action to take.

2. You are riding in a taxicab and notice a \$20 bill that has obviously fallen from someone's wallet or purse. What do you do?

Student responses will vary. For some students the right thing to do would be to tell the cab driver. It may or may not be the driver's payment/tip from a previous passenger. Others may take a more relativistic approach and decide that the earlier passenger may not notice the loss, and that the cab driver would probably keep the money if they found it, therefore it's "found money."

3. You live in a small Midwestern town and have just lost your job at the local bookstore. The best-paying job you can find is at the local meatpacking plant, but you are a vegetarian and feel strongly that killing animals for food is unjust. What do you do?

Student responses will vary. Most of the students may feel that they must analyze the consequences and actions of each option. If they feel strongly about working at the meatpacking plant, then they should stay true to their values and begin looking for other options. Are there other opportunities in the area? Can they commute or move to another town?

4. You are having a romantic dinner with your spouse to celebrate your wedding anniversary. Suddenly, at a nearby table, a man starts yelling at the young woman he is dining with and becomes so verbally abusive that she starts to cry. What do you do?

Student responses will vary. Most of the students may feel that no one deserves to be abused, physically or verbally. One option could be to say something to your waiter/waitress and have management address the issue. Another option could be to approach the man; however, this would be interfering in a situation where you know very little of the facts.

5. You are shopping in a department store and observe a young man taking a watch from a display stand on the jewelry counter and slipping it into his pocket. What do you do?

Student responses will vary. Most of the students may feel that the man is obviously stealing and should be punished for his actions. The most appropriate action would be to inform a store manager or employee that you witnessed the young man stick the watch in his pocket. Also, there may be some who feel indifferent about the action and may altogether ignore the incident.

6. You are the manager of a nonprofit organization. At the end of the year, a local car dealer approaches you with a proposition. He will give you a two-year-old van worth \$10,000 that he has just taken as a trade-in on a new vehicle if you will provide him with a tax-deductible donation receipt for a new van worth \$30,000. Your current transportation is in very bad shape, and transportation is critical to the tasks your organization performs in the local community. Do you accept the proposition?

Student responses will vary. Most of the students may feel that this goes against values such as integrity, fairness, honor, etc. Although the children may really enjoy field trips and the organization may need new transportation, it would be unethical to accept this proposition. The organization should fundraise for new transportation rather than giving into a bribe.

## **Internet Exercises**

1. Visit the Center for Study of Ethics in the Professions (CSEP) at the Illinois Institute of Technology: <https://www.iit.edu/center-ethics>.

- a. What is the stated mission of CSEP?

The Center for the Study of Ethics in the Professions (CSEP) was established in 1976 to promote research and teaching on practical moral problems in the professions. It generates professional ethics courses at IIT and assists faculty at other universities to prepare for teaching professional ethics and to develop courses and programs (<https://www.iit.edu/center-ethics/about>).

- b. Identify and briefly summarize a current CSEP research project.

Student responses will vary. They may choose from the Ethics Code Collection Redesign, CSEP Publications, Ethics Education Library, the Online Ethics Center, or Building a Culture of Responsible Research and Practice in STEM

- c. Explain the purpose of the Ethical and Trustworthy AI Lab at CSEP.

The Ethical and Trustworthy AI Lab is an interdisciplinary group of researchers interested in the social and ethical implications of artificial intelligence. The group investigates philosophical, ethical, and social aspects of AI including trustworthiness and the question of what it is that makes AI uses ethical, just, and trustworthy.

- d. Do you think that an “Ethics Bowl” competition at your institution would be useful in discussing the issues of professional ethics? Why or why not?

Student responses will vary. Most of the students may feel that having an “Ethics Bowl” at institutions would be useful as this would combine the excitement and fun of a competitive tournament with a valuable educational experience for the students.

2. In these days of increasing evidence of questionable ethical practices, many organizations, communities, and business schools are committing to ethics pledges as a means of underscoring the importance of ethical standards of behavior in today’s society. Using Internet research, find two examples of such pledges and answer the following questions:

- a. Why did you select these two examples specifically?

Student responses will vary.

- b. Why did each entity choose to make an ethical pledge?

Student responses will vary based on the examples they choose.

- c. In what ways are the pledges similar and different?

Student responses will vary based on the examples they choose.

- d. If you proposed the idea of an ethics pledge at your school or job, what do you think the reaction would be?

Student responses will vary.

