US ARMY SERGEANTS MAJOR ACADEMY
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Developing Organizations and Leaders

Developing Ethical Organizations

Ethical Decision Making: Using the "Ethical Triangle" Dr. Jack D. Kem*

Doing the right thing is good. Doing the right thing for the right reason and with the right goal is better.

ADRP 6-22, *Army Leadership*, para 3-27

Background

In May 1968 Soldiers of Charlie Company, 11th Infantry Brigade of the Americal Division entered the village of My Lai in Vietnam and within three hours over 500 civilians had been massacred. This horrible memory of the United States Army at war was again remembered in 2004 as the case of the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq exposed atrocities that were an embarrassment for the military. The war in Iraq also had a number of high profile cases that related to ethical behavior, such as the court-martial for six reservists who had "scrounged" vehicles to deliver supplies to troops in the field and the scene of a marine reacting to a perceived threat and subsequently killing an unarmed Iraqi prisoner in a mosque in Fallujah. In recent years, the misconduct of senior commanders and Sergeants Major has also received notoriety and embarrassment to the military.

In all of these cases the public has had widely different opinions of how to treat the military involved in the incidents. For Lieutenant Calley and those involved in My Lai, many in the public viewed the actions of Charlie Company as understandable because of the nature of the war in 1968, everyone seemed to be the enemy and the "search and destroy" missions of that time were based upon intelligence that indicated the enemy was using hamlets such as My Lai for refuge. As a result, the punishment for all of those involved in My Lai was very light or nonexistent; Lieutenant Calley was the only one convicted, but he only served three days in prison and was pardoned by President Nixon after serving three and a half years on "house arrest."[1] For the cases in Iraq, the reaction was mixed in the public, from widespread support for the Marine in Fallujah and the reservists who "scrounged" vehicles, to disgust at the Abu Ghraib cases and calls for courts-martial for senior officials.

These highly publicized cases admittedly involve only a small portion of the military, but have had an impact on the culture and climate of the military. These ethical issues indicate a need for a closer look at the ethical reasoning and decision making processes of the military. This article will briefly discuss the current doctrinal approach for ethical reasoning in the Army, followed by an alternative approach for ethical decision making.

The Army's Current Approach to Ethical Reasoning

The United States Army prides itself on being a "value-based" institution, with the admonition in its doctrine to "do what is right." In the Army's leadership manual it states that "leaders draw from deep-rooted values and professional competence to demonstrate resolve to do what is right at the right time for the right reason."[2] The manual continues by stating the "leaders of integrity do the right thing because

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their character permits nothing less. To instill the Army values in others, leaders must demonstrate them."[3] The leadership manual continues with the list of "values" that define character for Soldiers using the acronym *LDRSHIP*: loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, and personal courage. [4]

The Army's current leadership manual contains a relatively short section on the subject of ethical reasoning. The description of ethical reasoning starts with the following:

> *To be an ethical leader requires more than knowing the Army values. Leaders must be able to apply them to find moral solutions to diverse problems. Ethical reasoning must occur during the operations process. Leaders consider ethics in planning, preparing, executing, and assessing operations.*[5]

> *Ethical choices may be between right and wrong, shades of gray, or two rights. Some problems center on an issue requiring special consideration of what is most ethical. Leaders use multiple perspectives to think about ethical concerns, applying the following perspectives to determine the most ethical choice. One perspective comes from the view that desirable virtues such as courage, justice, and benevolence define ethical outcomes. A second perspective comes from the set of agreed-upon values or rules, such as the Army values or Constitutional rights. A third perspective bases the consequences of the decision on whatever produces the greatest good for the greatest number as most favorable.*[6]

> *Army leaders are expected to do the right things for the right reasons. It is why followers count on their leaders to be more than just technically and tactically proficient. They rely on them to make ethical decisions. Determining what is right and ethical can be difficult.*[7]

The Army's leadership manual continues by stating that "ethical reasoning is complex in practice" and "no formula will work every time." The last paragraph of the ethical reasoning section states:

