Morals for your story


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Dilemma 1

This last summer I had an internship for a Petroleum Company. I had two different supervisors, depending on whether I was working in the office or in the oil field for the week. When I was working in the oil field, I heard rumors from "pumpers" that my supervisor had been selling old pipe from the field that belonged to the company as scrap metal and pocketing the cash. I never saw it done, and I didn't know how valid the claims were. However, I learned this semester that an investigation is being done on the specific oil field I worked in focusing on missing equipment. I don't know if this includes the pipe or not. I got to know my field supervisor very well and do not want to cause any unnecessary grief. Am I morally obligated to call the company and let them know the rumors I heard, or if they contact me, should I play dumb or tell them the claims that were made against my supervisor? How do I decide what to do? --Play Dumb?

Responses to Dilemma 1

I do not believe that it is your moral responsibility to seek out the company and tell them what you heard about your supervisor stealing the pipe. It would be a different story if you saw it first hand, but it is not smart to jump to conclusions and make snap-decisions based off of rumors. If the company contacts you, however, I believe it is your responsibility to tell them about the rumors (make sure to specify that you heard rumors and don't know anything concrete). I say this because you should be aware of being included in the missing equipment discussion as a conspirator if you stay silent and the company finds out that you know something.

--Burt R.

If your goal is to be a virtuous and honest person, then you should tell the company about the rumors that you heard, especially if they call you asking for information. You can always add a disclaimer saying that you know they are only rumors, and you have not seen any evidence of your supervisor selling the pipe yourself. If it turns out that your supervisor was selling the old pipe, then he has brought the grief upon himself, and you have simply done the right thing by helping to right this situation.

--Honesty Virtuoso

You do not know whether the rumors you heard about your supervisor are true. If you are contacted about this issue, that means the investigation has already turned out suspicions about your supervisor. Because all you heard is rumors, all you can do is confirm that there are suspicions. It is most likely that your word on this will not have an impact, so the consequences will not be significantly swayed either way. If you look at the most moral thing to do as the thing with the best consequences for the most amount of people, then it won't matter either way. Because the impact is insignificant, you should do the right thing simply because it is right in itself and tell the truth if you are contacted. Furthermore, if you are not contacted, you are not obligated to contact someone with the investigation. Telling the truth is the moral thing to do, but not saying anything is not lying.

--Ryan

Dilemma 2

My parents have been divorced since I was in middle school. I, along with my two older siblings stayed with my mom after the divorce, and my dad moved out. My dad was not really my favorite person, because the way he acts sometimes embarrasses me to call him my dad, especially when he is being a jerk to people. My mom has been there for me, and she has provided everything that my siblings and I need. Now though with all three of her children in college (two of us at Mines), my mom is beginning to have a lot of financial trouble. Also I have noticed that since coming to college, not only does my mom tell me more about things that stress her like her finances, but also my dad has been making strong attempts to get me to spend time with him.

Now here is where the dilemma comes in. I feel like I have a responsibility to be helping my mom out with her finances, but all of the money that I am making goes toward my car payments and buying gas, and the small extra amount is used for the random outings with my friends. But then I thought about daddy. I always am joking with my friends that when I need money, I just go to daddy for some. This time though, I am contemplating whether or not I should ask my dad to pay my car payments, and give the money that I used for car payments to my mom. Should I go to my dad for money? Should I even be worrying about giving money to my mom? Do I really have an obligation or responsibility to be helping my mom out financially?

--Financial Burden

Responses to Dilemma 2

You have to feel some amount of responsibility for someone who made you a priority in her life (a single mother no less!) for 20 years. You have spent your way into moral and economic servitude to this lady. Any moral responsibility? Dude you owe interest! You are, at the very least, morally obligated to squeeze your sugar daddy like the IRS. Work that. I assume your dad himself is financially well off of course.