## **Team Exercises**

### **1. Take me out to the cheap seats.**

*Divide into two groups and prepare arguments for and against the following behavior: My dad takes me to a lot of baseball games and always buys the cheapest tickets in the park. When the game starts, he moves to better, unoccupied seats, dragging me along. It embarrasses me. Is it OK for us to sit in seats we didn't pay for?*

Student responses will vary. Some students may feel it is not OK to sit in seats that one didn't pay for. This is essentially stealing from the baseball park. The park is a business and their product is the ticket. Stealing is unethical and this person and his/her father should be sitting in the seats that they paid for. Others may argue that since the seats are going to waste anyway, where's the harm?

### **2. Dine or dash?**

*Divide into two groups and prepare arguments for and against the following behavior: On my way home from work, I ordered dinner via my phone. When I picked up the order in the lobby of my building, I realized it was the wrong order—and three times the size of the meal I originally ordered. Should I have alerted the delivery service about the mistake or should I just be happy I now have dinner for the next couple of days?*

Student responses will vary. For most, stealing (in this case, getting a larger, incorrect dinner order and choosing not to acknowledge the mistake) is unethical. Even though the food delivery company made the mistake, and it would have been a hassle to have the correct order delivered at a later time, at the very least, a call to the delivery service acknowledging the mistake would seem appropriate.

### **3. A gift out of the blue.**

*Divide into two groups and prepare arguments for and against the following behavior: I'm a regular customer of a men's clothing mail-order company, and it sends me new catalogs about six times a year. I usually order something because the clothes are good quality with a money-back guarantee, and if the item doesn't fit or doesn't look as good on me as it did in the catalog, the return process is very easy. Last month I ordered a couple of new shirts. When the package arrived, there were three shirts in the box, all in my size, in the three colors available for that shirt. There was no note or card, and the receipt showed that my credit card had been charged for two shirts. I just assumed that someone in the shipping department was recognizing me as a valuable customer—what a nice gesture, don't you think?*

Student responses will vary. This would be a nice gesture if that was the case. This person is simply rationalizing why he should keep the shirts. If they were a gift, most likely there would have been a note accompanying his order explaining that the extra shirts were his valuable customer gift. Some of the students may feel that the person needs to call the company and tell them about the mistake.

#### 4. Renting a dress?

*Divide into two groups and prepare arguments for and against the following behavior: My friend works for a company that manages fund-raising events for nonprofit organizations—mostly gala benefits and auctions. Since these events all take place in the same city, she often crosses paths with the same people from one event to the other. The job doesn't pay a lot, but the dress code is usually very formal. To stretch her budget and ensure that she's not wearing the same dress at every event, she buys dresses, wears them once, has them professionally dry-cleaned, reattaches the label using her own label gun, and returns them to the store, claiming that they were the wrong color or not a good fit. She argues that the dry-cleaning bill is just like a rental charge and she always returns them for store credit, not cash. The dress shop may have made a sale, but is this fair?*

Student responses will vary. Rationalization is taking place in this situation. Some students may feel that just because the store is making a sale does not mean that it is ethical to continuously return dresses for store credit after wearing them.

### **Thinking Critically**

#### **1.1 – The Demise of FTX—Mismanagement or Fraud?**

1. Based on the evidence presented in this case study, was Bankman-Fried's actions deliberate fraud or mismanagement? Defend your position.

Student responses will vary based on their opinions or positions they take based on the information provided in the case. Some students might view Bankman-Fried's naivete about running such a complicated company as mismanagement, while others might decide that Bankman-Fried and his associates committed fraud.

2. Should the celebrities who endorsed FTX be held responsible for their part in the scandal?

Student responses will vary. On a personal level, some celebrities might feel bad for FTX investors but claim “ignorance” when it came to being responsible for perpetuating a business fraud. Others may believe that they are not responsible for vetting the details of the

FTX cryptocurrency model—that they are merely the “hired help.”

3. Many individuals were financially ruined by their investments in FTX and its FTT tokens. What advice would you give them about crypto and its volatile environment?

Student responses will vary but should underscore the need for individuals to do their homework when it comes to investing in cryptocurrency, including the positive and negative aspects of this volatile market.

4. Should there be consequences for the U.S. politicians who accepted the millions in contributions to help pass favorable legislation for crypto companies? Explain your reasoning.

Student responses will vary. Some of the students may feel that politicians should be held accountable for passing favorable legislation for crypto companies while others may suggest they have no accountability at all.

