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# Ethics: What does it mean?

*April 14 & 17, 2023*



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# Ethics

What does this word mean?  
And what does it mean  
related to "good work"?



Is it about right and wrong?



Is it about personal decisions?



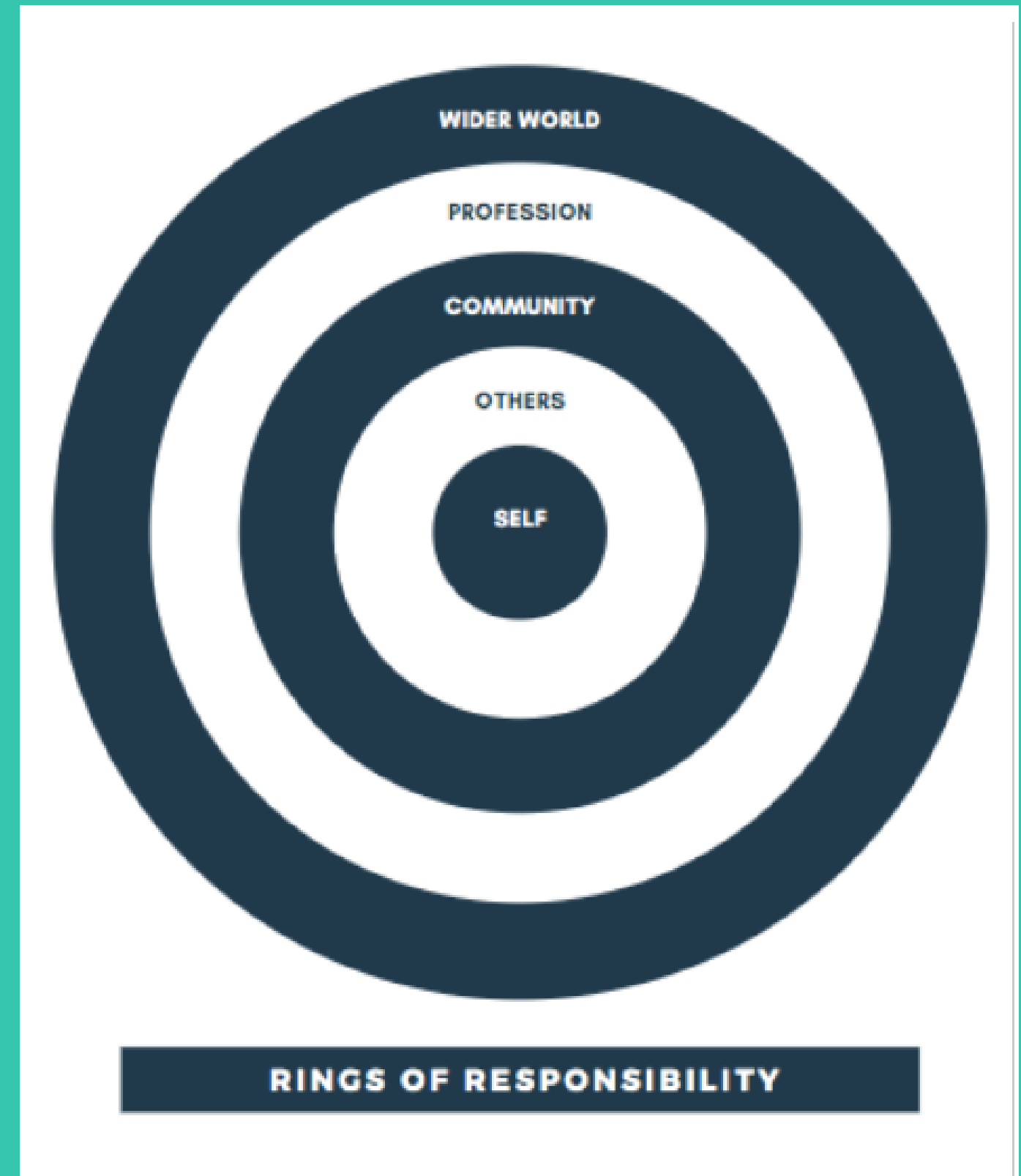
Is it about how you affect others?