--Keith Schumacher

Seeing as I am also a student attending Mines, also with divorced parents and a mother helping with finances, I can really relate to your problem. My mother has an agreement with me and my siblings (one of whom goes to Mines as well) that she will pay for all of the expenses of one year of college, and the rest is on us. I have put a lot of effort into obtaining scholarships to take some of the burden off of her, because I do not believe that it is the parents’ responsibility to put children through school. If they choose to save up for that, it is one thing. But expecting it is highly self-centered in my opinion.
The fact alone that you are attending the School of Mines implies that you will most likely be making enough money to live pleasantly when you are older. Therefore, I think it is not unreasonable to take out your own loans to help take some of the burden off of your mother. Asking your father for financial help is totally acceptable in my opinion, but I would not rely on it.

--Scholarships and Loans to the Rescue

Yes you should help your mom out financially. From what it sounds like you father wants to be part of your life; if helping you through college makes him feel like he’s a bigger part of your life then there is no problem getting financial help from him. If you're getting financial help from your father it will free you up to help support your mother, who raised you and helped get you to where you are today. You should have no qualms about wanting to help your mom, and if your father wants to help you then you now have a way to help her.

--Nathan

From Immanuel Kant's, deontology, in this circumstance you should not use your father as a means, but instead respect his value as a person, and leave it upon himself to financially support you or your mom if he so chooses. Additionally, deontology would argue that you shouldn’t spend time with your dad in order to receive money. According to deontology, determining what's moral and immoral relies majorly on the motive behind one's actions. Therefore, spending time with your dad for the sole purpose of receiving money would be immoral. As for supporting your mom, it would seem logical to help out as much as you can. As you mentioned, she has given you everything you need.

--Don't Be a Daddy's Boy/Girl

According to John Stuart Mill's theory of Utility, the ethical response in any situation is the one that produces the greatest good for all involved. If you were to consider important in a good friend. Does telling him your girlfriend is cheating show your loyalty to him, your honesty, or show him respect? I believe it does all of the three, and as a good friend you should tell him. Do it gently by all means, but tell him nonetheless!

--Erika

College relationships are similar to a carousel. You ride that horse and buggy for a while and get some angular momentum with that special someone, then the organ music gets too repetitive and you find a new ride at the carnival. Maybe the girl on your hall thought a particular display of testosterone was enticing for a while, but this didn't meet her prerequisites for the long haul. Mathematically the guy/girl ratio at this school supports matriarchal efforts to find male suitors in that they simply have more choice available. During these formative years, we all must try as much as possible to determine exactly what it is we want to feel in a relationship. This idea on occasion may preclude any preconceived notions of what we perceive as fidelity. This is simply because at this age we don't know what we want. Experience is the only guide that anyone can have in a place as subjective as relationships.

So to Snitch, I believe your empathy for your friend in his boyfriend role is altruistic and well-placed. Telling him that you saw his lady love making out real hard in a hallway may not be the best option. Hearing such news from someone else is not conducive to effectively resolving an issue and getting into a lover's quarrel that isn't your own won't help your sanity. To Ditch, your energy is better spent being a supportive friend in his times of need, in that you shouldn't get involved until properly prompted. Maybe next time you casually walk past and see the girl getting tender and frisky with another man, you should politely yell, "HONESTY is the underpinning to any healthy relationship!"

--R.P.

If you want to maximize the happiness, or rather minimize the unhappiness, of everyone involved, then you should talk to the girl on your hall, rather than her boyfriend. You should tell her that she needs to break up with her boyfriend, or quit cheating. Doing one of these two things will cause some unhappiness of either the boyfriend or the scandalous mystery boy. If you were to instead confront the boyfriend, it will likely turn out detrimental and ruin the friendship of your hall mate and the boyfriend forever. If you do nothing, it is likely that the boyfriend will find out himself, also resulting in a ruined friendship between the hall mate and her boyfriend. If you want to look out for everyone, counsel your hall mate. Don't be too harsh on her though, cause let's face it—statistically all of us Mines guys have to share our girlfriends with two other dudes.