> *Ethical reasoning is complex in practice. If time allows in particularly ill-defined situations, using concepts from the Army Design Methodology (see ADRP 5-0) can help to frame the right problem and consider ethical implications in detail. Resolving ethical problems requires critical thinking based on the Army values. No formula will work every time. By embracing the Army values to govern personal actions, developing an understanding of regulations and orders, learning from experiences, and applying ethical reasoning, leaders will be better prepared to face tough decisions.*[8]

Unfortunately, these passages from the Army's leadership manual does not provide a lot of guidance on how to address ethical issues, other than to embrace the Army values. Although I agree that all Soldiers should embody the Army values, the term itself is problematic. These traits of loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, and personal courage are more properly thought of as *virtues*. None of the Army values is more important than the others; all Soldiers are expected to embody all of these traits as part of their character. Values, however, indicate a relative worth or importance–we value a quarter more than a dime; a quarter has more "value" than the dime. In fact, the Army's leadership manual describes the virtues-based approach as an ethical perspective that "comes from the view that desirable virtues such as courage, justice, and benevolence define ethical outcomes."[9] We will discuss more about virtues and the "virtues-based approach to ethics" later.

Defining the Ethical Dilemma

The Army's leadership manual also states that "Ethical choices may be between right and wrong, shades of gray, or two rights."[10] Let's look at this in detail.

When an ethical choice is between right and wrong, deciding what to do is more of an issue of moral courage to do what is right. If the choice is this clear, it should not pose a problem for leaders of character. Dr. Donald “Ducky” Mallard (David McCallum) in the CBS television series NCIS stated that “The ethical man knows he shouldn’t cheat on his wife, whereas the moral man actually wouldn’t.” As this clearly shows, ethics is the study of what is right and wrong, morality is concerned with the issue of “what should be.”[11]

Determining what is the ethical or moral thing to do when the choices are between shades of gray or between two rights is much more difficult. This is the case of ethical dilemmas–when virtues come into conflict with each other or when you have to make a choice that either upholds one “right virtue” or another “right virtue.” Ethical dilemmas essentially consist of competing virtues that we consider important but which we cannot simultaneously honor.[12]

To bring clarity to an ethical dilemma it is useful to define the problem–the ethical dilemma–in terms of a “right versus right” conflict. There are four common “right versus right” dilemmas that can be used to define the problem–truth versus loyalty, individual versus community, short term versus long term, and justice versus mercy.[13] Defining ethical dilemmas in these terms is difficult at first, but this process helps to define the problem and set up the testing of the problem against ethical standards. To define a problem in terms of “right versus wrong” either defines a problem that isn’t an ethical dilemma–or, worse yet, pre-defines the solution to the problem since one virtue or value is stated in a positive way while the other virtue or value is stated in a negative way.

Four Common “Right versus Right” Ethical Dilemmas

- Truth versus Loyalty
- Individual versus Community
- Short term versus Long term
- Justice versus Mercy

Figure 1. Common Ethical Dilemmas

The Army’s leadership manual states that “leaders will be better prepared to face tough decisions” by “embracing the Army values to govern personal actions, developing an understanding of regulations and orders, learning from experiences, and applying ethical reasoning.”[14] Knowing the Army values, understanding the rules, and drawing from experience should not give a predetermined answer to an ethical dilemma. Before developing possible courses of action, “defining the problem” in terms of the ethical dilemma (right versus right) should be done first. After defining the ethical dilemma, an analysis of potential “courses of action” or action choices should then be made. Based upon an analysis of an ethical dilemma, there will normally be two obvious courses of action; to do something or to not do something. Keeping these two options in mind–while being open to a possible, unthought-of alternative ‘third choices’ (such as ‘win-win’ possibilities or no decision at all), should help set the stage for testing the actions that appear to be obvious.

Three Alternative Bases for Ethics

Once an actor has defined the problem in terms of ‘right versus right’ and identified the obvious courses of action, these courses of action should be tested against three completely different criteria for ethical decision making. They are: rules or principles-based approach; utilitarian or consequences-based approach; and virtues-based approach. These are the three basic schools of thought for ethics–the “ethical triangle”–which are worthy of further study for clarification.

