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Final Assignment

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Coming to an agreement is not always an easy thing to do. Everyone has different viewpoints and experiences to base their answer off of, so how will two people ever see something the exact same way? They will not, but that is why we try not to base every decision on the way we feel but instead on what we believe is the ethically correct answer. This by no means will give a sure, ethical answer, but using the resources we have access to will allow us to see every side of the question at hand and pull it apart to its more raw form.

When it comes to the ethical aspects of a question or scenario, we have to look at it from different angles and ask ourselves some questions. Some of the more critical questions and factors that guide my ethical decision making include a variety of topics that all will come together to form an ethical conclusion. One of the most core and essential factors within ethics is all about being fair and doing the overall right thing. When looking at the effects of an ethical dilemma, we want to make sure it is as fair of a decision as possible. An excellent way to make sure you are being honest with yourself when thinking through putting yourself in the shoes of each person impacted will allow for a general understanding. Ethics is not about giving one person or group an advantage over another; it is about ensuring everyone is treated with equal respect and thought. However, this can become quite difficult if the scenario is more extreme, as it will not always be possible to make everyone happy; some may even be angered by the decision. A typical example of an ethical scenario is that there is a train coming to a fork where it will either head straight and hit five civilians or you can turn a lever that will redirect the train to hit only one person. Would the correct move be to allow the train to follow its natural course or to take the life of the individual who was safe in order to save the other 5? As seen, it is no easy decision to make, and indeed, it isn't fair to one person to lose their life when they were not

meant to be hit in the first place. This is what makes these decisions so difficult, which is also why there are other means to determine an ethical outcome from a scenario.

This leads me on to a second important factor that guides my ethical decision making: the impact. Decisions are made everyday that affect groups of people in positive and negative ways. Making decisions that will presumably lead to the best outcome for the most people is an essential part of considering the answer to an ethical question. Although, truly understanding and being able to see how different groups of people are affected by decisions is not always the easiest. Putting yourself in the shoes of the affected group and analyzing the situation from many different angles will allow for a good understanding of what each decision may lead to.

However, another factor that guides my ethical decision making is justice. To be just is to make sure each person or group that will be affected by the decision will be treated equally and with respect to their needs. An example of where this may come into play is a possible situation where an apartment building was getting torn down with short notice and it was difficult for residents to find new locations. In this situation, the best thing to do would be to allow the residents time or resources to find a new location and give them a fair amount of time to not only find a new place but also move without too much of a rush. There are many occurrences in the real world where a similar situation occurs, and landlords give very little respect to their residents. Making a turn for the better and thinking through ethical situations with factors in mind will provide for more ethically correct answers rather than the answer that may put more money in one's pocket. Even in the scope of money for this situation, it may be more beneficial to form good relationships with residents as they may want to come live at a different location one may own. But at the end of the day, making sure everyone gets the respect they deserve is important in making ethical decisions.

Not every person will make the same judgments based on their resources and past life experience. This goes the same when it comes to making ethical decisions. Factors we view as important may change in one way or another as a person ages and their views are altered from

what they may have been in the past. I can personally say, my views have been altered between this year and last. This class has introduced me to many different scenarios and ethical perspectives that I would not have had accessible within my brain otherwise. Going back to my first previously mentioned value, fairness, my perspective has changed greatly. Prior to the beginning of this course, I may have thought that not every decision should be fair as the world itself is not a fair place. There are many decisions where I would've thought it may be better to prioritize one side over another, even though it may not be fair to some. This still may be the case in some scenarios as every question doesn't have an answer favorable to all. But being sure to be as fair as possible should always be a priority when it comes to many decisions. An example of this could be something as simple as being a parent to multiple children. Say one kid is naturally more gifted than another in school, and parents have to decide if they wanna invest more resources to try to continue elevating the gifted child while the others get the bad end of the stick and will not have access to as many supplemental resources. It may seem in their mind that the other kid isn't on the same level, so he doesn't deserve the same, but being fair would be to give both kids equal recourse and try to elevate them both. It's simple scenarios like this that allow us to pull apart our ethical roots and make a decision that is truly fair, where no one person is held at a higher value than others.

Going over to the second mentioned factor, impact is a crucial thing to consider when making ethical decisions. Coming into this class, I don't believe I was truly understanding just how much of an impact can be made through ethical decisions. Even simple decisions can carry a heavy burden on a person or group. There are many times that a cyber security worker may have to make decisions that carry heavy burdens. Making sure to understand how each burden will affect a person or group is crucial to making a correct ethical decision. An example of a possible ethical decision with a possibly large impact is deciding to be a whistleblower. This is a very risky and potentially dangerous act to commit, as companies and governments have grown to have the power to cause serious consequences to an individual whistleblowing. This is a very

impactful decision as if you do decide to whistleblow, the company or government you are working against could suffer major backlash or potential legal consequences if a strong enough basis is presented. While holding back information that the people should know could be an injustice to the people that the company is affecting with whatever action they may be committing. So, carefully considering your options and what impact each may bring can provide excellent consideration when making a decision. I understand this now after spending time in class, impact can be very easily overlooked but is actually among the most important when coming to a decision.

