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### Learning Objectives

- Understand the difference between morals and ethics
- Understand ethical decision making
- Understand the obligations of a professional
- Know how to find and use the ABIH Code of Ethics

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### Ethics vs. Morals

Morals: The foundational principles upon which human/societal values are based

Ethics: What are valued as right and wrong with respect to human behavior

Example:

- Human life is sacred (Morality)
- Murder is wrong (Ethics)

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### Ethics and Morality Defined

*Ethics* is the application of morality within a context established by cultural and professional values, social norms, and accepted standards of behavior.

*Morality* refers to the values that are subscribed to and fostered by society.

*Ethics* attempts to apply reason in determining rules of human conduct that translate morality into everyday behavior.



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### Preamble of the US Constitution

We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish **justice**, insure **domestic tranquility**, provide for the common **defense**, promote the **general welfare**, and secure the blessings of **liberty** to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.



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### Excerpt from the Declaration of Independence

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created **equal**, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are **Life**, **Liberty** and the **pursuit of Happiness**.



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## Eighth Amendment

Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, **nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted.**

- Dignity



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## National Morals

- Life
- Liberty
- Justice / Domestic Tranquility (Peace)
- Dignity / Equality
- General Welfare (Common Good) / Defense (Security)
- Pursuit of Happiness/Property



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## Situational Ethics & Morality

Is it ever permissible to tell a lie?

The moral of justice leads to the conclusion that lying is an unethical act because it is used to deceive someone who has a right to know.

Is it ever permissible to tell an untruth?

Situationally, when another moral is at jeopardy e.g. Life

- If the you are hiding Anne Frank in you home and the SS are at the front door asking if you are hiding Jews. Telling the truth would forfeit their lives (Moral) and the SS do not have a right to that information.
- Classified information works under a similar concept
- White lies: when someone bakes you a cake and it isn't any good, would you interfere with their pursuit of happiness?



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## Conflicting Morals

8 examples are given for understanding morals the nation holds true.

What if a situation arises where two morals are at odds?

For example, if you are a slave (denied liberty) with a family, do you attempt to escape risking your family's life?

If you rank life as a higher moral to liberty, you would not try to escape.

If you rank liberty above life, you would try to escape.

Either decision could be ethically correct depending upon your order

"Better even die free, than to live slaves." – Fredrick Douglas

"Live free or die!" – Official motto of New Hampshire

However, Life in prison is a lesser sentence than the death penalty



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## The Golden Proportion

$\Phi$  (Phi) = 1.618



Found throughout nature and connected to the Fibonacci sequence

Widely known to be aesthetically pleasing

Parthenon, Pyramids, humans, etc.



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## Golden Mean

From Aristotle's Nicomachean ethics

Both Aristotle's son and father were named Nicomachus

Ethics and morality form a continuum between vice, virtue, and counter vice

Virtue is found in the middle (Mean), though it typically lies somewhat off center (as in the golden proportion)

Also found in the writings of Confucius as well as Wasat in Islam



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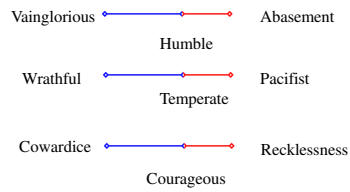
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### The Golden Mean




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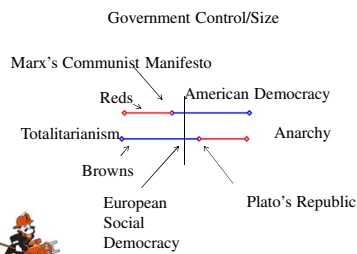
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### Good people can disagree on the mean




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### Legal ≠ Ethical

What is permissible under statutory law may not be morally permissible e.g. slavery and lack of women's suffrage were at one time legal

Presently, it is legal to be in debt beyond your means to recover, know you are going to file for bankruptcy protection, but max out your remaining credit cards on a vacation to Aruba.