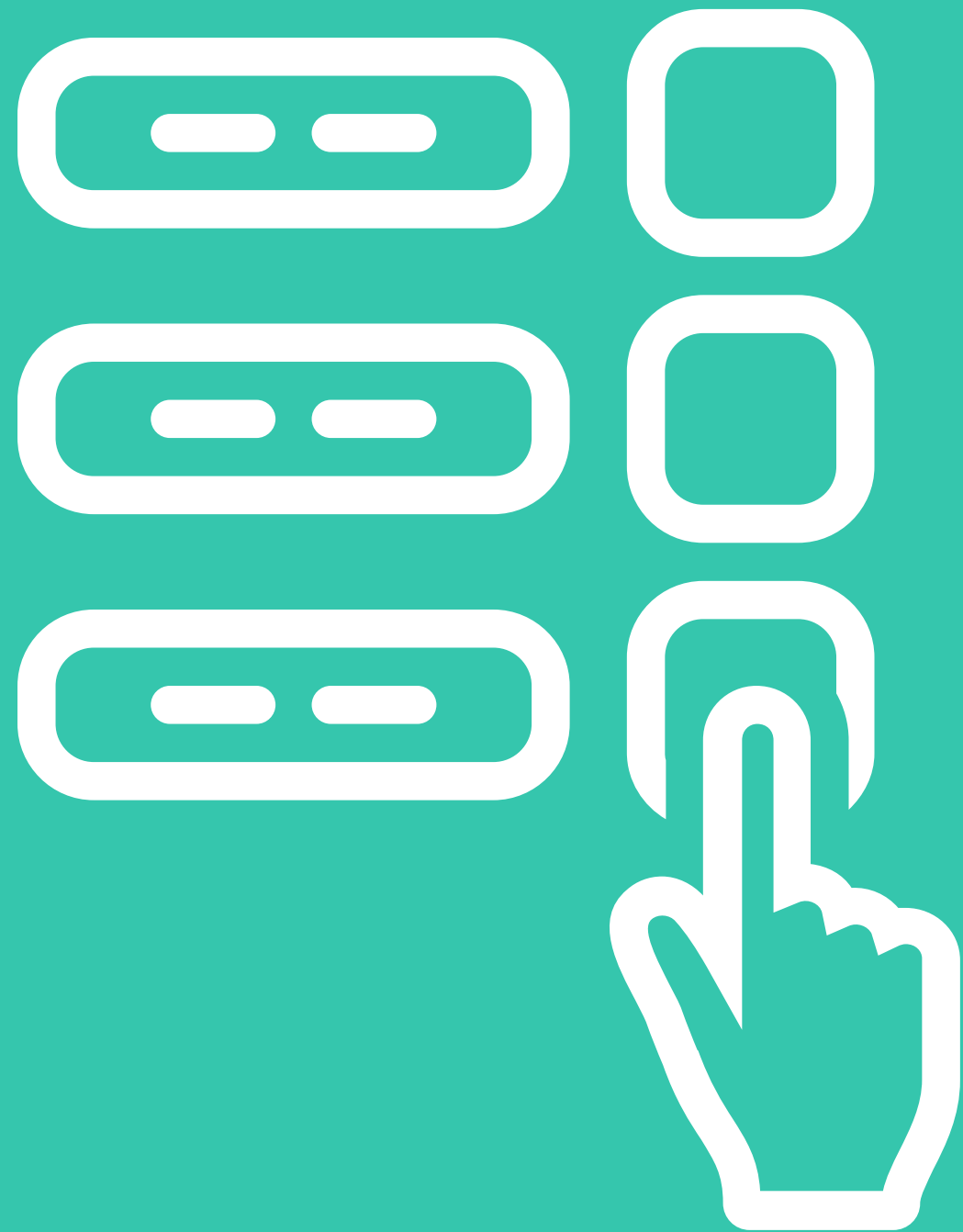
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# Responsibility

At The Good Project we often talk about ethics as having a sense of responsibility to the world around you.





# Poll

Look at the choices.