- My girlfriend's cheating too

Personally, I expect a friend to be loyal, honest, and respectful. You say that you consider this boy a good friend, so you should brainstorm the traits that you consider important in a good friend. Does telling him his girlfriend is cheating show your loyalty to him, your honesty, or show him respect? I believe it does all of the three, and as a good friend you should tell him. Do it gently by all means, but tell him nonetheless!

--Erika

According to John Stuart Mill's theory of Utility, the ethical response in any situation is the one that produces the greatest good for all involved. If you were to not tell your friend or the girl you would feel unhappy (due to guilt) and your friend would most likely be extremely unhappy catching his girl friend with another man. If you did tell him, your friend would be unhappy because of the girlfriend's betrayal which would be less severe than his unhappiness at her
betrayal compounded with your bad friendship. You would also be happier if you told him what was going on and got it off your chest. It is hard to tell whether or not the girlfriend would be happy in either situation (she might have wanted to get caught). Based on this, you should tell your friend about what you saw. The consequences of your actions will likely cause the couple to talk in private about their issues which will cause happiness for everyone in your dorm, which is an added bonus.

--Krista

According to Kant, we cannot take a certain course of action unless we can wish that everyone in the world would take the same course of action. Can you wish that everyone in the world would let people get away with lying? If you can't then you should tell the boyfriend, but you shouldn't just bluntly tell him his girlfriend is cheating on him. Have a conversation with him and broach the topic of his relationship gently. Chances are he has suspicions already. Although you may not want to see him get hurt, he will find out the truth eventually and will be even more hurt if he finds out that you knew and didn't tell him.

-The Truth Shall Set You Free

Dilemma 4
My friend became sick for a week and he was falling behind on our group project. Besides a page and a half of an underdeveloped analysis, I ended up doing most of the 45 page project by myself. Peer evaluations will be handed out after the project is over and a large part of our grade is based on that evaluation. How should I answer when I'm asked, "Did your partner do his share of the work?" If I tell my professors the truth, they might dock off his grade. To be fair, he is a good friend of mine and he has helped me out in many instances in the past over non-school related issues. Should I help him out since he has been a great friend to me and because he was sick? Or should I tell the truth and be a disloyal friend?

--Disloyal Friend or Lying Doormat

Responses to Dilemma 4
If your friend did put their best foot forward in an attempt to help with the project, then say so in your evaluation. People get sick in the real world too; it is an expected part of life. Most professors I know recognize this fact—recognize that the person contributed as best they could, and grade accordingly. Moreover, the professor would see that you went above and beyond the call of duty to complete the project in a satisfactory manner even though your partner was sick. On the other hand, if your friend waited until the last minute to contribute to the project and then tried to blame his lack of effort on being sick, then this is another matter altogether. In this case, if you lied on the peer evaluation, then your friend would simply be getting a good grade for doing nothing on the project in addition to using you as a means to that grade. The fact that this is a good friend to you outside of class should not be reflected in the grade for an assignment; including this information in your decision would be unfair to the other students in the class.

Tell the professor the facts as you know them. Your friend will also have to fill out a peer evaluation, at which point they can state the facts from their perspective. The professor should then take these statements into account while grading. Do not try to adjust the peer evaluation in order to try and influence the desired outcome. Let the professor grade as he or she sees fit using accurate facts.

--The Power of Pure Truth

It's not being a disloyal friend to tell the truth here. As Kant would tell you it's unethical to lie to anyone for any reason. So lying on the evaluation would be unethical. Just because your friend was sick does not mean he is no longer responsible for the work and any grade solution he gets should come from him talking it out with the teacher. Academically, he should hold his own and not rely on favors to make it through classes.

-Mitch

If all society had one group who worked hard and another who leeched off the hard workers, society would fail. Having this been said, your friend should have worked his butt off to get caught up and add to the final presentation. In this case he should be held responsible for not working hard to catch up. I do understand that he was sick for a week, which is difficult, but it is not an excuse for an entire semester long project. Since you did do the project, you are already boosting his grade a ton because you were able to complete the project. In this case he should not receive those extra points.

--Your Friend