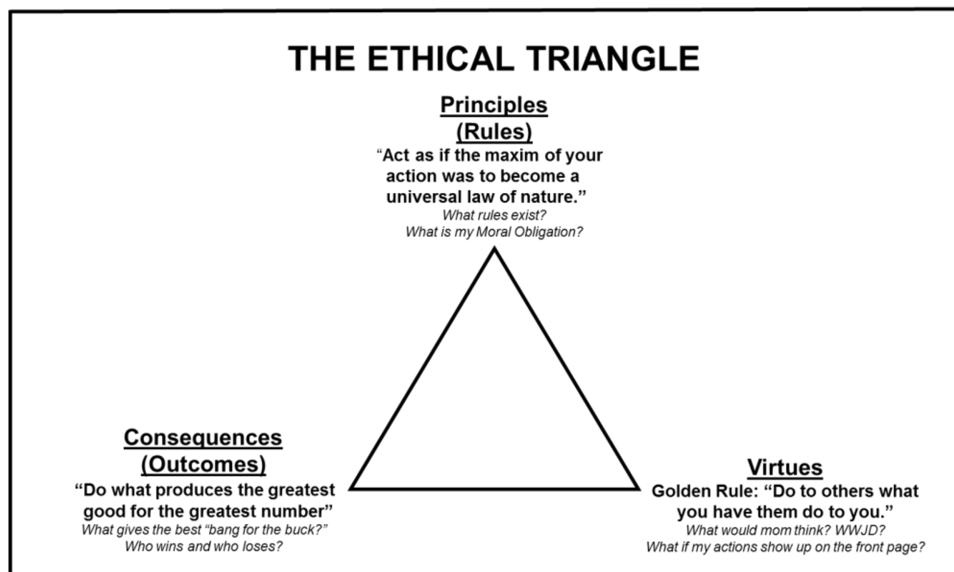

Figure 2. The "Ethical Triangle"

The Ethical Triangle: The ethical triangle considers these three different approaches to ethical reasoning. As the Army's leadership manual states, "Leaders use multiple perspectives to think about ethical concerns, applying the following perspectives to determine the most ethical choice. One perspective comes from the view that desirable virtues such as courage, justice, and benevolence define ethical outcomes. A second perspective comes from the set of agreed-upon values or rules, such as the Army values or Constitutional rights. A third perspective bases the consequences of the decision on whatever produces the greatest good for the greatest number as most favorable.[15] The ethical triangle considers these three different perspectives. In much of the literature, including products produced by the Center for the Army Profession and Ethic (CAPE), these perspectives are described as "the ethical lenses."

There are a number of questions that could be asked about these three perspectives. Which of the ethical philosophies are the most useful–rules or principles-based ethics, utilitarian or consequences-based ethics, or virtues-based ethics? Which one of the philosophies is the best fit for human behavior? All three appear to have some merit; all three can be used for decision-making as "distinct filters that reveal different aspects of a situation requiring an ethical choice."[16] To only consider one of the different theoretical bases runs the risk of being one-sided in analysis. Whether principles, consequences, or virtues provide the true reasons for ethical decision-making, all three of the theories and their lineage are useful for gaining insight into the complexity of ethical decision making.

Principles-based ethics (Rules): Principles, or rule-based ethics, has one primary philosopher that rises as the strongest voice–Immanuel Kant. Principle-based ethics is defined in many ways, but one general definition is that one should not act according to the consequences of an action, but instead according to agreed-upon or settled values and principles.[17] Kant states that "the moral worth of an action does not lie in the effect in which is expected from it or in any principle of action which has to borrow its motive from this expected effect."[18] From this emphasis on moral worth–regardless of the consequences of actions–Kant derives one categorical imperative, "Act as if the maxim of your action was to become a universal law of nature." Morality is found in following rules that are absolute with no exceptions, come what may–and by following this imperative, society and individuals will be better off.[19] Man knows, in

Kant's view, what is right and moral and merely has to choose to do what is right–just as he would have others do in the same situation.

