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Ethical Decisions: The Slippery Slope/The Blurred Lines

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Ethical Decisions: The Slippery Slope/The Blurred Lines

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**PRESENTATION FOR THE NAD
ORIENTATION FOR NEW TREASURERS
MARCH 31, 2016**

Ann Gibson, PhD, CPA
Andrews University

Ethical Rationalizations

2

Calling an unethical act by a softer name

Everybody else does it

That's the way it has always been done

It's a gray area

I was just following orders

Ethics and World View

3

I Corinthians 15:32

“If the dead are not raised, let us eat and drink for tomorrow we die.”

Paul, quoting Epicurus (342-270 BC)

Ethics and World View

4

I Corinthians 15:20, 58

But Christ has risen from the dead!

We should live today in light of the fact that one should stand firm, and always give their work to the Lord, for labor in the Lord is not in vain.

Moral Development Levels

5

The Morally Clueless:

- Appear to be unaware of any ethical rules
- Appear to have little or no sensitivity as to the impropriety of their conduct

Moral Development Levels

6

Example of the morally clueless:

Chuck Colson

Moral Development Levels

7

The Amoral Technician:

- Functions within the system to the letter of the law
- “Works the system”
- Appears to be unaffected by the impact of their decisions on others

Moral Development Levels

8

Example of the amoral technician:

Andrew Fastow

Moral Development Levels

9

The Morally Desensitized and/or Morally Detached:

- Feels beaten down by the organization's actions
- Gives up raising concerns
- May or may not join in unethical activity

Moral Development Levels

10

Example of the morally desensitized or morally detached:

Reuben

Moral Development Levels

11

The Moral Chameleon:

- Adapts to the ethics of those he/she works with
- Ethics change when the organization, the group, or their role changes
- When asked, states: “I was just following orders”

Moral Development Levels

12

Example of the moral chameleon:

Douglas Faneuil

Moral Development Levels

13

The Moral Procrastinator:

- Aware of ethics, but will worry about ethics “later”
- “Later” is generally after personal wealth is generated

Moral Development Levels

14

Example of the Moral Procrastinator:

The rich farmer (Luke 12)

Moral Development Levels

15

The Morally Superior:

- Ethics rules are for the plodders, not for the stars

Moral Development Levels

16

Example of the morally superior:

Sanjay Kumar

Moral Development Levels

17

The Moral Schizophrenic:

- Lives by one set of ethics at work and another set of ethics in their personal life
- “I only do this in certain situations”
- “I would never allow my kids to do this”

Moral Development Levels

18

Example of a moral schizophrenic:

Bernie Ebbers

Moral Development Levels

19

The Inherently Moral:

- Has a strong moral code
- No hypocrisy
- Commitment to values and a life that reflects those values

Moral Development Levels

20

LORD, who may abide in Your tabernacle?

Who may dwell in Your holy hill?

He who **walks uprightly,**

And **works righteousness,**

And **speaks the truth in his heart;**

He who **does not backbite with his tongue,**

Nor does evil to his neighbor,

Nor does he take up a reproach against his friend;

Moral Development Levels

21

**In whose eyes a vile person is despised,
But he honors those who fear the LORD;
He who swears to his own hurt and does not change;
He who does not put out his money at usury,
Nor does he take a bribe against the innocent.**

He who does these things shall never be moved.

Psalm 15 (NKJV)

Moral Development Levels

22

Summary:

- Morally Clueless
- Amoral Technician
- Morally Desensitized and/or Morally Detached
- Moral Chameleon
- Moral Procrastinator
- Morally Superior
- Moral Schizophrenic
- Inherently Moral

Common Ethical Challenges

23

Taking things that don't belong to you

Giving or allowing false impressions

Saying things you know are not true

Common Ethical Challenges

24

Buying influence or engaging in conflicts of interest

Hiding or divulging information

Permitting interpersonal and/or organizational abuse



A Closing Word from Paul

26

“We try to live in such a way that no one will ever be offended or kept back from finding the Lord by the way we act, so that no one can find fault with us and blame it on the Lord.”

2 Corinthians 6:3

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