## Ethics within Human Relationships

## Introduction

Our many relationships are where the applied ethics of our lives are acted out, and conflict commonly occurs at every level of life. This week, we meet and practice using three of the best models for resolving conflicts. Then we move on to revisit a concern from earlier in our course in the concept of "The Whole World in Our Hands," the concern about the boundaries of our duties and obligations. With Ayn Rand's Objectivism comes the question of what, if any, ethical duties and obligations impact our lives. Then we visit the professional and business relationships that will touch our lives in days to come.

Ethical dilemma resolution models give us a "series of questions" to work through when faced with an ethical dilemma. Some work better for select situations. We have covered a few of these up to this point and discussed each week how some famous philosophers solved ethical dilemmas. Many ethicists believe that a particular mindset is the way to solve all ethical dilemmas. Others find that putting yourself in another person's shoes is a great strategy. Other resolution models ask you to think how you will feel if others know what you have done. The best part of using any model is that it trains a person to think through behaviors and consider consequences before acting. Sometimes that "breather" time alone is enough to stop a bad action in its tracks. These models can also help you stop others who may be contemplating an unethical action by helping them work through a dilemma in a step-by-step, thoughtful way.

Following an explanation of these three methods, you will have the opportunity to practice the first case study situation that we will discuss this week.

## Laura Nash Method

Laura Nash is an ethics and divinity professor at Harvard. She created a series of 12 questions to ask oneself when confronted with an ethical dilemma:

1. Have you defined the problem accurately?
2. How would you define the problem if you stood on the other side of the fence?
3. How did this situation occur in the first place?
4. To whom and to what do you give your loyalty as a person and as a member of the corporation?
5. What is your intention in making this decision?
6. How does this intention compare with the probable results?
7. Whom could your decision or action injure?
8. Can you discuss the problem with the affected parties before you make your decision?
9. Are you confident that your position will be as valid over a long period of time as it seems now?
10. Could you disclose without qualm your decision or action to your boss, your CEO, the board of directors, your family, society as a whole?
11. What is the symbolic potential of your action if understood? Misunderstood?
12. Under what conditions would you allow exceptions to your stand?"

 (adapted from: Nash, L. (1981). Ethics Without the Sermon. Harvard Business Review, (59). Found at: [https://hbr.org/1981/11/ethics-without-the-sermon (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.](https://hbr.org/1981/11/ethics-without-the-sermon).)

After answering the questions, a person then chooses an action, which will hopefully be ethical and appropriate.

**See the interactive in the box below, which allows you to practice using this model.**

## Blanchard and Peale Method

Management expert Kenneth Blanchard and the late Dr. Norman Vincent Peale offer a series of questions that people should ponder in resolving ethical dilemmas:

1. Is it legal?
2. Will I be violating a civil law or institutional policy?
3. Is it balanced?
4. Is it fair to all concerned?
5. Does it promote win/win situations?
6. How will it make me feel about myself?
7. Will I be proud?
8. Would I feel good if my hometown newspaper published my decision?
9. Would I feel good if my family knew about my choice?

(Blanchard, K., & Peale, N.V. (1988). *The power of ethical management.* New York: William Morrow [p. 27] )

Using these questions and subsequent answers, it is the hope that the person in this situation will think through and allow their conscience to control their behavior.

**See the interactive in the blue box below, which allows you to practice using this model.**

## Front Page of the Newspaper

This very simple ethical resolution model requires only that a decision-maker envision how a reporter would describe a decision on the front page of a local or national newspaper. An example, provided by Marianne Jennings in her Business: Its Legal, Ethical, and Judicial Environment (6th Ed.), states:

"When Salomon Brothers illegally cornered the U.S. government's bond market, the Business Week headline read: "How Bad Will It Get?;" nearly two years later, a follow-up story on Salomon's crisis strategy was headlined "The Bomb Shelter That Salomon Built." During the aftermath of the bond market scandal, the interim chairman of Salomon, Warren Buffett, told employees, "Contemplating any business act, an employee should ask himself whether he would be willing to see it immediately described by an informed and critical reporter on the front page of his local paper, there to be read by his spouse, children, and friends. At Salomon we simply want no part of any activities that pass legal tests but that we as citizens, would find offensive." "

(Jennings, M. M. (2003). *Business: Its legal, ethical, and judicial environment* . Mason, OH: Thomson Southwest-West [p. 60])

With this strategy comes a way forward for those suffering the effects of conflict with both benefits and costs.

Lets practice using the three ethical dilemma resolution models in this interactive tutorial. The tutorial below will provide you with a dilemma scenario and then let you try out the three models. Click the button for the model you want to use to see a "sample" analysis using that model.

