

**Kohlberg's Moral Dilemmas**

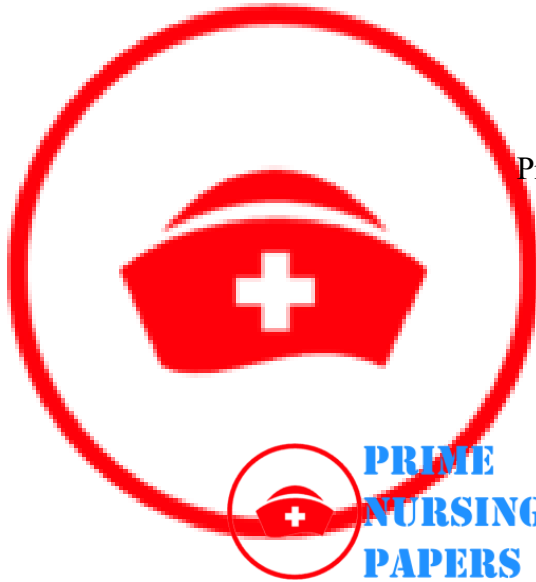
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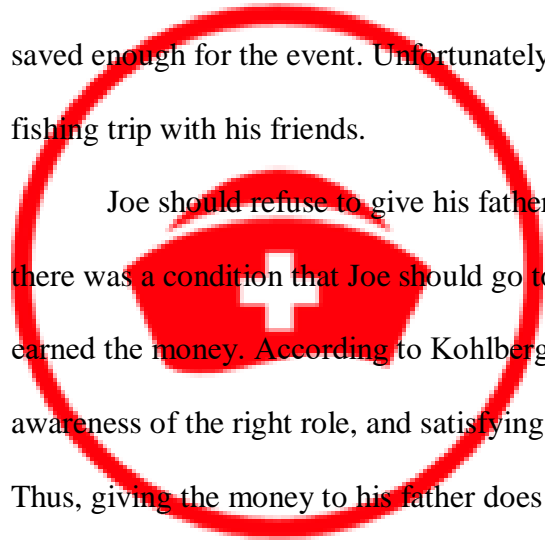
### Kohlberg's Moral Dilemmas

#### Dilemma I

Joe is a teenager who wanted to go to camp, and his father promises that he could go if he saved enough for the event. Unfortunately, when the money is enough, the father wants it for his fishing trip with his friends.

Joe should refuse to give his father the money because he earned the money himself, and there was a condition that Joe should go to the trip only if he earns the money. The father has not earned the money. According to Kohlberg's conventional morality, the reasoning is based on the awareness of the right role, and satisfying the expectations of others as a value in its own right. Thus, giving the money to his father does not define him as a good son, because even if he gives it out, he would just be submitting or conforming to the objective responsibility as a pre-conventional orientation of obedience and punishment. The most important thing in this situation is that Joe was working towards meeting the condition of looking for the money, and the father had promised Joe that he could go to the camp if he earned the money. When an adult or a parent make a promise to the young teenager or to a stranger, he or she should keep it even if one don't know well if they will see the person again, because it still remain a promise.

Stage six of Kohlberg's morality of individual principles of conscience addresses the trust, respect, moral choices and responsibility, which are key relationship concerns expected



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from the father to his teenage son. Discipline is the authority of the father to his son as the parent should bring up a son who is responsible and with moral values. The other important thing is that, Joe should give up the money to conform to the expectations of the parent, because the father would consider him a good boy for conforming to the social expectations of children obeying their parents without much questioning. Holding the money and going for the trip would label him a disobedient son, and he may suffer reproach and guilt from disobeying the parent.

### **Dilemma II**

Louise the older sister to Judy should not tell the mother immediately, but should discuss with Judy first then expose the scheme Judy used to attend the performance. Judy's developmental stage does not allow her to make personal decisions and execute his plans independently without the mother's consent. The scenario can be understood through the convectional morality stage 1, where the child must behave well to avoid being punished by the parent. Judy fears the physical consequence of her action and decision, and does not bear individualism in taking responsibilities. Thus, because Louise understands the relationship they share with Judy as sisters, her decision to inform the mother is different. She need to let the mother know about what Judie did, because she could be a bad girl if the mother realizes the secret she is keeping from her.

The fact that Judy earned the money herself is important to this situation because it was a contractual agreement between her and the mother, but the mother breaks the agreement and wants to divert the expected intentions of the daughter. Judy was motivated to look for the money, not because of buying the clothes but for the purpose of buying the performance ticket. Thus, the mother promised the most important thing in the situation because if not for the drive the daughter had for the performance event, she could not be motivated to look for the money.

