Flint Water Crisis: Local EPA Director Resigns

A regional director has resigned in connection with the drinking water crisis in Flint, Michigan.
Course Objectives

Improve Your Ability to:

• Identify ethical dilemmas that arise in work situations;
• Identify the value conflict(s) that must be confronted in resolving an ethical dilemma;
• Define and apply an ethical decision making model;
• Act to implement an ethical decision; and
• Avoid key mental traps in ethical decision making.
What is Ethics?
## Efforts to Define Ethics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethics as:</th>
<th>Key Questions:</th>
<th>Major Thinker:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Virtue</td>
<td>What does a person of good character do?</td>
<td>Aristotle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Have I reached the “golden mean?”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principles</td>
<td>Am I using people as ends in themselves, not means to an end?</td>
<td>Immanuel Kant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Is my action a maxim for all people?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consequences</td>
<td>What is the greatest good for the greatest number?</td>
<td>Jeremy Bentham</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ethical Action

“I can’t be bought by…”

VIRTUES

CONSEQUENCES
- Expediency
- Self-Serving Behavior

PRINCIPLES
- Rigid application of rules
- Following blindly

Source: The Ethical Triangle, by James Svara
Bill White
And the
Veterans Administration
# Two Kinds of Ethical Issues

## Rules-Based

“Moral Temptations”

- A conflict between moral and immoral values
- Right vs. Wrong
- Governed by law or regulation
- One right answer

## Values-Based

“Ethical Dilemmas”

- A conflict between moral values
- Right vs. Right
- Governed by conscience
- Two or more right answers

Source: Rushworth Kidder

*How Good People Make Tough Choices*

Institute for Global Ethics
Ethics and the Clash of Values

**Constitutional Values**
- Representative government
- Due process
- Separation of powers
- Equality
- Responsiveness
- Justice
- Community

**Organizational Values**
- Efficiency
- Effectiveness
- Chain of command
- Timeliness
- Collaboration
- Creativity
- Stewardship of resources

**Personal Values**
- Achievement
- Truth
- Fairness
- Compassion
- Responsibility
- Freedom
- Loyalty
Find a Trilemma Option

"I can’t be bought by..."

VIRTUES

Ethical Action

CONSEQUENCES
- Expediency
- Self-Serving Behavior

PRINCIPLES
- Rigid application of rules
- Following blindly
What did we do in these cases to help us make the best possible ethical decision?
Whose Values Count?

- Personal Values
- Organizational Values
- Constitutional Values
- Societal/Community Values
- Professional Values
- Global Values

YOU!
Exercising Moral Empathy

As You See It:
• What is the ethical dilemma?
• What’s at stake for you?
• What values are primary for you?
• What options do you see?
• How can your core values be satisfied?

As Others See It:
• What is the ethical dilemma?
• What’s at stake for them?
• What values are primary for them?
• What options might they see?
• How can their core values be satisfied?
**Ethical Decision Making Model**

- **Right vs. Right?**
- **Right vs. Wrong?**
- **Get the Facts**
- **Identify Options**
- **Make/Implement Decision**

Do the right thing!
**Get the Facts**

What’s the ethical dilemma as you define it, in everyday language?  
Who are the stakeholders and how do they see the issue?  
What’s at stake for you? What are your motives?  
What are the relevant facts?  
What values are in conflict?  
What assumptions are you and others making that might need to be tested?

**Identify Options**

Who has responsibility to resolve this ethical dilemma?  
What results would define success for you? For other stakeholders?  
What are all of the possible options?  
What are the positive and negative consequences of the most promising options?

**Make and Implement a Decision**

What option best satisfies your core values while being acceptable when viewed from the perspective of fairness and history?  
How will you implement the chosen option and mitigate negative impacts?
BREAK
Frances Perkins Leaves a Legacy

*How did Perkins address the challenges she faced?*
Eight Tactics of Quiet Leaders

• Don’t Kid Yourself
• Trust Mixed Motives
• Buy a Little Time
• Invest Wisely
• Drill Down
• Bend the Rules
• Nudge, Test, and Escalate Gradually
• Craft a Compromise

Source: Leading Quietly by Joseph Badaracco, Jr.
Social Power

• **Interpersonal power**
  – Emotional intelligence

• **Informational Power**
  – Pertinent knowledge
  – Business acumen

• **Associational Power**
  – Personal networks
  – Social intelligence

• **Expertise Power**
  – Mastery of facts/context
Voicing Your Values

- Enlist allies
- Lower threats to others’ status
- Reframe the problem as an opportunity rather than a reproach
- Identify and prepare to counter reasons and rationalizations you will hear
- Identify levers you can use.
  - Long-term vs. short-term needs
  - Core purpose/values of the organization
  - Actionable alternatives
  - Dangers of inaction
  - Full accounting of costs of options
  - Pay to your strengths
- PRACTICE THE WORDS!
Moral Courage

Principles

Timid

Moral Courage

Foolhardy

Physical Courage

Danger

Endurance

Rushworth Kidder
Moral Courage
What Helps/Harms Ethical Action in the Foreign Service?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What Fosters Ethical Action</th>
<th>What Hinders Ethical Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Current State of Ethical Behavior</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Proportion of Rulings in Favor of Parolee

Trap #1: Ego Depletion

- 2% of body weight
- 20% of total body oxygen
- 25% of total body glucose
Trap #2: Failure to Integrate Reason and Emotion

Brain Areas:

Emotion      Working Memory

% Change in MRI Signal Relative to Baseline

-0.2
-0.1
0
0.1
0.2
0.3
0.4
0.5

A B C D E F G

Personal
Impersonal
Non-Moral

Source: Joshua Greene at al
People who bring reusable bags for their groceries buy more organic food. They also buy more junk food than those who use plastic bags.

Why?

Source: Uma Kamarkar and Bryan Bollinger, Harvard Business School
## Trap #3: Moral Licensing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Words to Use in a Story</th>
<th>Amount (of $10) Donated to Charity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neutral: book, keys, house</td>
<td>$2.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative traits: disloyal, greedy, mean, selfish</td>
<td>$5.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive traits: caring, generous, fair, kind</td>
<td>$1.07</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: *Sinning Saints and Saintly Sinners*, by Sachdeva, Iliev and Medin
Ethical Decision Making Tips

• Don’t make key decisions when you/your team are tired
• Name your emotions and engage others to help integrate reason with emotion
• Be wary of rationalization – in yourself and others: recall the “should” self
• Cultivate productive dissent
“Great learning and superior abilities, should you ever possess them, will be of little value and small estimation unless virtue, honor, truth, and integrity are added to them.”
Write down the first answer that comes to mind for the following problem.

A bat and ball cost $1.10.

The bat costs one dollar more than the ball.

How much does the ball cost?
Write down the first answer that comes to mind for the following problem.

A bat and ball cost $1.10.

The bat costs one dollar more than the ball.

How much does the ball cost?

• More than 50% of students at Harvard, MIT and Princeton said 10 cents.
• More than 80% of students at less selective universities said 10 cents.
How We Think

System 1
- Automatic; can’t turn it off
- Fast
- Little or no mental effort
- When overwhelmed, calls on System 2 for help
- Has the first word
- Has biases - systematic errors
- Maintains/updates your model of the world

System 2
- Deliberate; must turn it on
- Slow
- Requires mental effort
- When overwhelmed, System 1 may take over
- Has the last word
- Can catch biases - may need help
- Questions your model of the world