Thomas Hobbes' social contract theory did not go as far as Kant in his philosophy of following rules without exception, but is generally accepted as a principles or rules-based approach. Hobbes' view was that people have a common knowledge of natural laws–of the principles that all should understand. His writings described the theory that there is a "natural law" in which man's nature is determined by the sum of all his experiences and abilities, yet as a result of these experiences there is a common understanding of what is right and wrong. Hobbes defines natural law, or a law of nature, as "a precept or general rule, found out by reason, by which a man is forbidden to do what is destructive of his life or takes away of preserving the same." [20] Because of this common understanding, written laws and agreements in society should be based upon a rational self-interest to benefit all for a peaceful society. Knowing these common laws, coupled with mutual trust in others, provides an incentive for all to cooperate in a consistent, principled manner.

When looking at ethical dilemmas through the 'lens' of principles, or rule-based ethics, consideration must be made for the rules that exist–or should exist. The consequences of actions are not considered–but the principles related to the actions one makes in response to the ethical dilemma. Kant's categorical imperative, "Act as if the maxim of your action was to become a universal law of nature," should help to focus the decisions made using this approach. The key questions to ask when considering the principles or rules-based approach would be "what rules exist" and "what are my moral obligations?"

Consequences-based ethics (outcomes): The second general basis for ethics is consequences-based ethics, or utilitarianism, which is closely aligned with the philosopher John Stuart Mill. Ethical decisions determined under this basis are made on the likely consequences or results of the actions. "Decisions are judged by their consequences depending on the results to be maximized–security, happiness, pleasure, dignity, and the like."[21] The utility of an action, or how that action produces happiness, is "the ultimate appeal on all ethical questions" that is "grounded on the permanent interests of man" according to Mill.[22]

Both Georg W.F. Hegel and David Hume are considered utilitarians. Hume is considered to be an ethical subjectivist, which holds that right and wrong are relative to the attitudes of each individual–morality is a matter of sentiment rather than fact.[23] Hegel emphasized the consequences of actions as a part of the actions themselves.[24] He stated the principle "judge an act by its consequences, and make them the standard of what is right and good," which, according to Hegel, provides the basis for law.

> *… by the theft of a bread a property is no doubt injured. Still, if the act was the means of prolonging life, it would be wrong to consider it as ordinary theft. If the man whose life is in danger were not allowed to preserve himself, he would be without rights; and since his life is refused him, his whole freedom is denied to him also. Hence only the need of the immediate present can justify a wrong act. Yet the act is justified, because the agent, abstaining from it, would commit the highest wrong, namely, the total negation of his realized freedom.*[25]

Friedrich Nietzsche may also be considered a utilitarian, but a flawed utilitarian–a hedonistic, selfish utilitarian. Nietzsche provides perhaps the most disturbing theory of ethics–not only because of its implications for society, but because of its apparent appeal to many. Nietzsche did not believe that there is a universal definition of a "good man," but instead each man should be different with different traits.[26] Nietzsche defines "good" not in terms of a person's relationship with others, but rather in terms of the person's relationship to himself. He writes that ethical philosophers look for good in the wrong place: "the judgment 'good' does not originate with those to whom the good has been done. Rather it was the 'good' themselves, that is to say the noble, mighty, highly placed, and high-minded who decreed themselves and their actions to be good…."[27]

When looking at ethical dilemmas through the 'lens' of consequences-based ethics, or utilitarianism, consideration must be made for who wins and who loses–the consequences of actions are the prime considerations. John Stuart Mill should help to focus the decisions made using this approach: "Do what produces the greatest good for the greatest number." Key questions to ask when considering the consequences-based ethics or utilitarianism would be "what gives the biggest bang for the buck" and "who wins and loses?"

