

...ACT ETHICALLY

In experiential education (EE), facilitators and leaders are expected to consider an established code of conduct (one hallmark of a profession). When faced with a moral dilemma, outside of this code, they must newly reason a resolution.

Before practicing to resolve an ethical dilemma, using sample cases for books or articles, be prepared by recognizing your own belief systems, understanding your non-negotiable values, and applying AEE's ethical guidelines.

MORAL REASONING

One useful method to resolve a moral dilemma through reasoning has five sequential steps. If the dilemma cannot be resolved at a particular step, go to the next one.

1. **Intuition or a "gut" reaction:** ask yourself "what feels right?" in the context of your established belief system, non-negotiables, and ordinary moral sense of right or wrong.
2. **Option listing:** In balancing the tension between right or wrong, simply identify the pros and cons of each choice and evaluate both sides to see which is more desirable.
3. **Ethical rules:** review codes of conduct for your profession or ones closely allied to yours (see ethical guidelines opposite).
4. **Ethical principles:** five enduring beliefs protect the interests and wellness of clients
 - *autonomy (freedom of action and choice),*
 - *nonmaleficence (no harm to others),*
 - *beneficence (contribute to health/welfare),*
 - *justice (fair and equal), and*
 - *fidelity (promissory, loyal, and respectful).*
5. **Ethical theories:** two general laws help resolve the final step
 - *universalizability (do the very same ethical actions fit across similar situations?), and*
 - *balancing (what does the least avoidable harm and brings the greatest happiness?).*

ETHICAL GUIDELINES

The following EE ethical guidelines have been developed by AEE to guide adventure therapy facilitators and leaders in taking ethical action.

1. **Competence:** Understand the boundaries of own skills, know the limits of adventure activities, and utilize program resources to act in the best interests of clients. Exercise reasonable judgment and take appropriate precautions to promote client welfare. Engage in continuing education to ensure currency in competence and activities.
2. **Integrity:** Be honest, fair, and respectful of others. Avoid statements about services, products, qualifications, fees, and research that are false, misleading, or deceptive. Know own belief systems, values, needs, and limitations and how these impact work.
3. **Responsibility:** Uphold ethical principles of behavior, clarify professional roles and obligations, accept personal accountability for behavior and decisions, adapt methods to the needs of different populations, and report ethical misconduct and malpractice.
4. **Respect:** Value the privacy, rights, dignity, worth, and self-determination of others. Maintain confidentiality, strive to empower, explain consequences, and be sensitive to cultural and individual differences of clients.
5. **Concern:** Keep interactions professional, avoid abusing power or entering dualistic relationships with clients. Do not distort information, or mislead, exploit, harass or discriminate against clients or others.
6. **Influence:** Avoid misusing position or work product within society or local community.

More details on moral reasoning and AEE's code of conduct can be sourced from the next page.

(Thanks to Jasper Hunt) – Simon Priest

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FURTHER RESOURCES

MORAL REASONING

Kitchener, K.S. (1984). Intuition, critical evaluation, and ethical principles: The foundation for ethical decisions in counseling psychology. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 12(3), 43–55.

Kitchener, K. S., & Anderson, S. K. (2011). *Foundations of Ethical Practice, Research, and Teaching in Psychology and Counseling*. Routledge/Taylor & Francis.

ETHICAL GUIDELINES

AEE's expanded list of **Ethical Guidelines**: <https://www.aee.org/ethical-guidelines-for-cat>

OTHER

Plato. (2021). *Apology* (Complete). Digireads.com Publishing.

Aristotle. (2012). *Nicomachean Ethics* (Books 1-4). Dover Publications.

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Machiavelli, N. (2019). *The Prince* (Complete). Cambridge University Press.

Hume, D. (1992). *A treatise of human nature* (Book 2-Book 3). Prometheus Books.

Mill, J. S. (1899). *Utilitarianism* (Chapters 1-4). Willard Small.

Kant, I. (2008). *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals* (Preface- Section 2). Yale University Press.

Arendt, H. (2006). *Eichmann in Jerusalem* (Complete). Penguin Publishing Group.

Krakauer, J. (2009). *Into Thin Air: A Personal Account of the Mount Everest Disaster* (Complete). Anchor.

Noddings, N. (2013). *Caring: A Relational Approach to Ethics and Moral Education* (Complete). University of California Press.

MacIntyre, A. C. (2013). *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory* (Complete). Bloomsbury.