This is a moral decision that violates the ethic of Justice




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## Ethics in Business

Business ethics typically appeal to:

- General Welfare (Common Good) – Corporate Responsibility
  - Environmental Harm
- Justice
  - Insider Trading
  - Product Liability
- Equality
  - Honest work for honest pay
  - EEO



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## Business are not people

And the supreme court didn't say they are

- The court stated business have some of the same rights as people
- Marriage is not a person either, but the partnership has certain rights and privileges
- Only individuals can act morally or immorally
  - Being sentient is a pre-requisite to moral decisions



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## Unethical vs Immoral

- If an act violates an ethic, the act is immoral
  - Murder violates life and is immoral
- If an act places a higher value on one ethic than would the natural law or society would, the act is unethical
  - Insider trading values pursuit of happiness/property over equality/justice and is unethical



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## Business Ethics Achilles' Heel

Pursuit of Happiness/Property coupled with debt leads the created ethic of "Employment" to become a scapegoat for moral justification.

If an employee speaks up against something unsafe or unethical, they fear losing their job, resulting in a lack of income, resulting in foreclosure, possibly their ability to eat (Life).

Companies reinforce the ethic of employment saying act this way (ethical) or get fired. If an employee can act unethically (insider trading) and gain sufficient wealth, employment is unnecessary and an insufficient deterrent.



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## Profession vs. Occupation

- Special knowledge
  - Large knowledge base
  - Extensive training
- Special privileges
  - Self-regulating
  - Autonomy
  - Independent judgment
- Special responsibilities
  - Ethical standards



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## Threat

- Expertise is vital to public welfare
  - Must maintain high level of technical competence
- Technical incompetence threat to public
- Violation of ethics threat to public
- Some violations are obvious
  - Gray areas
    - Conceptual issues – knowing vs. knowing
    - Factual issues – obligation to inform a regulator?
  - Tradeoffs – all risk cannot be eliminated



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### **Obligation to Society**

- Foremost responsibility is to public welfare
- Only approve documents that conform to accepted engineering standards
- Notify employer or client when professional judgment is overruled and public at risk
- Objective and truthful in everything
  - Include all relevant information
  - Beware of lies of omission



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### **Obligation to Society**

- Only give professional opinion publically when founded on adequate knowledge of facts and a competent evaluation of the subject matter
- Clearly identify all conflicts of interest
- Do not be associated with others doing fraudulent or dishonest work
- Report any knowledge of possible misconduct to the certification board



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### **Obligation to Employer and Clients**

- Only undertake assignments for which you have the technical expertise
- Do not approve any document where you lack competence or not prepared under your direct supervision
- Can coordinate project if each segment sealed by someone competent
- May not divulge proprietary information
  - May not solicit or accept gratuities from contractors



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### **Obligation to Employer and Clients**

- Clearly identify all conflicts of interest
- Cannot accept compensation from more than one party for services pertaining to the same project unless fully disclosed and agreed to by all parties
- Cannot solicit work from a government body if principle or officer serves as a member
- If serving a government body must not participate in decisions regarding your company



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### **Obligation to Other Engineers**

- Must not falsify or exaggerate
  - Academic or professional qualifications
  - Degree of responsibility in prior assignments
  - Complexity of prior assignments
- Cannot give or receive commission, gifts, or political contributions in order to receive or award contract
- Cannot attempt to maliciously injure the reputation of competitor



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### **Tests to Determine Ethical Behavior**

To determine if a choice is ethical, you can apply the following tests:

Morning-after

Front-page

Mirror

Role-reversal

Common sense



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### Three-Pronged Role

Safety and health professionals have a three-pronged role with regard to ethics. They are responsible for:

- Setting an ethical example
- Helping employers identify the ethical choices when facing ethical questions
- Helping employers follow through and actually undertake the ethical option



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### Three Ethical Dilemma Approaches

Safety and health professionals have three approaches available in handling ethical dilemmas:

- Best-ratio
- Black-and-white
- Full-potential



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### Personality Traits that Influence Employees' Behavior

Three personality characteristics that can influence an employee's ethical behavior are:

- Ego strength
- Machiavellianism
- Locus of control



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### Guidelines for ethical IH practice

- Identify your bias / conflict of interest
  - Are you setting up your sampling to get the results you want?
- Draw your conclusions from the data
- Ask, "Would this exposure be acceptable to me if a family member was in the exposure group?"
- Maintain the integrity of your data.
  - Double check and peer review your calculations
  - Be meticulous in calibration and set up



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### Professional Ethics

- Responsibility of engineer/individual
- At the core of safety
- Required for professional designations
  - FE, CIH, CSP Exams
- Multiple entities with ethical codes
  - <http://www.besp.org/pdf/ethics.pdf>
  - <http://www.abih.org/sites/default/files/downloads/ABIHCodeofEthics.pdf>



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**Have a great day!**



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