You have just graduated from Devry University Online and have landed your first job as a contract consultant for a web development company. You will work as a consultant through a temporary service for a period of six months and then if all goes well, you will be offered a permanent position with benefits.

Your wife of two years is very excited as she is working in a dead end position for a man who has been harassing her for the last four months. And furthermore as soon as you get benefits, she would like to start having a family. You are a very motivated employee.

In month four of your six month probation you receive a new assignment from your boss. The assignment is to set up a website which explains how to procure various different chemicals and substances as well as linked to another site online where individuals may legally purchase anhydrous ammonia. You realize within minutes that you’ve been assigned to create a website to help people product crystallize methamphetamines, a legal and illegal black market drug.

You’ve selected to approach your boss with the assignment and hesitantly ask for an appointment to discuss it. Your boss, a rather distant and nasty man gives you a thumbs down and says, “Oh, I’m busy, go get the assignment done. The client pre-paid it and it’s a rush order.” You look down at the paper and see the gold star in the corner which means it is to be done within 24 hours.

[Transcript (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.](https://lms.courselearn.net/lms/CourseExport/files/23d02b84-0255-43c8-8aa5-032beb3f64e2/wk6_EthicalDecisionMaking.html)

As the employee, what do you do? Check the three sample solutions below.

#### Ethical Dilemma Resolution Models

Select a method below to see the recommendations for each model approach.

1. Laura Nash
2. [Hide Answer](https://chamberlain.instructure.com/courses/22737/pages/week-6-lesson?module_item_id=2628685#answer0)
3. 1. Have you defined the problem accurately?
4. In this case, if you are certain that the website is in fact designed to help people learn to make crystal meth, then in all likelihood, you have defined it accurately. However, you also know that if you don’t do this, someone else will.
5. 2. How would you define the problem if you stood on the other side of the fence?
6. This is always one of the hardest questions. What IS on the other side of the fence?
7. A) Your boss’s fence: he took the money and offered a service.
8. B) The fence of the client. He paid for the service.
9. C) The fence of the people using the website: you would be an accomplice to their crime, possibly.
10. D) The fence of the law: 1st Amendment rights of freedom of speech. What exactly does this entail? Does that extend to providing people with the method to make illegal drugs?
11. 3. How did this situation occur in the first place?
12. In an employment situation where you want to do really well, so that your wife can get out of her situation and the two of you can start a family. You just wanted to do your thing for 6 months until you got put on permanently. You don’t want to rock the boat.
13. 4. To whom and to what do you give your loyalty as a person and as a member of the corporation?
14. As a person: your loyalty obviously is to your wife and future family, and yourself! (Think Ayn Rand here.) Duty (Kant) to society as well.
15. Member of the corporation: On one hand, doing what the boss says is your job. But, if you put this together and then the company is later implicated in a legal battle about it, have you really served the company? Since you didn’t get to talk to your boss about WHY you are concerned, what if he gets mad later that you didn’t insist? This is a tough one.
16. 5. What is your intention in making this decision?
17. This personal question is hard. You probably want to: a) keep your job b) pass your probation period and c) not write this website.
18. Employer issues aside, you also don’t want your company to be implicated in a scandal like this.
19. 6. How does this intention compare with the probable results?
20. It is likely that somehow this will turn out badly either way. This dilemma is one of those no-win dilemmas.
21. 7. Whom could your decision or action injure?
22. Deciding to go forward with the page could injure someone who uses the site to make meth, someone who ends up buying the meth, your personal integrity, and also the company in the long term if it gets caught.
23. Deciding not to go forward with the page could get you fired and then your wife will be stuck in her bad job and you have to delay having a family even longer.
24. 8. Can you discuss the problem with the affected parties before you make your decision?
25. You tried and your boss said no. You need to either go up the chain of command (over his head) or do the page.
26. 9. Are you confident that your position will be as valid over a long period of time as it seem now?
27. Yes, very confident.
28. 10. Could you disclose without qualm your decision or action to your boss, your CEO, the board of directors, your family, society as a whole?
29. You could only discuss this without qualms if you didn’t go forward with the page.
30. 11. What is the symbolic potential of your action if understood? Misunderstood?
31. Symbolically, you will have made a statement that your personal ethics are more important than making money for your company if you don’t do it. If you do it, you have made the statement that you believe you have the right to write anything you want, and only the people who take the information are at fault. Kind of like the “guns don’t kill people-people kill people” analogy. That way you get to keep your job.
32. 12. Under what conditions would you allow exceptions to your stand?
33. This will be personal to each person. Possibly, you would make an exception if you knew that this site was actually going to be used by law enforcement personnel to track the people who use the site to try to create a sting operation to catch the abusers.
34. Thus, this method helps you think deeply about the situation…but doesn’t make the decision for you.
35. What is your decision?
36.
37. Blanchard and Peale
38.
39. [Hide Answer](https://chamberlain.instructure.com/courses/22737/pages/week-6-lesson?module_item_id=2628685#answer1)
40. 1.Is it legal?
41. No, crystal meth is illegal. Not sure if writing the website is illegal.
42. 2.Will I be violating a civil law or institutional policy?
43. It is likely that some would say the 1st Amendment would protect me but not sure on that.
44. 3.Is it balanced?
45. It is not balanced. This is weighed entirely on the side of bad/criminal/dangerous. The only thing on the side of not rocking the boat is that I might lose my job. I want my wife away from that boss and we want a family. If I am out of work, we will never be able to get ahead.
46. 4.Is it fair to all concerned?
47. It is not fair.
48. 5.Does it promote win/win situations?
49. Not really applicable. The boss’s refusal to talk to me was not win/win. Me getting fired is lose/lose.
50. 6.How will it make me feel about myself?
51. If I do this page, I will feel awful and guilty and scared. If I don’t, I may lose my job and feel awful.
52. 7.Will I be proud?
53. Not if I write the website.
54. 8.Would I feel good if my hometown newspaper published my decision?
55. I would feel good if they published that I stood my ground and refused to write the page.
56. 9.Would I feel good if my family know about my choice?
57. Only if I chose NOT to write the page.
58. In this case, I am clearly determined NOT to do this job. I will just have to get my boss to talk to me. If he says I must do it, I’m taking it up the chain. I will call the local authorities if I must, and try to get Whistleblower protections.
59.
60.
61. Front Page of the Newspaper
62. [Hide Answer](https://chamberlain.instructure.com/courses/22737/pages/week-6-lesson?module_item_id=2628685#answer2)
63. Envisioning this on the front page of the paper:
64. “Web designer provides method to produce Crystal Meth—caught in Police Sting operation.”
65. “12 youths killed when crystal meth lab explodes in apt building. ‘I learned it from a website’ said one.”
66. “Crystal Meth responsible for school bus crash.”
67. Sensationalizing the way this could be depicted is one hard and fast way to decide your actions.
68. What are some other headlines you can think of?