Which of the actions do you think of as "morally wrong"?

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- 1) **Care/harm:** virtues of kindness, gentleness, and nurturance.
  - 2) **Fairness/cheating:** ideas of justice, rights, and autonomy, including equality concerns.
  - 3) **Loyalty/betrayal:** virtues of patriotism and self-sacrifice for the group, such as “one for all, and all for one.”
  - 4) **Authority/subversion:** virtues of leadership and followership, including deference to legitimate authority and respect for traditions.
  - 5) **Sanctity/degradation:** notions of an elevated, less carnal, more noble way, including about the body, common to religious traditions.
  - 6) **Liberty/oppresion:** feelings toward those who dominate or restrict liberty or hold authority.

# Moral Foundations

[moralfoundations.org](http://moralfoundations.org)

Based upon the idea that there are common moral tensions across human experience that influence feelings about what is or is not ethical.

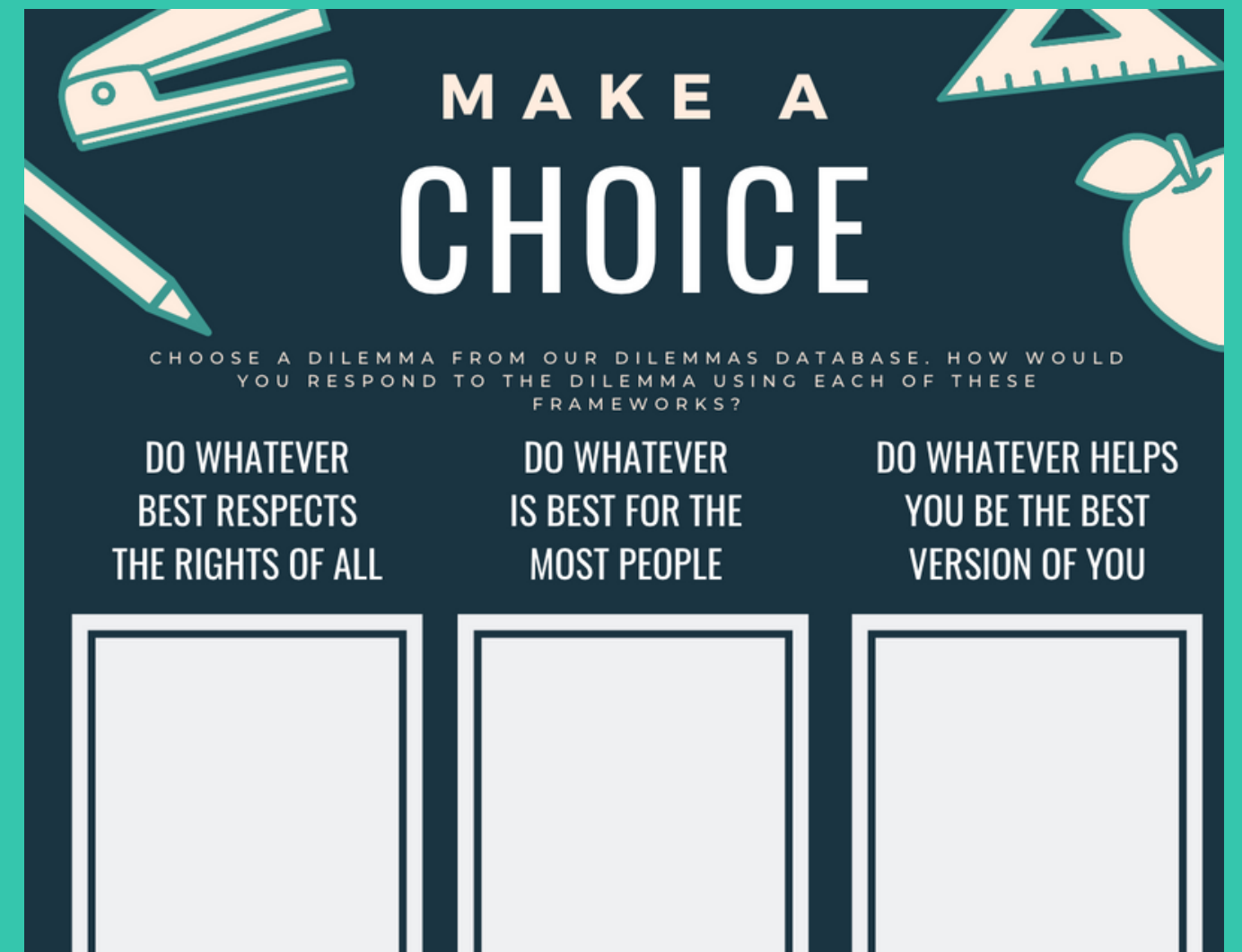
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# Ethical Theories

