

Ethical CHOICES

INDIVIDUAL VOICES

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ETHICAL CHOICES: INDIVIDUAL VOICES

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ETHICAL CHOICES

Honesty ... Responsibility ... Loyalty ... Independence ...

What do these words mean to today's teenagers?

The ETHICAL CHOICES series challenges high school students to question their beliefs and to consider the impact of their choices on society. Drawing on the experiences of teenagers who confront critical issues involving violence, health, rights and responsibilities, and cultural diversity, among others, ETHICAL CHOICES promotes the development of ethical reasoning, higher-level thinking, effective communication, conflict resolution, and responsible decision making. ETHICAL CHOICES utilizes the Socratic method, in which participants are asked to examine their values and assumptions in a question-and-answer forum. ETHICAL CHOICES originated from Thirteen/WNET's Teen Leadership Institute, a highly successful symposium for high school students in the New York–New Jersey–Connecticut area.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

ETHICAL CHOICES: INDIVIDUAL VOICES explores teenagers' personal perspectives and feelings on issues of loyalty, honesty, and integrity. Moderator Kim Taylor-Thompson, associate professor of law at Stanford University, guides seven teenagers and educators Christina Hoff Sommers, Lem Martinez-Carroll, and Bill Puka through a series of hypothetical situations drawn from real life. The videotape includes three 15- to 20-minute segments entitled Lying, Cheating, and Stealing. As the program begins, Kim (played by the moderator) is asking a friend to lie on her behalf. "Would you cover for me?" she asks. The teenagers debate how they would handle a range of incidents. Spotting the often-conflicting relationships between loyalty, friendship, trust, and honesty, each scenario challenges the teens to examine their own values and choices. The adult participants consider the broader implications of personal ethics. All responses are completely candid; none are scripted. This stimulating, thought-provoking 60-minute program raises tough, complex questions that require young people to search their own consciences for answers.

OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- Engage in classroom discussions on honesty and integrity.
- Evaluate the impact their own values and ethics have on their decision-making process.
- Develop critical reasoning and communication skills.

HOW TO USE THIS TEACHER'S GUIDE

This Teacher's Guide provides suggestions for developing lessons on dealing with honesty and integrity, and should be used in conjunction with the 60-minute video **ETHICAL CHOICES: INDIVIDUAL VOICES**. Designed for use with high school students, this Teacher's Guide is divided into three general sections: Lying, Cheating, and Stealing. Each section is divided into smaller subsections (e.g., Covering for a Friend). On-screen titles clearly indicate the sections and subsections in the videotape. This breakdown gives you the flexibility to use these materials during one or more class periods. You may choose to use some but not all of the segments and/or use them nonsequentially.

The following steps are recommended for effective interactive use of the Teacher's Guide and videotape.

1. Pre-screen the program to determine its suitability for your class.
2. Review the Background to the Socratic Method (page 7) used by the moderator in the program.
3. Conduct pre-viewing activities, such as Introducing the Topic (this page).
4. Begin segment by discussing pre-viewing questions.
5. Give students a focus for viewing, i.e., tell students to listen to opinions expressed by the panelists, or direct students to keep the pre-viewing discussion in mind as they watch the segment unfold.
6. Play the program as instructed.
7. Pause at cue. (The pause function provides an opportunity to check on student comprehension, ask questions, call for predictions, and have students write down their observations or raise questions.)
8. Ask questions that are listed in the discussion section.*
9. Resume playing the program to the next pause cue or the end of the segment, and lead a discussion as noted.
10. Allow students time to discuss any questions or concerns in small groups before moving on to the follow-up activities.
11. Conduct follow-up activities to apply and reinforce concepts.

Be flexible. You need not follow the pause points strictly. Adapt the content of the program to your students' needs. Because of the sensitive nature of **ETHICAL CHOICES** topics, you may wish to pause the video after each panelist's response to slow down the discussion and fully explore students' reactions. To develop dialogues on topics more specific to your class, refer to Using the Socratic Method in Class (page 7).

*Questions may also be used after viewing the program in its entirety.

Special Note on INDIVIDUAL VOICES

ETHICAL CHOICES: INDIVIDUAL VOICES may provoke a variety of emotional responses in students as they view the program and delve into their personal experiences. Set ground rules in the classroom that call for confidentiality, respect, and consideration for students' thoughts and feelings. To establish a more private setting, you may wish to break students up into small groups to allow them to share and reflect on the issues raised in the program.