Do you agree with the sample solutions or do you disagree? Feel free to discuss the differences and similarities or any questions you have about this in the discussions this week.

### Talking Points about Ethical Resolution Models

The most difficult part about using ethical dilemma resolution models is knowing which one to use in what situation. The ones listed in this lecture are mostly used in business ethic situations. Oftentimes, one must stop and think, "Is this the kind of situation where anyone would care enough to put my behavior on the front page?" If not, that doesn't necessarily mean the action is ethical, just not "newsworthy." The fact that newspapers focus on the strange and unusual is not a basis for declaring an unethical action to be ethical. It just may mean that the front page of the newspaper test isn't the best one for that dilemma.

Likewise, because a newspaper may report something as being unethical even when it is not, a person needs to really think through his or her behavior. What if the news reporter is unethical? What if his or her ethics are different from yours? What if you know in your heart that an action is the right thing to do, but the newspapers will jump on it with two feet and make you look bad? For example, Dr. Kevorkian, mentioned last week, still feels he did the right thing in assisting sick people with dying. He was willing to go to jail (suffer the consequences) for his behavior.

The easiest and most personally enlightening ethical resolution method is just that one:

1. What will be the consequences of this action if others learn of my action?

2. Are the consequences worth carrying through with the action?

If the answer to #2 is yes, then for that person, the action is the "right" one. Whether it is the "ethical" action, however, is another story. Ethics really is a question of "right" and "wrong." Consequentialism is definitely an ethical theory, and one which many people say is just like Utilitarianism. The ironic thing about this method, however, is that it only works for people who have a base system of ethics or principles. Moral relativists, who are inherently unethical, are able to use this 2-step method to justify to themselves (quite often) their dangerous or unethical behavior. Thus, people with difficulty understanding the difference between right and wrong should use a more detailed method, such as Laura Nash's, until a habit of ethical behavior becomes established.

If you still have questions about this, do not feel alone. Many of us do; truly ethical people continue to question, grow, learn, and sometimes even change their mind about right and wrong as a result of experiences, results, and learning throughout their lives. As we also discussed last week, Norma McCorvey, the woman who was the Plaintiff in Roe v. Wade, has changed her mind as an older adult, and regrets very much her role in legalizing abortion.

If you want the best advice on ethical behavior, it would make sense to ask a well-respected person in their 70s or 80s--by that age, these seniors have seen years of life, made millions of decisions, and realized and lived with the results of those decisions. Truly, humans have a unique ability to learn from older generations and should take advantage of this whenever possible.