Virtues-based ethics (virtues): Plato and Aristotle provided the first ethics theory–virtue, or in today's political language, "character matters." The focus in virtue ethics is not on "what one should do" but rather "what kind of person should one be?" Good character, or virtues, is central to virtue theory.[28] According to Plato, men must be given the right instruction on what is good: "given the right instruction, it must grow to the full flower of excellence; but if a plant is sown and reared in the wrong soil, it will develop every contrary defect."[29] Morality and virtue are skills learned from others–not theoretical knowledge, but knowledge put into practice.[30]

Aristotle emphasized virtue as desirable for society so that all may become good citizens and law-abiding people. This human goodness is not goodness of body, but of the soul. Aristotle describes virtues in two categories: intellectual and moral. For example, wisdom and understanding are considered intellectual virtues, while liberality and temperance are moral virtues. All of these virtues are gained through knowledge and application of the virtues–by exercising and actually doing virtuous acts.[31]

Virtues-based ethics differs from principles-based and consequences-based ethics in several basic ways. First, virtue based ethics is based upon learning from others rather than by the individual coming to the realization of what is ethical; this process is learned from others. Second, in applying principles-based and consequences-based ethics, there is a right answer and a wrong answer. For example, in Kantian principles-based ethics, your actions are guided by what is or should be the law for everyone; in consequences-based ethics, your actions are guided by what gives the greatest benefit to the greatest number.

In virtues-based ethics, it's not that easy–there is a middle ground known as the *golden mean*. Virtues, by their very nature, have to be applied in a judicious manner. For example, it is necessary to have confidence, but one can have an excess of confidence (rashness) or a defect of confidence (cowardice); the *golden mean* of confidence is courage. One can have an excess of shame (bashfulness), a defect of shame (shamelessness), and a *golden mean* of modesty.[32] Learning how to have the *golden mean* of a particular attribute is a lifetime endeavor, learned from others and experience.

When looking at ethical dilemmas through the "lens" of virtues-based ethics, consideration must be made for what a virtuous person would do. The Golden Rule can be used to focus the decisions made using this approach: "Do to others what you would have them do to you." Key questions to ask when considering virtues-based ethics would be "what would my mom think?" or "what if my actions showed up on the front page of the newspaper?" For some, the question could be the popular question among some Christians of "what would Jesus do?"

Using the Ethical Triangle for Ethical Decision Making

Now that we have discussed how to define an ethical dilemma in terms of right versus right, have considered potential courses of action or action choices, and have understood the different ethical perspectives that are used in the ethical triangle, it is time to put it all together in a model for ethical decision making. The steps in this approach are:

- Define the problem (ethical dilemma) in terms of right vs. right

- Consider alternative courses of action or action choices
- Test the courses of action against the “ethical triangle”
  1. Principles-based ethics (rules)
  2. Consequences-based ethics (outcomes)
  3. Virtues-based ethics (virtues)

- Consider additional alternative courses of action (such as ‘win-win’ possibilities or no decision)
- Choose the course of action or action choice
- Implement the course of action