CROSS-CURRICULAR USE

ETHICAL CHOICES: INDIVIDUAL VOICES may be used in a variety of subject areas, such as guidance, philosophy, religion, ethics, psychology, sociology, and extracurricular activities like peer counseling, as well as community-based programs for teens and parents.

INTRODUCING THE TOPIC

Objective: To encourage open dialogue among teenagers about how personal honesty and integrity affect their lives and influence their choices.

Discuss: Ask students to describe their feelings on the importance of honesty, loyalty, and integrity. Do students value one over the other? Question students about how much lying, cheating, and stealing they encounter regularly. Do they see it as a problem?

Why is or why isn't there a problem with the lying, cheating, and stealing that the students are aware of?

START VIDEO

and play until **Kim** says:
"We hope that as you watch, you will do the same."
(Approx. 1 min.)



In a recent survey of almost 6,000 high school students, 73 PERCENT said they had LIED TO A PARENT more than once in the previous 12 months.

Source: 1996 Report Card on American Integrity, by the Joseph and Edna Josephson Institute of Ethics.

LYING

The segment begins when **Kim** says, "Elizabeth, you're at home one morning before school."

Pre-Viewing

Initiate a discussion on honesty. How do class members react to the adage "Honesty is the best policy?" How do students define trust? If asked to choose between lying for a friend or telling the truth, which would they choose? Which is more important, loyalty or honesty?

COVERING FOR A FRIEND

PLAY VIDEO for approx. 4 min.

PAUSE VIDEO after **Lem** says:

"Tell that person 'I'm not here,' or 'I'm asleep.' I mean, that might sound real trivial. But, I mean, I think it builds up."

Discussion

- Ask students if they would lie or cover for a friend in a similar situation. What unintended consequences might result from this type of dishonesty? Are there any situations for which students would refuse to cover for a friend? Why is loyalty in a friendship important?
- Ask students to discuss what it feels like to lie to someone. Do they become anxious or nervous? How does it feel to be caught lying? What does it feel like to be lied to? How would they feel if their parent(s) lied to them?

FALSIFYING A JOB APPLICATION

RESUME VIDEO to the end of the segment, approx. 3 min.

Discussion

- Ask the students if they would apply for a job without the necessary work experience. Is embellishing a résumé different from other forms of lying?
- Ask students to list reasons why people lie on job applications and résumés. What are the benefits of falsifying a job application? What are the dangers? Is it okay to lie if "everyone is doing it"?
- Ask students if there is a way to enhance a résumé honestly and, if so, how?

Follow-up Activities

Keeping a Journal

Ask the students to keep a journal for seven days that chronicles the lying they observe in real life. Ask them to consider all realms — politics, school, friends, reports in the media, their own actions, etc. At the end of the week have them develop a chart of the types of lying they encountered and the possible motivations.

Telling a Lie

Ask each student to write about a time when they lied or were dishonest. Instruct students to leave their essays unsigned. Divide students into groups. Collect and randomly redistribute these essays to each group. Then ask the students to respond to the situations described in the essays.



photo: Joe Sinnott

65 PERCENT of high school students surveyed admitted they had **CHEATED ON AN EXAM** in the previous year. **47 PERCENT** said they had done so more than once.

Source: 1996 Report Card on American Integrity, by the Joseph and Edna Josephson Institute of Ethics.

CHEATING

Pre-Viewing

Initiate a discussion on cheating. Ask students to define cheating and list some reasons why people cheat. Is cheating common? If so, why? Would students cheat for a friend or a family member? How do they feel about others who cheat? Are some forms of cheating more or less serious than others? Ask students to list possible consequences of cheating.

PLAGIARIZING

PLAY VIDEO for approx. 6 min.

PAUSE VIDEO after Erin says:

"Obviously, we fall into a pattern and then we get used to things."

Discussion

- Ask students if they would read their brother's paper in a similar situation. Is it cheating simply to read the paper? Would students use parts of the paper to write their own assignment? Would they submit the paper as their own?
- Ask students if it is okay to cheat when an assignment seems unfair. What other actions might students take to deal with an unfair assignment?

A LITTLE EXTRA HELP

RESUME VIDEO for approx. 11 min.

PAUSE VIDEO after Lem says:

"It's smaller. But in reality, it's a microcosm of a larger issue."