## Ayn Rand's Objectivism

Our ethicists to this point have come from long before we could ever sit at their feet for direct teaching--some, such as Aristotle, from very long ago. In the case of Ayn Rand, we have a teacher from the early age of television and can learn from her directly.

### Ayn Rand in Person...

This is a television interview segment from 1959 of Ayn Rand by Mike Wallace. It was a half-hour interview program, and here we meet her for just over nine minutes to get the essence of what she was teaching. The whole interview in three segments is available online for those who wish to hear it.

[Transcript](https://chamberlain.instructure.com/courses/22737/pages/week-6-lesson?module_item_id=2628685)

Interview video 1

Interviewee: Sense of the word. I’m not \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ emotional impression. Is that your impression? Announcer: Mike Wallace Ayn Rand, 225-1 take two. Interviewer: I have not. I’m curious. Better not talk \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. This is Mike Wallace with another television portrait from our gallery of colorful people. Throughout the United States, small pockets of intellectuals have been become involved in a new and unusual philosophy which would seem to strike at the very roots of our society. The fountainhead of this philosophy is a novelist, Ayn Rand whose two major works, The Fountainhead and Atlas Shrugged have been bestsellers. We’ll try to find out more about her revolutionary creed and about Miss Rand herself in just a moment. And now to our story. Down through history various political and philosophical movements have sprung up but most of them died. Some of them however, like democracy or communism take hold and affect the entire world. Here in the United States perhaps the most challenging and unusual new philosophy has been forged by a novelist, Ayn Rand. Miss Rand’s point of view is still comparatively unknown in America but if it ever did take hold it would revolutionize our lives. Ayn, to begin with, I wonder if I can ask you to capsulize; I know this is difficult. Can I ask you to capsulize your philosophy? What is Randism? Interviewee: First of all I do not call it Randism and I don’t like that name. Interviewer: All right. Interviewee: I call it objectivism. Interviewer: All right. Interviewee: Meaning a philosophy based on objective reality. Now let be explain it as briefly as I can. First, my philosophy is based on the concept that reality exists as an objective absolute that man’s mind, reason is his means of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and that man needs a rational morality. I am primarily the creator of a new cult of morality which has so far been believed impossible, namely a morality not based on faith – Interviewer: On faith.

Interviewee: Not on faith, not on arbitrarily whim, not on emotion, not on arbitrary \_\_\_\_\_ mystical or social but on reason. A morality which can be proved by means of logic which can be demonstrated to be true and necessary. Interviewer: All right, all right. Interviewee: Now, may I define what my reality is? Interviewer: All right. Interviewee: Because this is merely an introduction. My morality is based on man’s life as a standard of value and since man’s mind is his basic means of survival, I hope that if man wants to live on earth and to live as a human being, he has to hold reason as an absolute by which I mean that he has to hold reason as his only guide to action and that he must lead by the independent judgment of his own mind, that his highest moral purpose is the achievement of his own happiness and that he must not force other people nor accept their right to force him, that each man must life as an end in himself and follow his own rational self interest. Interviewer: May I interrupt now? Interviewee: You may. Interviewer: Because you bring, you put this philosophy to work in your novel Atlas Shrugged. You demonstrate it in human terms in your novel Atlas Shrugged. Now let me start by quoting from a review of this novel Atlas Shrugged that appeared in Newsweek. It said that, you are out to destroy almost every edifice in the contemporary American way of life, our Judea Christian religion, a modified government regulated capitalism, a rule by the majority will. Other reviews have said that you scorned churches and the concept of God. Are these accurate criticisms? Interviewee: Yes. I agree with the facts but not the estimates of these criticisms, namely if I am challenging the base of all these institutions. I’m challenging the moral cult of altruism, the precept that man’s moral duty is to live for others, that men must sacrifice himself to others which is the present day morality. Interviewer: What do you mean by “sacrifice himself for others”? Now we’re getting to the point.

Interviewee: One moment, since I’m challenging the base I necessarily would challenge the institutions you're naming which are a result of that morality. Interviewer: All right. Interviewee: And now what is self sacrifice? Interviewer: Yes, what is self sacrifice? You say that you do not like the altruism by which we live. You like a certain kind of Ayn Randist selfishness. Interviewee: Well see but I don’t like is to wick a word. I consider it evil and self sacrifice is the precept that man needs to serve others in order to justify his existence, that his moral duty is to serve others. That is what most people believe today. Interviewer: Well yes we’re taught to feel concern for our fellow man, to feel responsible for his welfare, to feel that we are as religious people might put it, children under God and responsible one for the other. Now why do you rebel? What’s wrong with this philosophy? Interviewee: But that is what in fact makes man a sacrificial animal. That man must work for others, concern himself with others or be responsible for them. That is the role of a sacrificial object. I say that man is entitled to his own happiness and that he must achieve it himself but that he cannot demand that others give up their lives to make him happy and nor should he wish to sacrifice himself for the happiness of others. I hold that man should have self esteem. Interviewer: And cannot man have self esteem if he loves his fellow man? What’s wrong with loving your fellow man? Christ, every important moral leader in man’s history has taught us that we should love one another. Why then is this kind of love in your mind immoral? Interviewee: It is immoral if it is a love placed above one’s self. It is more than immoral, it’s impossible. Because when you are asked to love everybody indiscriminately, that is to love people without any standard, to love them regardless of the fact whether they have any value or virtue, you are asked to love nobody. Interviewer: But in a sense in your book you talk about love as if it were a business deal of some kind. Isn't the essence of love that it is above self interest?