The final mentioned ethical decision factor was justice. Everyone hears the word justice throughout their lives and may relate it specifically to heroes or the police. I will admit I was slightly along these lines and never truly understood how justice is a normal consideration that should be made for any ethical decision. This view has changed vastly for me over the course of the class and I now understand that justice is not just capturing the bad guy but also making sure people or groups get what they deserve out of a decision if possible. This can be something as simple as distributing bonuses through a company. In this scenario, it would be unfair to distribute a large amount of the bonus pool to a certain section over another unless there was a clear difference in the work they were doing. Holding justice as a valuable consideration for ethical decision making will help ensure joy across the board rather than in a particular subsection of those affected.

In order to effectively implement these factors into my ethical decision making while pursuing my career goals, some soft skills will be important. A few soft skills that I believe will be most important include creativity, critical thinking, and leadership. Creativity may not be the first thing to pop into one's mind when it comes to thinking about skills needed for ethical decision making. Although, it is very important to think outside the box for alternative solutions than what may be presented to you from the beginning. It is very likely that there is always a better option; working your way through the options and finding the best possible fit is necessary to make a

strong and clear decision. Ways of trying to brew up some creative ideas or thoughts can include trying to observe a situation from multiple perspectives. Put yourself in the shoes of each person affected in each scenario and use that information to help build a basis for the potential impact a situation may have.

Critical thinking is also one of the, if not the most important soft skills to have and utilize during ethical decision making. Critical thinking is all about analyzing situations and using the obtained information to base a decision. Without thinking critically about a situation, there may be many different small but significant factors you could be missing out on. You should not only analyze and process the information you have been given but also expand on this by gathering others' opinions and using their input to continue creating an ideal solution. Critical thinking can be applied to almost any situation in one way or another, but a situation that relates closely to this class would be analyzing different security risks within a company and determining which risks hold a priority over others. This can be a difficult task as these decisions can have a large impact on a company if one was to think a high level security risk shouldn't be a priority at the time. Making sure to fully analyze a situation is important, as doing only half will get you only half a solution.

The final skill, leadership, is very important when it comes to making big decisions. The reasoning behind this is that people like to follow leaders, someone they can put their trust in. Holding a high level of leadership will ensure trust in your opinions. Without trust, there may be doubt in your solution which could lead to even worse circumstances than prior to the decision. Leadership also means having the ability to make hard decisions and not bring personal feelings into said decisions. This is extremely important as not every decision will be as simple as a yes or no, and sometimes you will have to lay down some really hard news or take a big risk. The reason it's important to not involve personal feelings is that it can create a bias in the decision and lead to a false solution that was made based on feelings rather than facts and available resources.

All of that being said, by no means will it be easy to fully implement and utilize all of the skills and factors for decision making. Stress may become a factor when big decisions come into play, and this can easily skew some of the previously established views. This is why I will utilize something such as a checklist or spreadsheet when it comes time to pull apart a situation and analyze it fully. This can prove very helpful and you can even add new ways to get a good look at the situation, such as a pros and cons list. Doing this will ensure proper situation analysis and will allow for the best available decision to be made. Another small yet helpful strategy to aid in decision making is the environment you are in. Being surrounded by a loud and stressful environment can take a lot away when making a decision. Being able to be in an environment that allows for clear thought is sure to make the process less stressful and better overall. This doesn't even have to be anywhere crazy, perhaps something as simple as walking over to a local cafe or a library where you are sure to find a decently calm environment. If struggling still comes after that, it may be valuable to talk to others with similar decision making skills and ask them for their input. This can provide another perspective on the situation and can open up new routes and solutions to explore. The thing to be aware of in this situation, though, is not letting others opinions be the main deciding factor of your decision. Using their opinions as a reference and resource rather than as an answer is crucial to making a decision that is sure to be strong.

So, it is now safe to say that there are many aspects that go into ethical decision making. Going back to the central three factors for ethical decision making, it is important to always factor in impact, justice, and fairness. With these factors being considered in a decision, it would be hard to make a poor decision. But thinking all the way through these decisions and deploying soft skills that assist with the decision is crucial. Important soft skills mentioned include creativity, leadership, and critical thinking. These are all valuable soft skills to have or develop for the future, as they will always be of use. Within the cyber security field, there will be many times when decisions will fall onto your shoulders, and you will have to take what you have and

come up with the most effective solution. This will not always be an easy task to accomplish, and struggling will come. Learning to deal with the struggling and deploying strategies to get around the stress is crucial to having a successful career in cyber security. With the use of all the mentioned ways to view a situation, one is sure to make good decisions in the future.