5. Assume you worked for FTX as illegal loans were being made to company executives—could you pass the “sleep-test” of ethical behavior?

Student responses will vary. Some students may deflect blame for the loans to someone “above their pay grade” while others would argue that if they knew about the illegal loans they should raise the red flag or become whistle-blowers.

6. Bankman-Fried’s parents are law professors at Stanford University and are being sued for their involvement in the FTX scandal, although they both claim they are innocent. Do the parents have any ethical responsibility for the actions of their son? Why or why not?

Student responses will vary. Some students may feel that Bankman-Fried’s parents acted merely as advisors to their son, while others might place blame on the parents based on their legal and academic backgrounds.

## 1.2 – The Man Who Shocked the World

1. Critics of Milgram’s research have argued that the physical separation between the participant and the teacher in one room and the learner in the other made it easier for the participant to inflict the shocks. Do you think that made a difference? Why or why not?

Student responses will vary. The physical separation could have been a variable in the experiment affecting the outcome. However, the participants were still aware that the higher

voltage shocks were supposed to be causing potentially fatal pain. The actor was still visible and participants were able to see the “pain” they were causing by the shocks. It may have had a more dramatic effect on the participants to be in the same room as the learner.

2. The treatment of the participants in the study raised as much criticism as the results the study generated. Was it ethical to mislead them into believing that they were really inflicting pain on the learners? Why?

Student responses will vary. It was not unethical to mislead them in believing that they were really inflicting pain. This is essentially the same as medical experiments when patients are given a placebo pill or sugar pill. In addition, the participants were informed at the conclusion of the experiment.

3. The participants were introduced to the learners as equal participants in the study—that is, volunteers just like them. Do you think that made a difference in the decision to keep increasing the voltage? Why?

Student responses will vary. It is possible that participants continued increasing the voltage because they were under the impression that the learner was volunteering; although, it still should not have mattered when it came to a point of possible death. Volunteering to die is not an excuse to kill someone.

4. What do you think Milgram’s research tells us about our individual ethical standards?

Student responses will vary. Milgram’s research tells us that our individual ethical standards are based on selfish reasons or on what we’re told to do, rather than thinking of others.

5. Would you have agreed to participate in this study? Why or why not?

Student responses will vary based on individual beliefs and value systems.

6. Do you think if the study were repeated today we would get the same kind of results? Why?

Student responses will vary. Many of them may say that if the study were repeated today, we wouldn’t get the same kind of results because today people may come forward and accept that such experiments are wrong and shouldn’t be done.

### 1.3 – Getting Fired via Email

1. Google’s long-standing reputation for being “employee-centric” took a hit with the way they terminated thousands of U.S. employees. What could the company do to ensure it can retain workers who survived the massive layoff?

Student responses will vary. Some students might suggest that Google increase its level of transparency about potential layoffs and communicate more clearly with its workers. Some others might suggest that the company continue to acknowledge its bad showing for terminating all these employees via email and demonstrate actions to its workforce that company executives have learned from this major misstep.

2. Assume you survived the layoffs at Google and continue to work there. How has this experience changed the way you view the company and its management team?

Student responses will vary. Survivors of the layoffs may decide the company’s actions will accelerate their search for a job outside of Google. The management team will need to earn back the trust of its existing work force.

3. From a business ethics perspective, which was worse: the way employees were let go or the millions CEO Pichai received in pay and stock awards. Explain your reasoning.

Student responses will vary. Some students will believe that termination via email is humiliating, while others will believe that the pay and stock awards granted to the CEO could have been used to save thousands of jobs at the company.

4. Did the company’s decision to lay off employees based on organizational structure rather than individual performance lessen the blow of the 12,000 layoffs? Why or why not?

Student responses will vary. Some students will rationalize the termination based on organizational structure as something that is not unusual in a large organization and will begrudgingly accept the decision. Others might think that layoffs of that magnitude and the way they were handled could never be justified.

5. Do you consider the Google layoffs as an example of utilitarianism? Explain your reasoning.

Student responses will vary. Some students may believe that Google had no choice but to layoff thousands of workers in an effort to contain costs across the company. And other students may believe that Google misstepped when it hired on too many new workers during the pandemic.

6. Assume you are head of HR for Google, how can you justify the way thousands of employees were let go via email?

Student responses will vary. Some students will blame HR for such a move while others will put the blame directly on the CEO. There is no justification for terminating thousands of experienced workers via email for any organization.