 Interviewee: Well let me make it complete for you. What would it mean to have love above self interest? It would mean for instance that a husband would fail his wife if he were moral according to the conventional morality that I am marrying you just for your own sake. I have no personal interest in it but I’m selfish that I’m marrying you only for your own good. Interviewer: Should husbands and wives telling – Interviewee: Would any woman like that? Interviewer: Should husbands and wife’s tally up at the end of the day and say well now wait a minute, I love her if she’s done enough for me today or she loves me if I have properly performed my functions as? Interviewee: Oh no, you misunderstood me. That is not how love should be treated. I agree with you that it should be treated like a business deal but every business has to have its own terms and its own kind of currency and in love the currency is virtue. You love people not for what you do for them or what they do for you. You love them for their values, their virtues which they have achieved in their own character. You don’t love \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. You don’t love everybody indiscriminately. You love only those who deserve it. Interviewer: And then if a man is weak or a woman is weak then she is beyond, he is beyond love? Interviewee: He certainly does not deserve it. He certainly is beyond – he can always correct it. Man has free will. If a man wants love he should correct his weaknesses or his flaws and he may deserve it, but he cannot expect the unearned either in love nor in money, neither matter nor spiritual. Interviewer: You have lived in our world and you realize, recognize the fallibility of human beings. There are very few of us then in this world by your standards who are worthy of love. Interviewee: Unfortunately yes, very few but because open to everybody to make themselves more deserved and that is all that man morality offers them, a way to make themselves worthy of love although that’s not the primary motive. Interviewer: Let’s move ahead.

Interview video 2

Interviewer: Let’s move ahead. How does your philosophy translate itself into the world of politics? Now one of the principal achievements of this country in the past 20 years particularly, I think most people agree is the gradual growth of social, protective legislation based on the principal that we are our brother’s keepers. How do you feel about the political trends of the United States, the western world? Interviewee: The way everybody feels except more consciously. I feel that it is terrible that you see destruction all around you and that you are moving toward disaster until and unless all of those welfare state conceptions have been reversed and rejected. It is precisely these trends which are bringing the world to disaster because we are now moving towards complete collectivism or socialism, a system under which everybody is enslaved to everybody and we are moving that way only because our altruism morality. Interviewer: Ah yes but you say everybody is enslaved to everybody. If this came about democratically, a free people in a free country voted for this kind of government, wanted this kind of legislation, do you object to the Democratic process? Interviewee: I object to the idea that people have the right to vote on everything. The traditional American system was a system based on the idea that majority will prevail only in public or political affairs and that it was limited by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ individual rights. Therefore I do not believe that the majority can vote a man’s life or property or freedom away from him. Therefore I do not believe that if a majority votes on any issue, that this makes the issue right. It doesn’t. Interviewer: All right, then how do we arrive at action? How should we arrive at action? Interviewee: By voluntary consent, voluntary cooperation of free men, unforced. Interviewer: And how do our leaders arrive – how do we arrive at our leadership? Who elects? Who appoints? Interviewee: The whole people elects. There is nothing wrong with Democratic process in politics. We arrive at it the way we arrived by American constitution as it used to be. By the constitutional \_\_\_\_\_\_ as we had it, people elect officials but the powers of those officials. The powers of government are strictly limited. They Ayn Rand Interview: part will have no right to initiate force or compulsion against any citizen except a criminal. Those who have initiated force will be punished by force and that is the only proper function of government. What we would not permit is the government to initiate force against people who have hurt no one, who have not forced anyone. We would not give the government or the majority or any minority the right to take the life or the property of others. That was the original American system. Interviewer: When you say ‘take the property of others’ I imagine that you're talking now about taxes. Interviewee: Yes I am. Interviewer: And you believe that there should be no right by the government to tax? You believe that there should be no such thing as welfare legislation, unemployment compensation, regulation during times of stress, certain kinds of rent controls and things like that? Interviewee: That’s right. I’m opposed to all forms of control. I am for an absolute less affair, free, unregulated economy. Let me put it briefly. I’m for the separation of state and economics just as we had separation of state and church which led to peaceful coexistence among different religions after a period of religious wars. So the same applies to economics. If you separate the government from economics, if you do not regulation production and trade, you will have peaceful cooperation and harmony and justice among men. Interviewer: You are certainly enough of a political scientist to know that certain movements spring up in reaction to other movements, the labor movement for instance, certain social welfare legislation. This did not spring full blown from somebody’s head. I mean out of a vacuum. This was a reaction to certain abuses that were going on. Isn't that true Ayn? Interviewee: Not always. It actually sprang up from the same source as the abuses. If by abuses you mean the legislation which originally had been established to help industrialists which was already a breach of complete free enterprise, even in reaction labor leaders get together to initiate legislation to help labor. That is only acting on the same principle namely all parties agree that it is proper for the state to legislate in favor of one economic group or another. What I’m saying is that nobody should have the right, neither employers or employees to use state compulsion and force for their own \_\_\_\_\_. [Crosstalk] Interviewer: But when you advocate, when you advocate completely unregulated economic life in which every man works for his own profit, you are asking in a sense for a devil take the hind most dog eat dog society and one of the main reasons for the growth of government controls was to fight the robber barons, to fight less affair in which the very people whom you admire the most Ayn, the hard headed industrialists, the successful men perverted the use of their power. Is that not true? Interviewee: No it isn't. This country was made not by robber barons but by independent men, by industrious who succeeded on sheer ability – [Crosstalk] Interviewer: Of course they succeed. Interviewee: By ability I mean without political force, help or compulsion but at the same time there were men, industrious who did use government power as a club to help them against competitors. They were the original collectivists. Today the liberals believe that that same compulsion should be used against the industrious for the sake of workers, that the basic principle there is should there be any compulsion and the regulations are creating robber barons. They are creating capitalists with government help which is the worst of all economic phenomenon. Interviewer: I think that you will agree with me when I say that you do not have a good deal of respect for the society in which you and I currently live. You think that we’re going downhill fairly fast. Now I would like you to think about this question and you’ll have a minute intermission to ponder it and then come back and answer it. Do you predict dictatorship and economic disaster for the United States if we continue on our present course? Do you? And we’ll get Ayn Rand’s answer in just a moment. [Pause] And now back to our story. All right Ayn Rand, what I’d like to know is this, since you describe it as happening in your novel Atlas Shrugged, do you actually predict dictatorship and economic disaster for the United States?