*Imagine that you are involved in a shipwreck situation - a ship has started to sink in the middle of the ocean. Eleven people have jumped into a life-boat that has been designed for a maximum of ten people only, and the life-boat is also starting to sink. What should the passengers do? Throw one person overboard and save ten lives? Or stick to the principle of "do not kill", which means that everybody will drown?*

<https://www.unodc.org/e4j/en/integrity-ethics/module-1/exercises.html#/module1exercise2>



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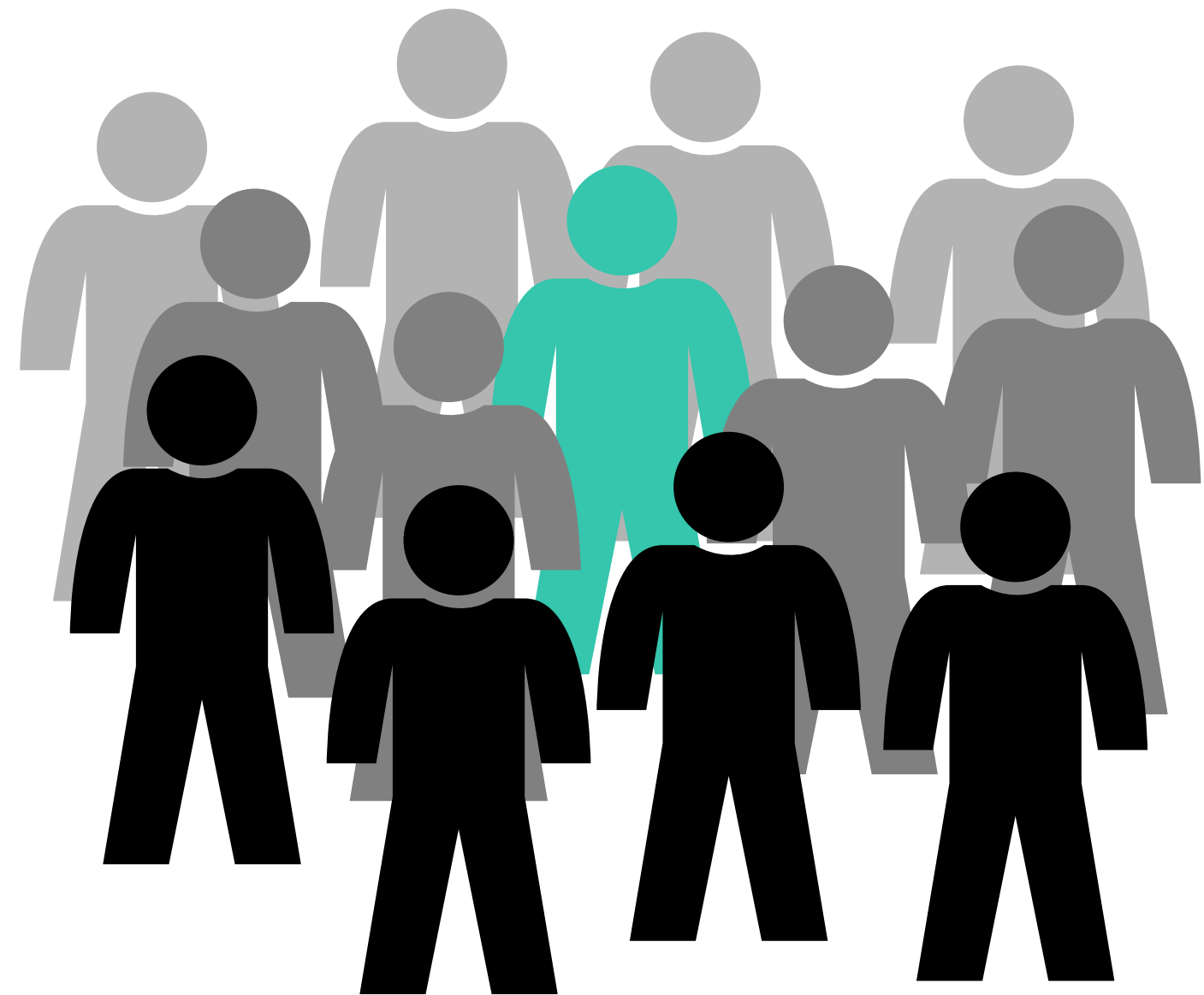
# Throw one person overboard



