

Possibly Ambiguous Personal Ethical Code

As a mathematician, my field underlies all scientific research and industry. Mathematical developments can be so abstract that they have almost no impact at all on science as a whole, or they can be so broad-reaching that they lead to developments across the board. Therefore, the importance and ramifications of mathematical research are extremely hard to define. This is why consideration must be given to the morality of all proceedings at all times. I am attempting to enter into a career that will be both exciting and secretive, and this makes it even more important to always attempt to consider all possible consequences of what I am working on *and* be careful with how the work is conducted.

Above all, I vouch to always comply with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the United Nations. This includes actions during research and also the possible impacts of any research I do. Although the UDHR is sometimes ambiguous, I hold a personal ethical code on human rights, which I think is much stricter. It boils down to never knowingly physically or emotionally harming another human being, including by omission of action if there is any way in which I can help someone. This also means that I must consider the ramifications of any work I do on people everywhere, and must never let myself do anything that could hurt another person. I will always attempt to make my definition of 'hurt' in the previous sentence include feelings, as much as it would ever be in my power to avoid that. I will never discriminate against a person for traits that are out of their control, or hold prejudices against another person, unless the person is choosing to act like a jerk. Even then, I believe in second chances, unless the actions were really despicable. This applies to interactions in both my personal and professional lives. I expect myself to maintain constancy of character between both.

If in the course of my career, I find myself in the position to publish a paper, I will ensure that the material it covers is accurate, relevant, necessary and authentic. I truly will never put myself in a type of position where I have a quota to fill by publishing papers for the sake of publishing, rather than for the merit of the content. I fear that in such a position, I would be tempted to publish frivolous or trivial ideas, and that would be a waste of my time and the time of every person who tries to read it. I will always give credit to others, proportional to their contributions. I will refuse credit for work that I feel I did not contribute to, or credit that is disproportional to my contributions. I will keep ample documentation of everything I do, even if it must be held in a confidential vault, so that the work could be reproduced or verified. This last part should not really be a problem for me, since I am an incredible pack rat of documents.

If (when) I find that I have made a mistake, whether it's in a publication or just in my process of doing anything, regardless of the size of the project, I will notify the appropriate people of my error as soon as I realize it so that it can be corrected. Even small mistakes in seemingly insignificant projects can have unforeseen impacts. I will always do my work as quickly as I can while still being careful, since I would neither like to waste my time nor find it ethical to waste the money of my benefactors. I will never knowingly undermine the work of another. I will never be dishonest or any less than candid about the work I am doing, except as restricted for security purposes. I will, however, never reveal anything that, by virtue of being exposed, could cause harm to a person or entity. I will never intimidate or coerce anybody into doing anything.

In the spirit of being completely frank, I would like to mention that I researched the ethical codes of the following organizations to help me develop my own: American Mathematical Society: <http://www.ams.org/about-us/governance/policy-statements/sec-ethics>; Mathematical Association of America: <http://www.maa.org/aboutmaa/whistleblowerpolicy.html>; Society for Industrial and Applied Mathematics: <http://www.siam.org/about/science/sci-pol.php>; Universal Declaration of Human Rights: <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/>.