Interviewee: If the present collectivist trend continues, if the present ulterior reason philosophy continues, yes. That is the way the country is going but I do not believe in historical terminism and I do not believe that people have to go that way. Men have the free will to choose and to think. If they change their thinking, we do not have to go into dictatorship. Interviewer: Yes, but how can you expect to reverse this trend when as we’ve said, the country is run by majority rules through ballot and that majority seems to prefer to vote for this modified welfare state. Interviewee: Oh I don’t believe that. You know as well as I do that the majority today has no choice. Interviewer: What do you mean? Interviewee: The majority has never been offered a choice between controls and freedom. Interviewer: How do you account for the fact that an almost overwhelming majority of the people who are regarded as our leading intellectuals and our leading industrialists, the men whom you seem to admire the most, the men with the muscle and the money favor the modified capitalism that we have today? Interviewee: Because it is an intellectual issue since they all believe in collectivism, they do favor it. But the majority of the people has never been given a choice. You know that both parties today are for socialism in effect, for controls and there is no party. There are no voices to offer an actual pro-capitalist less affair economic, freedom and individualism. That is what this country needs today. Interviewer: Isn't it possible that they all, we all believe in it because we are all basically lonely people and we all understand that we are basically our brother’s keepers? Interviewee: You couldn’t say that you really understand it because there is no way which you could justify. Nobody has ever given a reason why men should be their brother’s keepers and you have every example. And you see the examples around you of men perishing by the attempt to be their brother’s keepers. Interviewer: You have no faith in anything. Interviewee: Faith? No. Interviewer: Only in your mind. Interviewee: That is not faith. That is a conviction.