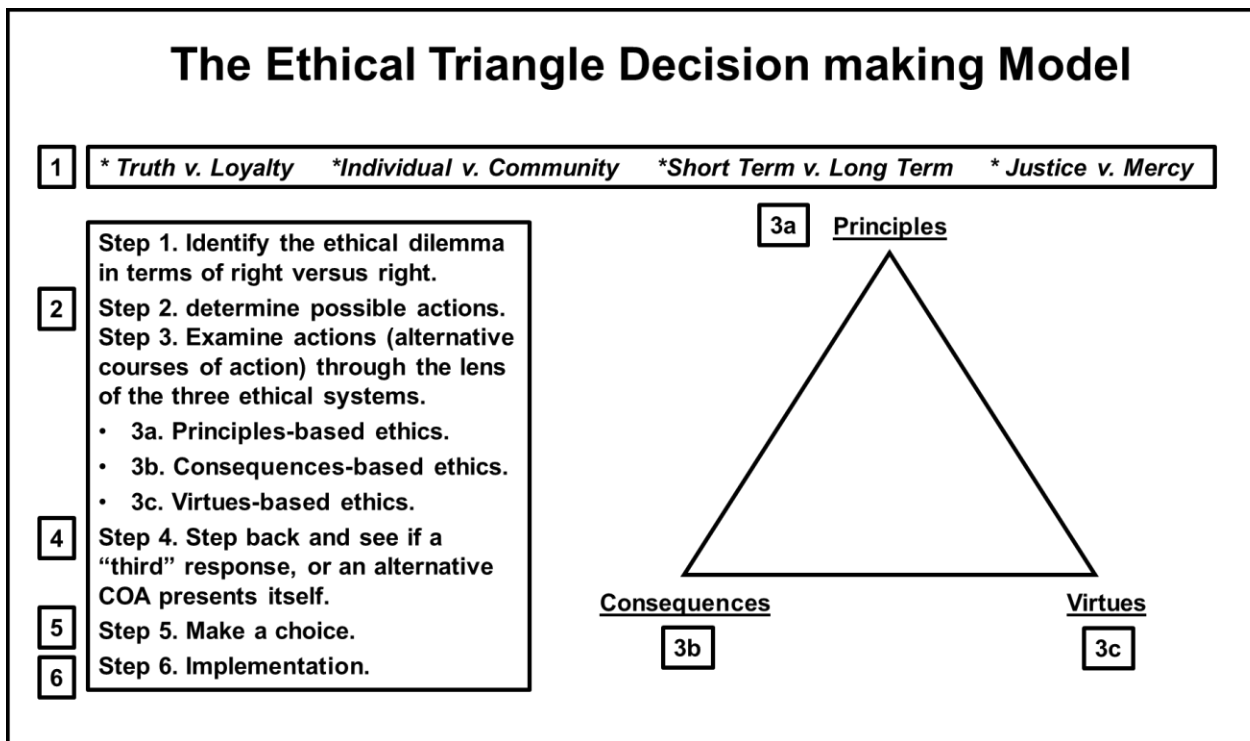

Figure 3. The “Ethical Triangle” Ethical Decision Making Model with Steps

The first step is to identify the problem, the ethical dilemma, in terms of right versus right. Again, this is necessary to provide clarity to the dilemma while ensuring that a predetermined decision is not made. The four dilemmas listed cover just about every ethical dilemma–and some ethical situations may include one or more of the dilemmas. Stating the problem in this format will help to test the actions that should be taken.

The second step, as mentioned earlier, is to determine the possible actions. There will probably be two obvious responses–to do or not do some action. Of course this is not the dilemma–these courses of actions are <u>responses</u> to the dilemma. It is important during this step to realize and even hope for a possible alternative third response to the dilemma.

The third step is to examine the two most apparent alternative courses of action through the lens of the three ethical systems. The most methodical means to do that is to first look through principles-based ethics, then consequences-based ethics, and finally through virtues-based ethics. Generally, the principles

will be relatively easy, while the consequences will not be as easy–particularly when you look at all of the potential second- and third-order effects of actions. Because virtues-based ethics uses discretion to determine the "golden mean," it can serve as the integrating approach to ethics.

The fourth step is to step back and see if a "third" response, or an alternative course of action has presented itself (such as 'win-win' possibilities or no decision at all). Going through the process may indicate that there is another answer rather than the two courses of action initially determined. This will not always be true, but it's best to step back and see if there is another alternative.

The fifth step is that a choice has to be made. That choice should be made based upon an analysis using all three of the ethical systems–but, in the end, the choice is also made in the context of the organizational climate and culture, as well as the professional values of the organization.

The final step is implementation. This is where the rubber meets the road. By this time, the choice should be well thought out. The judgments that military leaders at all ranks make on a daily basis–especially in combat–imply a necessary level of discretion in determining the "right thing to do" in ethical decision making.[33] Military leaders are more than implementers of policy, but are also charged with "support for the realization of democratic principles" and commitment to obeying the law.[34] This is particularly true when decisions need to be made quickly and involve lives–and when there is no "top cover" guaranteed for the decisions made. Due to the nature of warfare today, the high level of discretion for ethical choices will be made by leaders at all levels (officers and non-commissioned officers) of military leadership. Putting ethical decisions into action requires moral character.