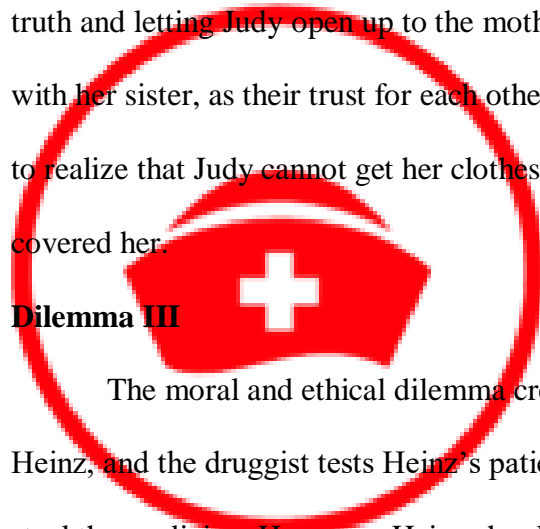
However, the mother should have kept her word since the relationship between the parent and the daughter is affected when promises are broken. In as much as the daughter has no entitlement for owning the money or deciding how to spend it, Kohlberg definition of morality implies that morality is the conformity to the shared internal standards, and action decisions are based on inner process of judgement concerning what is considered right or wrong (Berger 2020).

Thus, the shared thoughts and action-decision to work for money for the ticket should be held consistently between the mother and the daughter, so as the mother can be considered morally consistent. For Louise, the most responsible thing for her is to let the mother know the truth and letting Judy open up to the mother without causing sibling rivalry and confrontation with her sister, as their trust for each other would be affected. Similarly, it would hurt the mother to realize that Judy cannot get her clothes because she paid to the ticket secretly and Louise covered her.

### **Dilemma III**

The moral and ethical dilemma created by the case of the sick woman, her husband Heinz, and the druggist tests Heinz's patience to avoid breaking into the druggist's store and steal the medicine. However, Heinz should not steal the drug because he does not own it. It is against the legal orientation to steal or take someone's items without their approval. The norms of right and wrong has a rational basis as described in stage 5 of Kohlberg's model, and they clearly show that two wrongs does not make a right. Therefore, it would be outright wrong for Heinz to steal the drug.

Heinz has a duty to look for the drug and he may be convinced to steal it and save his wife because he loves her. However, stealing or not stealing the drug is not a measure of his love for her, and he should refrain himself from stealing it even if the person dying is not his wife.



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Doing wrong to create a good impression is as well immoral and Heinz should seek for other alternatives which are legal and acceptable. It is also against the law for Heinz to steal and this makes stealing morally wrong. People should do all what they can to obey the law for harmoniously living, as the law keep people from hurting themselves and protecting others. Finding a law of selling the drug would be a more amicable solution than stealing, because he can follow a legal procedure to either establish an agreement to complete the payment for the drug later. Heinz should also continue persuading the druggist about his payment plan and get the drug legally. If persuading him won't work, reporting the man to the court of law would assist him through legal intervention to access the drugs.

#### **Dilemma IV**

The scenario for Bob and Carl is in both cases stealing. Both cases of stealing are worse because none of them was truthful and honest. However, bob is more of a robber because he uses deceit and cunning ways to obtain money from the old man. He also made a promise to the old man that he would pay the money after recovering. The worst thing about Bob is that he lied, took the act of pity and humanity from the old man as a sheer joke, and lied to him on his face about his faked sickness and empty promises of the payment plan.

It is the duty of each society member to be responsible, honest, and truthful. It is important to keep promises to people you know and people you don't know well or will never see again. The reason for being honest even to strangers is that morality calls for social sobriety where people exist and co-exist harmoniously if there is openness and no lies. Stealing from the store is also a bad deed because the laws of the land has the property rights which protects individual's properties. Every person has a responsibility to obey the law, do their civic and social duty, and show respect for people's property. Order in the society determines with the

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sanity of the people. By lending \$1000 to Bob, the old man was not irresponsible but Bob. The scheme to lie to the old man is an irresponsible act because they were more egocentric and needed to benefit themselves through dubious methods. The old man is a perfect example of a kind and responsible person who expresses relative concern for the needs of others even if they are new to him.



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**Reference**

Berger, K. S. (2020). *The developing person through the life span* (11th ed.). Worth Publishers/Macmillan Learning.



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