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## *Utilitarianism or Ends-Based Thinking*

Do the greatest good for the greatest amount of people. Thinking about the end result-- how can the most people be helped? Demands a cost-benefit analysis.



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# "Do not kill"



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## *Deontology or Rule-Based Thinking*

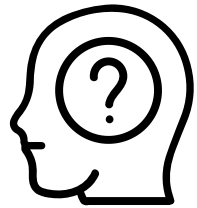
Do only behaviors that you would want everyone else to do. If everyone in the world did this action, would it produce the greatest good? In this form of reasoning the means do not justify the end, rather it is focused on doing our duty regardless of outcome.





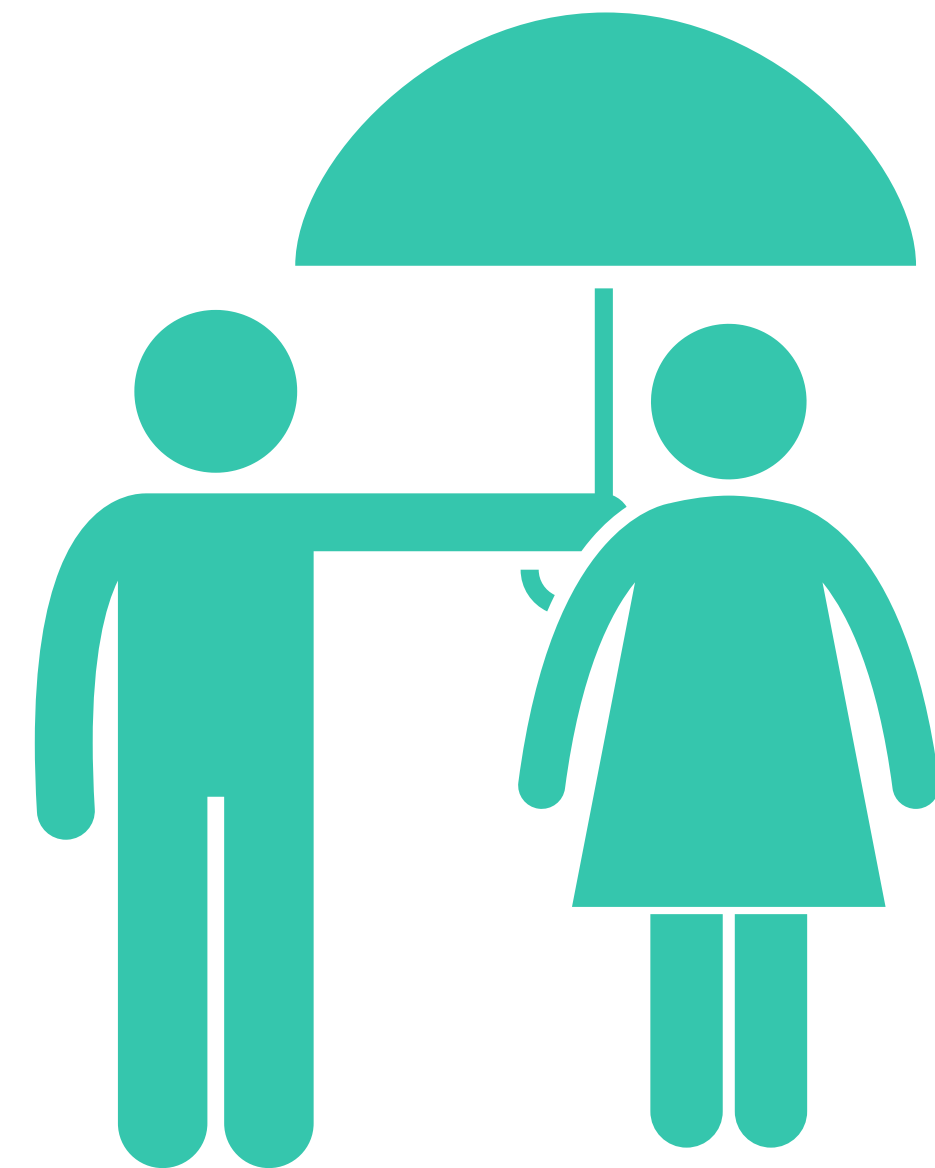
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# Perhaps sacrifices themselves for the group