Discussion

- Ask students if they would help a friend write a paper. What kind of help would they provide? Would students write the paper for the friend? What if the friend offers money? Is that better or worse?
- Ask students if they think much cheating goes on in the workplace. Is it cheating to take a co-worker's research and present it as your own? What are the potential long-term and short-term consequences of taking credit for someone else's work?

NOTES TO THE EXAM

RESUME VIDEO to end of segment, approx. 8 min.

Discussion

- Ask students if they would read the notes to an exam they found in class. Would students share this information with their friends? If they knew there was no way to get caught, would they cheat? Are they less guilty if they receive the information secondhand from a friend?
- If students see someone cheating during an exam, would they report the person? Does it make a difference if the person cheating is a close friend or someone they do not like? Ask students to list the possible long-term consequences of cheating.
- If your school had an honor code, would students report the person who cheated? If they do not report the student, are they being dishonest as well?
- Ask students why adults cheat on their taxes. Why would a medical resident cheat on a licensing exam? What are the potential consequences of this? How do these forms of cheating hurt other people?

Follow-up Activities

Conducting a Survey

Have the students enumerate how and why people cheat. Based on this discussion, help students develop an anonymous survey that asks teenagers about their experiences with cheating; if they have ever cheated; and, if so, how and why they cheated. Students should then ask as many people as possible to complete the surveys. Once all surveys are collected, the students can evaluate the responses. How widespread is cheating? What are the most common forms of cheating? Are certain types of students more likely to cheat than others? What are the most common motivations for cheating?

What's the Policy?

Divide students into three groups. One group can research the school's policy on cheating and plagiarizing. Students should interview the principal for a full description of the consequences and any history on the subject. The second group can research the rules on cheating and plagiarizing at one or two colleges. What are the procedures at the college if students are suspected of cheating? The final group can research legal penalties for plagiarizing and infringing on the copyright of published materials. The three groups can then report back to the class and discuss the findings.

Investigate the Truth

Cheating takes place in all walks of life — politics, business, sports, education, etc. Ask small groups of students to research an event or an individual notorious for cheating. (Examples include the Black Sox scandal, Richard Nixon, Ivan Boesky, cadets cheating at Annapolis and West Point, etc.) Students should present to the class detailed findings as to who cheated, what they did, their motives, and the ultimate consequences of their actions. Ask students to explain how the cheating was discovered and who was, or would have been, affected by the cheating. Compare and discuss.

Among high school males, 42 PERCENT said that they had **STOLEN SOMETHING** from a store within the previous 12 months. For females, the figure was 31 PERCENT.

Source: 1996 Report Card on American Integrity, by the Joseph and Edna Josephson Institute of Ethics.

STEALING

Pre-Viewing

Initiate a discussion on integrity. Ask students to define “integrity” and to list people whom they feel have it. What characteristics do these people share? What is the difference between honesty and trustworthiness? Ask students how they feel about stealing. What are some possible reasons why someone might steal? Are there times when stealing might be justified? Ask students to list the possible consequences of stealing.

FREE MONEY

PLAY VIDEO for approx. 2 min.

PAUSE VIDEO after **Kim** says:

“You can just basically guess that it may have fallen.” And **Eric** says: “That’s tough.”

Discussion

- Ask the students if they would keep any money they find or if they would try to locate the owner. Is there any reason to leave money on the sidewalk? Does the amount of money make a difference?
- Ask students if they would return the money if they knew who the owner was. Is it stealing to keep found money? Does the amount of money make a difference? Does it matter if the person is rich or poor? How do students feel about people publicly taking found money (e.g., the cash that flew out of a Brinks Armored truck during an accident)?

A WALLET AT SCHOOL

RESUME VIDEO for approx. 6 min.

PAUSE VIDEO after **Christina** says:

“... I think the failure is not being clear about that to young people.”

Discussion

- Ask students whether, if they found a wallet without any identification, they would keep the money or take it to the school lost and found. Does it matter how much money is in the wallet? Is it stealing to keep the money?
- Ask students if they would return the wallet with the money if they knew the owner. Does it matter who needs the money more? What do students think about keeping the wallet of someone they don’t like?

A MISTAKE IN YOUR FAVOR

PLAY VIDEO for approx. 2 min.

PAUSE VIDEO after **Lem** says:

“For that matter if I gave you a lower grade.”

Discussion

- Ask students what they would do if the teacher graded their paper too low. What if the teacher graded the paper too high? Would they return the extra change at the grocery store? Is there a difference between the extra points the teacher gives and the extra change from the grocery clerk?