Interview video 3

Interviewee: That is not faith; that is a conviction. I have no faith at all, I only hold convictions. Interviewer: Who are you Ayn Rand? When I say that I would like to know just a little bit of your vital statistics. You have an accent which is –? Interviewee: Russian. Interviewer: Russian? You were born in Russia? Interviewee: Yes. Interviewer: Came here – Interviewee: Oh, about 30 years ago. Interviewer: And whence did this philosophy of yours come? Interviewee: Of my own mind with the sole acknowledgement of a debt to Aristotle who is the only philosopher that ever influenced me. I devised the rest of my philosophy myself. Interviewer: Your parents, did they die in Russia or did they come here to the United States? Interviewee: No, I came here alone and I don't know, I have no way of finding out whether they died or not? Interviewer: You are married? Interviewee: Yes. Interviewer: Your husband, is he an industrialist? Interviewee: No, he’s an artist. His name is Frank O’Connor. Interviewer: And he – Interviewee: Paints – Interviewer: Not the writer? He paints. Interviewee: No, not the writer. Interviewer: And does he live from his painting? Interviewee: He’s just beginning to study painting. I was designer before. Interviewer: Is he supported in his efforts by the state? Interviewee: Most certainly not. Interviewer: He’s supported by you for the time being? Interviewee: No, by his own work actually in the past. Interviewer: Well I know – Interviewee: By me if necessary but it isn't quite necessary. Interviewer: And there is no, there is no contradiction here in that you help him? Interviewee: No because you see I am in love with him selfishly. It is in my own interest to help him if he ever needed it. I would not call that a sacrifice because I take selfish pleasure in it. Interviewer: Let me put one specific case to you. suppose under your system of self sufficiency, one single corporation were to get a stranglehold on a vital product or a raw material, uranium for instance which might be vital for the national defense and then would refuse to sell it to the government. Then what? Interviewee: Under a free system no one could acquire a monopoly on anything. If you look at the economics and the economic history will discover that all monopolies have been established with government help, with the help of franchises, subsidies or any kind of government privileges. In free competition no one could corner the market on a needed product. Interviewer: Ayn, let’s say there is a deposit – Interviewee: History will support me. Interviewer: There is a deposit of uranium in Nevada. It’s the only one in the United States and that’s our only access to that and for self defense we need this. Whereas let’s say in the Soviet Union the state is able to command that. And kind of a strange man of strange beliefs got hold of this uranium and said, “I will not sell this uranium to my government.” You should not be able to be forced by the government according to your philosophy to sell that uranium. Interviewee: But you realize you are setting up an impossible fantasy. If you are talking of any natural resource that is vitally needed, it would not become vitally needed if it were that scarce, not scarce to the point where one man could control all of it so long as I’m using your example – Interviewer: Yeah. Interviewee: If a natural resource exists in more than one place in the world, no one man is going to control it. Interviewer: All right, let’s take another. How do we build roads, sanitation facilities, hospitals, schools? If you are not – if the government is not permitted to force if you will by vote, taxation, use your word, we have to depend upon the trickledown theory upon the no blessel blige, the largess? Interviewee: I will answer you by asking you a question. Who pays for all those things? Interviewer: All of us pay for these things. Interviewee: When you admit that you want to take money by force from someone and ask me how are we going to build hospitals or roads, you admit that someone is producing the money, the wealth that will make those roads possible. You have no right to tell the men who produce the wealth in what way you want him to spend it. If you need his money you can obtain it only by his voluntary consent. Interviewer: And you believe in the eventual good will of all human beings, or at least that top echelon of human beings whom you believe will give willingly – Interviewee: No good will is necessary, only self interest. Interviewer: Only self interest. Interviewee: I believe in private roads, private post offices, private schools. Interviewer: When industry breaks down momentarily and there is employment, mass unemployment, we should not be permitted to get unemployment insurance, Social Security we do not need. We’ll Ayn Rand Interview: depend upon the self interest of these enlightened industrialists whom you so admire to take care of things when the economy needs a little lubrication and there are millions of people out of work. Interviewee: Study economics. A free economy will not break down. All depressions are caused by government interference and the cure is always offered so far to take more of the poisons that caused the disaster. Depressions are not a result of a free economy. Interviewer: Ayn, one last question. We only have about a half a minute. How many Randists – you don’t like the word. I beg your pardon – Interviewee: Objectivists. Interviewer: How many objectivists would you say there are in the United States? Interviewee: It’s hard to estimate but I can tell you some figures. My best intellectual Nathaniel Brandon, a young psychologist is giving a series of lectures on my philosophy in New York. He has received 600 letters of inquiry within the month of January. He’s giving these lectures and attendance is growing in geometrical proportion. Interviewer: Ayn, I’m sure that you have stimulated a good many people, more people than already have to read your book, Atlas Shrugged and The Fountainhead. And I’m equally sure they will be stimulated for the reading, indeed if they do not agree. Interviewee: Thank you. Interviewer: Thank you very much. I’ll be back in a moment with my personal footnote to the story or Ayn Rand. As we said at the outset, if Ayn Rand’s ideas were ever to take hold they would revolutionize the world. And to those who would reject her philosophy, Miss Rand hurls this challenge. She has said, “For the past 2,000 years the world has been dominated by other philosophies. Look around you. Consider the results.” We thank Ayn Rand for adding her portrait to our gallery, one of the people other people are interested in. Mike Wallace, good bye.

