

Justin Templeton

6 May 2022

My Personal Ethics

A code of ethics can be used to help guide one through their life, and in most cases, this can be applied to work life as well. As a cyber security professional, ethical dilemmas can come up quite commonly as this job requires working with sensitive data and the wellbeing of peoples' lives, as well as law enforcement and Government compliances. Having hard set personal rules to follow in the workplace can make life much easier, particularly when it comes to handling dilemmas and conflicts of interest when they arise. While I do not view these ethics deontologically, it would not be hard to do that. Four things all codes of ethics should contain are responsibility, compassion, an indomitable spirit, and sustainability.

The first major aspect of my code of ethics is assurance in responsibility. What I mean by this is that it is important to build up professional relationships in a way that the people I am surrounded by trust that when I say that certain objectives will be accomplished, they will get done. This is one of the virtues that I have always tried to do my best at, improvement can always be made. One part that I have always struggled with is allowing others to take command of responsibility, especially in activities such as group projects. Responsibility does not ensure that things have to go perfectly smoothly or there cannot be changes to the status quo, but someone is always responsible for their contributions. When I take on responsibility, this means I will do to the best of my abilities to solve any problems that arise to get the job done. One story that I have heard multiple times, including in class discussions, is the tale of a manager taking

the credit for a responsibility that belonged to and was achieved by their subordinates. Part of holding responsibility is that in a written or social contract, one's credibility and reputation is on the line at all times. This goes for taking credit for someone else's actions, whether positive or negative, or doing actions on your own. This is quite a peculiar thing as gaining reputation for one group can also decrease it in another. This factoid can lead to separation and distrust in the workplace. On that hand, I believe that it is ethical to be honest and to take pride in one's work, but it is also important to be able to stand back and give credit to those above and below you. For example, if you are the manager of a team, talking with your boss, you cannot go over every single detail and who deserves credit, so one must be suave in how they speak in order to give yourself credit but to not discredit the others on your team. As we spoke about in class, incorporating the soft skill of communication and respectfulness into your daily lives will help with the slog of building reputation when starting out. These sorts of values are important when it comes to building relationships with others and your employer and can be applied by being approachable and appropriate in the workplace.

My second part of my code of ethics is compassion. I find it difficult to not become zeroed in on my work at times. It is often a good idea to take a step back and observe what is going on around you. I had a mentor at a previous job of mine say "Always look up and serve with a smile". What I take away from that is even though you may be incredibly busy or a personal matter is getting in the way of your work, it is important to remember that in most cases you are part of a team. You must ensure that you treat everyone with dignity and the respect you would like to be treated with in return. This part of ethics goes hand-in-hand with empathy, and as we spoke about in class, emotional intelligence can be just as valuable as intellectual

intelligence. Making people feel important and seen, as well as listening to their problems, are just two parts of a vast amount of coverage that emotional intelligence has. Being able to read others and other forms of situational awareness such as noticing when other members of the team need help are valuable soft skills that are at work here. This help doesn't necessarily need to be direct intervention, but just communicating with coworkers can be a valuable aspect to keep up the morale of others and the best part is that these actions normally come back around to you eventually. I have worked these values into my life by trying to use people's real names, especially in restaurants or retail stores. I also try to take a step back while working on a project and try to make sure that everyone feels like they are pulling their weight and not having their skills neglected.

The third part of my code of ethics is indomitable spirit. What I mean by this is to never throw in the towel when it is not appropriate, making it very similar to perseverance. It is not uncommon in a job to get a request that is not possible in general or by a tight deadline. When in a case like this, it is easy to realize that it is not possible and just coast, but I personally believe that this leads to slothfulness and my attitude becoming sluggish, which can impact my productivity and personal life. This is one of the areas I think I may struggle with in cyber security work as it is easy to get negative easily in this field, as there is always something negative going on or to be worried about. Having low morale for what you are doing makes it easier for your spirits to be broken. In class, we talked about how sectors of the workforce such as risk management can be socially problematic as your job is to report to higher ups about negative events. Reporting this news can lead to being the person bringing down the mood can be really tough and painful if not managed correctly, after all, who would want to be the informer

that data is being held at ransom. It is important for cyber security professionals to build up communication and stress management skills in order to get work done and report to others without bringing down the mood of others or yourself. The lower the morale of a cyber security team is, the more likely said team is to experience delays on a development cycle or get into legal troubles due to making a mistake. Building up an indomitable spirit requires you to remember that work, and hence in this case cyber security and cyber crime, are just part of work. While this is important, you need to communicate to co-workers in ways unrelated to your work, whether that be other facets of the job or life in general. Other ways to work this skill into your life include doing your best to live in the present. It is easy when working with technology to be looking forward to or being scared of upcoming advancements or events, but focusing on the current decisions and events is a good way of maintaining optimism and not overthinking small details. Having the ability to distract yourself and others the constant negative that cyber security can be is a valuable skill that all should learn.

The last part in my code of ethics is sustainability. At first read, this may seem like a very odd choice for a code of ethics, but I think it is important to remember that respect and all of the other topics I have been speaking of so far all take place in the present. Sustainability in this context can also mean the more traditional term of leaving things as you found them. Making ecological choices to reduce a carbon footprint is good and makes common sense, and is being compassionate towards those in the future, but that doesn't have to do much with cybersecurity. When I mention sustainability, I mean how topics such as reputation and spirit can be affected by past projects needing to be rejuvenated with the need to be worked on. In class, we spoke about how at times a team receives a project of looking at someone else's code who no longer works at

the firm and updating for a new use. This team will run into issues if the original designer did not consider sustainability, but only functionality into said code. Trying to go back and read code from a year ago when you were the writer is hard enough, but someone else reading may just be impossible. Adding well placed comments and explanations can be super useful in being sustainable. Being considerate of others in this manner can also mean adding features such as paths to future updates and patches to the code or the underlying API's or hardware. The soft skills that can help with this are time management with a dash of enthusiasm, as we have all finished a large coding project and then loathed going back to comment on it well. While it may be tedious and annoying to go back and make a diagram of an internal network, it can also be dangerous as if someone who should not see it does, it could result in repercussions for you and the company. Being good at future proofing projects is an immensely powerful skill that companies look for and strive to instill in their employees, so adding sustainability to your internal checklist of things to do when working on a project could pay off handsomely. I think that I fall into the coding pitfall that most people do and that we spoke about in class, and that is that I will finish a large project, be glad it works, and then want to move on instead of trying to document it. I have met people who say to document it while writing, but that only works in certain situations. This is something that I think is important, but that everyone can strive to do better with.

The textbook mentions a part of ethics that I have never seen accurately like how it is, but I think it is really valuable. It says "It is not intended that the individual parts of the Code be used in isolation to justify errors of omission or commission." on page 506. I see this as important as it would be easy enough to justify poor judgment and actions based on only part of a code of

ethics. If one aspect of it is removed, it becomes much weaker and easier for potentially harmful ethical actions to slip past.

In conclusion, I believe that my cyber security code of ethics can be best summarized by the four virtues of responsibility, courtesy, indomitable spirit, and sustainability. These four lay the cornerstones of my Code of Ethics and the Code is not complete without any of these four. The soft skills of communication, leadership, situational awareness, and compassion towards yourself, others in your team, and everyone around you elevate the code of ethics to a more effective and useful place.