SHOPLIFTING

RESUME VIDEO for approx. 11 min.

PAUSE VIDEO after **Lem** says:

“I think that’s the parameter that has to be dealt with — is it right or is it wrong?”

Discussion

- Ask students why teenagers shoplift. Do the ends ever justify the means?
- Ask the students if there are reasons, aside from getting caught, that make shoplifting wrong. Would students try to dissuade a friend from stealing? What would they do if the friend steals anyway?
- Ask students whether or not they would keep the stolen shirt. Would they cover for a friend or tell the truth to the police? Where do students draw the line between loyalty and honesty?

WHAT’S RIGHT AND WHAT’S WRONG

PLAY VIDEO to the end of the segment, approx. 6 min.

Discussion

- Ask students how they know when a decision or action is wrong. If they cannot distinguish easily between right and wrong, how do they decide what to do?
- Ask students to discuss how individual differences (race, religion, gender, culture, etc.) might influence our definitions of right and wrong. Are there universal principles that everyone can agree on?

Follow-up Activities

Tracking Honesty

Ask students to conduct a survey asking people if they have ever been over- and/or undercharged at a restaurant. Have students create a chart with headings “overcharged,” “undercharged,” “reported,” and “did not report.” In addition, students can ask respondents how they felt about the incident(s). Compare and discuss the results.

Paying the Price

Shoplifting is expensive for everyone. Ask groups of two or three students to interview two local merchants and write a “news” article on how shoplifting affects local businesses. How does it contribute to the cost of the products we buy and the cost of doing business (e.g., security systems, guards, etc.)? In addition, students should report back on the store policies toward shoplifters. In the short-term, what happens to teenagers who get caught shoplifting? What are the potential long-term consequences of shoplifting? Of getting caught? Discuss.

Doing the Right Thing

Have groups of students draft a set of principles or a code of behavior by which — in an ideal world — all students in the school could abide. Ask each group to create rules for one of the following: lying, cheating, or stealing. Each group can then present its code and rules to the entire class. Finally, ask students to describe, discuss, and debate when the rules always apply, when the rules could be bent, and some acceptable reasons why the rules could be broken.



photo: Joe Sinnott

Background

Essential to the ETHICAL CHOICES educational package is the use of the Socratic method, which is attributed to the Greek philosopher Socrates (ca. 470–399 BC). Known today as the “Father of Ethics,” Socrates transformed philosophy from the study of the external universe to the study of human beings and their relationships. He sought to establish ethical truth through absolute standards of conduct and a system of morality independent of opposing doctrines, a system that was valid for everyone regardless of individual religious or civic views.

Socrates’ method of challenging the claims of those who participated in his dialogues was to search for truth by discussion. He was able to expose ignorance by claiming his own ignorance (“Socratic irony”) at times to elicit honest answers. Using inductive reasoning, Socrates centered the discussion on the individual he was questioning and on that individual’s beliefs.

Using the Socratic Method in Class

Keep the following points in mind:

- Act as a facilitator rather than as an authority figure, or allow a student to be a facilitator while you act as an observer.
- Draw from students’ experiences to select an issue that is both meaningful to them and may evoke many different points of view.
- Set up a hypothetical situation specific to your school and/or community that frames the ethical dilemmas raised by the issue.
- Devise a sequence of questions that progressively challenges students to examine their own thinking.
- Guide students by utilizing the questioning tips below.
- Follow up the Socratic dialogue with a discussion on the insights gained from the experience and their possible applications.

Questioning Tips

- Keep your questioning strategy flexible.
- Begin with general questions, and move toward specific and delving questions.
- Ask open-ended questions.
- If possible, share your own relevant experiences.
- Allow students time to think about answers before responding.
- Draw answers by innuendo, suggestion, and/or paradox.
- Probe students’ responses by challenging their statements.
- Restate and reflect the students’ statements in order to clarify and validate their thought (e.g., “I hear you saying that . . .”).
- Where there is an agreement among students, take on the role of devil’s advocate to enliven the discussion.
- Encourage students to ask questions or challenge other points of view.
- Avoid classifying students’ answers as right or wrong.
- Insist that students explain how they reached their conclusions.
- Prompt students to draw from their personal experiences and observations.