Heinz and the Druggist

Let me provide an example to work through the ethical decision making model. This scenario is a common scenario that is used in many tests for moral development. [35]

> *A woman was near death from a unique kind of cancer. There is a drug that might save her. The drug costs $4,000 per dosage. The sick woman's husband, Heinz, went to everyone he knew to borrow the money and tried every legal means, but he could only get together about $2,000. He asked the doctor scientist who discovered the drug for a discount or let him pay later. But the doctor scientist refused.*
>
> *Should Heinz break into the laboratory to steal the drug for his wife?*

The first step in the "ethical triangle EDMM" is to identify the problem, the ethical dilemma, in terms of right versus right. One possible answer would be the issue of individual versus community. Heinz has an obligation to do what he can for his wife (individual), but he also has an obligation to uphold community laws. Another possible answer would be long term versus short term. Heinz wants to save his wife as a short term immediate answer, but he should also be concerned that the price of the drug doesn't go up (because of theft) so that others will be saved in the long term.

For the second step, Heinz has tried a number of possible courses of action, such as trying to borrow the money and asking for discounts. He has only two obvious answers at this point–break into the laboratory or not break into the laboratory and watch his wife die. At this point, he does not see any other alternatives.

The third step is to test his courses of action against the different 'lens' of the ethical triangle. He follows these in order: principles-based ethics, consequences-based ethics, and virtues-based ethics.

The principles-based answer is relatively easy. The law says that he should not break in; and even if the law didn't say that, he would have a moral obligation to respect the property of the scientist. He would expect others to respect his right to property as well. He has an obligation to do what he can for his wife, but he considers the fact that as a moral actor, he isn't the one killing his wife, nor is it the druggist–it's the cancer. If he broke into the laboratory, he would be the actor. From a principles-based response, he concludes the answer is to not break into the laboratory.

The consequences-based response is much more difficult. Heinz has a lot of unknowns in this area. First of all, he doesn't know if the drug will cure his wife; he only knows that it "might" save her. He also doesn't know if he'll be caught or not; if he is caught, he doesn't know if the jury would give him mercy because of his motivation, or if they would 'throw the book' at him. After he thinks about it a bit, he realizes that even if he's not caught, he would be the prime suspect, especially if his wife is cured 'miraculously.' The police would know that he was the one who stole the drug. He doesn't know if the price of the drug would go up for others with similar cancers, nor does he know how many lives that would actually mean. The more Heinz thinks about it, the greater the number of potential consequences he has to consider. Heinz loves his wife dearly, though, so he concludes that her life is worth saving in spite of the consequences.

Finally, Heinz looks at the virtues based approach. Being a regular church-goer, he asks himself the question "what would Jesus do?" Heinz rejects that quickly–Jesus might possibly heal his wife on the spot and wouldn't bother with a drug, he muses to himself. He also realizes that in this case he cannot answer this question firmly without lots of speculation. What would his father do in the same situation? He respected his father and his father always seemed to do the right thing. It would be tough telling his father that he broke into a laboratory, but perhaps his father would understand. If Heinz was caught, how would he feel if his picture was on the front page of the paper? What would other people he respects do in these circumstances?

Heinz doesn't have a magic answer that comes to him–but regardless of the answer he comes up with, he has thought it through. He understands the rules, has weighed the consequences, and has considered what a virtuous person would do in these circumstances.