## *Virtue-Based Thinking or Character Strengths*

Virtue-theories define the traits of character strengths that define what is "good" in someone and then say what is right are the actions that someone with those traits would do. For example, bravery, curiosity, etc. Intellectual characters strengths are those that govern thinking, such as open-mindedness, curiosity, and intellectual humility, as they help the person seek "truth."





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# Now you try. Choose a dilemma.

Choose one of the following three dilemmas.

## Discuss:

1. What do you think your character should do?
2. What moral framework(s) (utilitarianism, deontology, or virtue ethics) or moral foundations apply here?
3. How would you use these ideas in teaching a dilemma to your students?

**Breakout Groups!**





# Farah's Volleyball Dream

Farah lives outside a big city. The head of her school has just passed a rule banning religious clothing on campus. Farah is Muslim, and it's important to her and her family that she wears a hijab (a head scarf worn by some Muslim women) at all times in public. Most of Farah's teachers are fairly tolerant and allow her to wear her hijab. However, the school's sports trainer reminds Farah of the new rule and refuses to allow her to participate in any athletic activities unless she removes it.

Farah has always been an active volleyball player and wants to join the school team. She even thinks she might be able to be a professional player someday. She knows the sports trainer won't let her on the team unless she removes her hijab. Farah is not sure whether it will go against her beliefs if she only takes her hijab off during volleyball practice—it's only a few hours a week—but she knows she needs to be on the team this year if she wants to have a chance at a volleyball career.



# Matthias's Phone Fears

Matthias is eager to buy the best new XYZ smartphone that's just been released. He wants to be a music producer, and he knows the phone has great recording features. Matthias does not have access to a computer at home, and this phone is most likely his best chance to make great music over the next year.

However, a newspaper article has just been published explaining how XYZ company uses teen labor in order to make the phone. The teenage workers, usually between 15 and 17 years of age, have to work at the company's factories for five months in order to get "work experience" to be able to graduate from their local school. The students are required to work long hours, sometimes over 11 hours a day. XYZ company insists that the students are choosing to work at the factories and are being paid fairly. The teens say they are being forced to work at the phone factories and that the work has nothing to do with their education. Having read this article, now Matthias isn't sure if he should buy the phone.



# For Li Wei, are GMOs a No?

Li Wei is a reporter for his school newspaper. He recently submitted an article for the paper in which he argued that governments should not limit or stop the production of genetically modified foods (GMOs). Li Wei argues GMOs support farming industries and help reduce hunger in many developing nations. However, the editor says that a school newspaper is not allowed to make political statements and that Li Wei can't write articles about this topic. The editor says he will not be able to publish Li Wei's article.

Li Wei lives in a country where freedom of the press is protected by the government. The editor argues that the school newspaper is not a "real" newspaper and that reporters have to do what the editor says. Li Wei wants to be a journalist in the future and is not sure if he should agree to follow the editor's rules. Li Wei also knows that the editor has sent around an article to the newspaper staff in the past that says that GMOs cause cancer and other health problems.