Organizations

The American Ethical Union
 2 West 64th Street
 New York, NY 10023
 Phone: (212) 873-6500
 E-mail: AEUOffice@aol.com

The American Ethical Union is a federation serving Ethical Culture/Ethical Humanist Societies. Ethical Culture began in 1876 with the founding of the New York Society for Ethical Culture by Felix Adler. Today there are 22 societies, which are humanist congregations where ethics are central and where the questions and problems of everyday living are explored unrestricted by creed or dogma. To put ethical concerns into practice, members seek to work for social improvements. For example, Ethical Culture members were instrumental in founding the first free kindergartens in New York and San Francisco, and the Visiting Nurses Service, Child Study Association, Legal Aid Society, ACLU, and NAACP.

Center for Civic Education
 5146 Fir Road
 Calabasas, CA 91302
 Phone: (818) 591-9321 or (800) 350-4223

The Center for Civic Education is a nonprofit, nonpartisan corporation affiliated with the State Bar of California. Its mission is to foster the development of informed, responsible participation in civic life by citizens committed to values and principles fundamental to American constitutional democracy. The Center develops and implements programs in civic education for public and private schools at elementary and secondary levels, cooperating with educators and scholars in the social sciences, humanities, and the law. The Center offers curricular materials, leadership training, teacher education, and research and evaluation in civic education.

CHARACTER COUNTS! Coalition
 c/o The Josephson Institute
 4640 Admiralty Way, Suite 1001
 Marina del Rey, CA 90292
 Phone: (310) 306-1868
 Website: <http://www.charactercounts.org>

The CHARACTER COUNTS! Coalition is a nonsectarian alliance of more than 100 nonprofit organizations dedicated to strengthening the character of America's young people with a consistent set of ethical values. The values — which are not politically, religiously, or racially biased — are called the "Six Pillars of Character": trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship.

Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC)
 55 Chapel St.
 Newton, MA 02158
 Phone: (617) 969-7100
 Website: <http://www.edc.org>

Dedicated to promoting human development through education, EDC works to address educational, health, and social problems and to improve the quality of life for people of all ages

and from all racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds. EDC specializes in designing curriculum materials dedicated to inquiry-based, hands-on learning; creating and implementing training programs for teachers, health-care professionals, and other workers; and conducting applied research on learning through the lifespan and in a wide variety of settings.

Educators for Social Responsibility (ESR)
 23 Garden St.
 Cambridge, MA 02138
 Phone: (617) 492-1764
 Website: <http://www.benjerry.com/esr>

Educators for Social Responsibility (ESR), founded in 1982, is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to helping young people develop the convictions and skills to build a safe, sustainable, and just world. ESR is nationally recognized for promoting children's ethical and social development through its leadership in conflict resolution, violence prevention, intergroup relations, and character education. ESR supports educators and parents with professional development, networks, and instructional materials.

Global Kids, Inc. (GK)
 561 Broadway, 6th floor
 New York, NY 10012
 Phone: (212) 226-0130
 Contact: Evie Hantzopoulos, Director of Training, or Peter Wilson, Senior Trainer

Global Kids, Inc. is a nonprofit educational organization dedicated to preparing urban youth to become community leaders and global citizens. The work of GK is based on the assumption that young people have the will and the capacity to be positive and productive members of their communities. Through its leadership, public school-based academic and computer technology programs, and its international youth-produced video exchange, Global Action Project, GK directly involves more than 600 teenagers each year and reaches hundreds of others through peer- and staff-led trainings and special events.

Girls Incorporated
 30 East 33rd St.
 New York, NY 10016-5394
 Phone: (212) 689-3700
 Website: <http://www.girlsinc.org>

Girls Incorporated is a national youth organization dedicated to helping every girl become strong, smart, and bold. For over 50 years, Girls Incorporated has provided vital educational programs to millions of American girls, particularly those in high-risk, underserved areas. Today, innovative programs help girls confront subtle societal messages about their value and potential, and prepare them to lead successful, independent, and complete lives.

The Human Connections Institute Inc.
 237 W. Walnut St., Suite 2-J
 Long Beach, NY 11561
 Phone: (516) 889-1994

Committed to working with individuals, small groups, schools, hospital community agencies, and businesses that are servicing the educational and social service needs of communities. Helps people develop skills and techniques to build their own sense of self-esteem and self-worth, and to empower people to live their lives and do their jobs more effectively and enthusiastically. Offers conflict resolution workshops for young people, anti-bias/prejudice reduction workshops, and violence prevention, among other programs.

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photo: Joe Simmott