Sergeant Major Smith and the Car Bomb

Let me provide another example to work through the ethical decision making model. This scenario is a fictional example but one that resonates closely to the reality for military leaders because of the context of the time dimension in a combat situation and the potential consequences of the ethical choice to be chosen:

> *You are Sergeant Major Smith, the new operations Sergeant Major for the 1st Infantry Brigade, just having joined the unit in the last week. Things have not been going well for the brigade in the last month, with a number of Soldiers having been killed–including your predecessor, a good friend–by improvised explosive devices (IEDs) set by local insurgents. The brigade is deployed throughout a major city, patrolling the streets. One evening you get a call from one of the company First Sergeants, who reports his Soldiers just caught an insurgent leader. The First Sergeant says the insurgent leader is bragging that a car bomb has been set to go off in the next 30 minutes and said "there's nothing you can do about it." The First Sergeant says he is prepared to do some "serious persuasion" to find out where the bomb is. "All of the interrogators are gone, and I know the new directives say they have to do all interrogations by the book–but time is running out. I know how to make a man squeal, so I can get the information. These attacks have to come to an end. Request guidance, Sergeant Major."*

What should Sergeant Major Smith do?

Sergeant Major Smith has as a truth-versus-loyalty dilemma. The truth is that the new directives are very specific about the conduct of interrogations, and he has an obligation to follow those rules–rules that were established for good reasons. But he also has an obligation of loyalty to the Soldiers in his command who are at risk right now, as well as the civilians in the city who are also at risk. If he gets the information about the location of the bomb in the next ten minutes, he can probably avert a disaster; if he waits to do things the right way more people will die. He can either tell the First Sergeant to stop or he can tell the First Sergeant to do what it takes.

From a principles-based approach, the answer is easy. The rules state that only interrogators can do the interrogation, and it's obvious that if the First Sergeant does an interrogation he's not going to use legal means. From a consequences-based approach, it is complicated. The best thing that could happen if the interrogation is authorized is that one insurgent gets hurt and a lot of lives are saved, but that's only if the information is correct and the timing is right to get everyone out of the area of the bomb. Careers could be in jeopardy based on the interrogation and the conscious decision to violate the rules. Sergeant Major Smith has an aversion to the term "careerism" but he would still like another shot or two at the Command Select List–and he certainly doesn't want to be testifying at a Court Martial in the near future. A report of torture of the insurgent could hit the press within the hour and only play in the hands of the insurgents who want to embarrass the United States military. From a pure consequences-based approach, he feels that he should authorize the interrogation. The math says one tortured insurgent versus the lives of many, although he realizes that it is a short-term approach to the problem. From a virtues-based approach, he's heard commanders and senior Sergeants Major in the past take both approaches–the approach always upholding the "rule of law" and honor, while others have taken the road of "Soldiers first, mission always." The conflict goes even further: his dad would probably understand if they did what it took, but his mother would be horrified at the prospect of her son taking actions tantamount to authorizing torture. Either way, at least some of the results of his actions <u>right now</u> will probably be in the paper tomorrow. What headline will it be?

Conclusion

Following the "ethical triangle" ethical decision making model is not an automatic process, it requires understanding and practice before it is mastered. Nonetheless, it is designed to provide a methodology for coming to an answer to an ethical dilemma that is well-thought out and supportable. The "ethical triangle" ethical decision making model does provide a better model than the simplistic Army model that merely states that the decision should be made based on the course of action that "best represents Army values." Applying the model to a variety of ethical dilemmas and testing the model against those dilemmas (such as My Lai and Abu Ghraib) helps to master the necessary "ethical fitness" for application in the real world.

> *Every time you make a serious moral judgment, you become that judgment; every time you issue a directive to a Soldier, you not only tell your subordinates what to do but what to be. That is why, in the horrible circumstances in which you or your Soldiers might find yourselves in the months ahead in a world seemingly gone morally mad, I trust in you because of the moral compass which is yours from your education, your experience, your expertise. You do on the basis of your information; you are on the basis of your formation. Ethics, in the final analysis, is caught, not taught.*[36]

Notes

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3. ADRP 6-22, para 3-14.

4. ADRP 6-22, para 3-4.

5. ADRP 6-22, para 3-37.

6. ADRP 6-22, para 3-38.

7. ADRP 6-22, para 3-39.

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9. ADRP 6-22, para 3-38.

10. ADRP 6-22, para 3-38.

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