Rand gives us an opportunity to connect ethics with other disciplines to see the continuity of thinking by our first CO.

Rand begins by asserting that all human behavior is self-interested. This is an objective and empirical claim based on observation of people; a claim of behavioral science. Notice her use of the descriptive word *is.*

To bring that claim to ethics involves a shift of language into prescriptive form. Rand is claiming that all honest and ethical behavior should be self-interested and only self-interested. Again, notice the shift to the prescriptive words *should be.*

## Rand & Relationships

Moving forward from that position approaches the whole problem of human relationships. If every action is motivated solely by self-interest so that people are not capable of unselfishness and seek only their own interests, what about that special yet common phenomenon of altruism? Is it unrealistic--or even impossible--that people behave altruistically toward each other?

If that is true, it suggests that ethics and morality are impossible. The idea continues that acting unselfishly has a benefit to the actor in a feel-good payoff of personal satisfaction; therefore, all altruistic acts are sabotaged in their moral value by the satisfaction that the actor enjoys. Especially for heroic acts, the public acclaim undermines the value of the true altruism which would be an act benefiting others without pay-off as an actor. The objectivist position claims that people do altruistic, noble, and even heroic acts for what is in their own interest, and acting in self-interest undermines all value attached to those altruistic actions.

Having shifted from *"is* self-interested" to *"should* be only self-interested," Rand's position also denies that people have any duty or obligation to others. If each person should pursue his or her self-interest exclusively, it follows that one's only duty is to their own self-interest and not to other people or the community at all. Even where people share the same self-interest and may align their efforts toward a common purpose, it remains true that each aligned person seeks their own benefit--that there is no duty to the other persons or to remain aligned with them beyond the current situation.

**Summarizing Self-interested Behavior**

**Very precisely:**

**\* Rand does NOT say that one should promote their own self-interest as well as that of others in a cooperative way.**

**\* Rand does NOT say that one should avoid actions that help others.**

**\* Rand does NOT say that one should balance his or her interest with the interest of others, although they may well align or coincide.**

**Rand's conclusion is that any decision becomes right by virtue of one's own advantage--and nothing else.**

We might then ask whether Rand's position is within the field of ethics or not. Writing a half century ago, nobody within the professional or academic community of ethics came to her support, and yet almost everyone felt the need to respond to her at some level. Her impact was enormous, but does her work qualify as studying ethics?

## Codes of Ethics

Professional communities, formed as professional societies, serve several functions.

Among the functions is to define the boundaries of the profession both as work to be accomplished and membership within the profession, to educate potential members of the professions through graduate education and accreditation of the graduate schools, to examine and certify graduates in order to determine whether they meet standards for practicing the profession, and to credential them for practicing the profession. Within that system is the need to guarantee that accredited members practice according to defined ethical standards. These societies--examples including the American Bar Association and the American Medical Association, among many others--all publish, educate for, and examine codes of ethics. When it becomes necessary to discipline a member, it is the Code of Ethics that provides the professional standard for behavior and quality of practice.

Professional education aimed toward entrance into the professions will endeavor to instill the values and ethos of the profession--ethos being a word with a common root as ethics. An ethics course within the professional curriculum will teach to instill the values of the professional community with a larger goal of protecting the integrity of the professional community's status and acknowledged role in the whole community into the future as it has honorably developed in the past. Within such a curriculum is an intention that new members of the profession will make their decisions and practical applications in continuity with the community's history and vision of the future.

## Summary Points

Ethics meets our lives both individually and professionally through relationships. To speak of relationships implies a level of contact and investment among those who are related and who share values and also share in the outcomes and consequences of the relationship that binds them. Defining relationships also necessitates a secondary definition of who is outside of the relationship. Such a relationship can be as narrow as two individuals or as wide as the whole world's population and every level in between. If we ask, "Who are we?" we are inquiring about who is in this relationship and who is outside of it. A subsequent question is that of what duties and responsibilities ensue that are different within and without the relationship.

Conflict exists within relationships, and people become deeply invested in conflict, which is why conflict is so common and so important. Participants in conflict can become so deeply invested that they cannot think or act beyond their deeply held convictions. Models of resolution exist and are available for use. They model careful and sequential questions and steps to move beyond investment toward resolution of conflict. This lecture presents three of the best examples. There are others.

If everyone is self-interested in their actions and behavior, should they always and only be self-interested in their ethics and decisions? If what Rand teaches is true, what is the role of relationships and acts of noble altruism in society?

Students studying here in preparation for entry into professions and occupations are also preparing themselves to value what those professions value and to live within the pattern of ethical practices that are defined in some Code of Professional Ethics. Professional societies define the values of their professional community, prepare and examine candidates for membership, define the practice of the profession, and discipline members for violation of their Code.