

Professionalism, Role of Ethics, and Ethical Reflection Checklists

Green Mountain SAF
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Pepper . . . and Salt

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL



“Let’s make sure that if there’s a return to morality, we get a piece of the action.”

Wall Street Journal, July 24, 1996.

Scope: Professional Ethics

- What is a profession?
- What is professional Ethics
- How do we find “the line”?
- How do we anticipate ethical problems?
- Legal/ethical duties of agents/trustees similar but really a separate matter

Professional Practice



Traits of a Profession

1. Specialized Knowledge/training
2. Service provided is arcane— ordinary consumer unable to evaluate
3. Public acceptance
4. Practical experience essential

profession, cont.

5. Professional societies:

1. Ethics codes
2. Enforcement of ethics rules
3. Examination or accreditation of training.
4. Continuing education

1. Some professions have special prerogatives:

- Attorney-client privilege (being re-examined)
- Journalists: obligation to protect sources

Profession, cont...

5. Classic “learned professions”: law, medicine, ministry .. Roots in the Middle Ages
6. Civil engineering, a model for modern “technical” professions
7. Professional practice is “in the public interest” and not merely a private business
 1. .e.g attorney as “officer of the court”
 2. Obligations of physicians, others for “pro bono” service
 3. Often regulated by States (LPE, etc)

Licensing/Registration

- In some states, professional registration or licensing exists for foresters & others
- Regulations may require certain actions only by Licensed foresters
 - E.g. sign management plans required by law/regulation
 - Inspect/approve cost sharing projects
 - Approve variances from standards

Ethical Reflection

- A matter of “practical deliberation”
- Understanding/applying general mandates
- Any process will do ... I suggest starting w. Kidder's – next page

Isn't my Conscience Enough?

- My feeling is, No.
- Conscience is a general feeling... not finely tuned to details & nuanced situations
- Often a way to avoid clear thinking /discussion
- Choices require clear, thought-out support, not just a feeling.

R. Kidder's Ethical checkpoints (adapted by Ici)

1. Recognize Problem
2. Determine the Actor
3. Gather relevant Facts
 1. Clarify Factual points
 2. Read Code & identify applicable Canons
 3. Identify what you don't know that is important
4. Interpret/apply Code provisions & commentary
 1. Right versus wrong issues
 2. Right versus right values

Guide...

5. Apply Other ethical perspectives

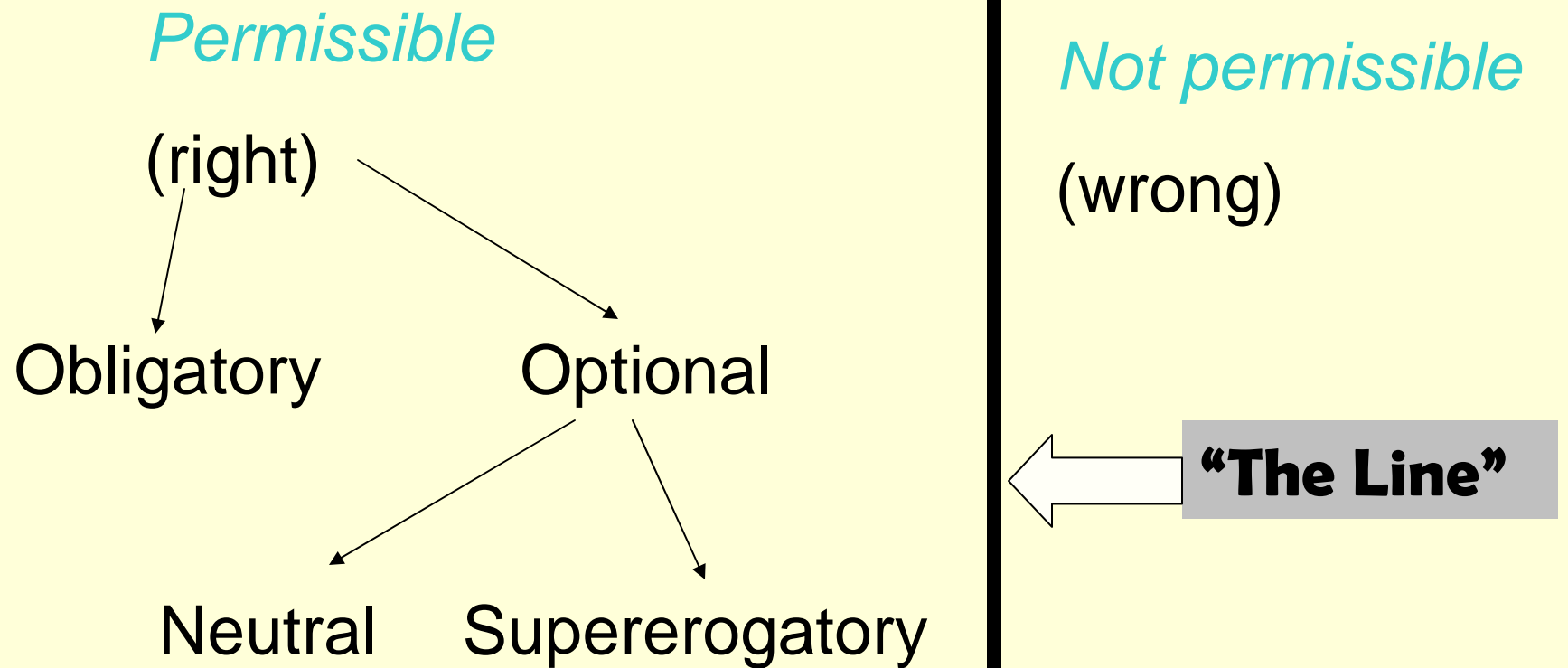
6. Look for Third Way
Formulate options

7. Make Decision

8. Revisit/Reflect

(Adapted from R. Kidder Checkpoints in Johnson, cf p. 144 ff.)

Kinds of Actions



(Pojman, Ethics... 1995 p. 10)

Where is the Line?

- Ethical dilemmas arise when you are uncertain where “the line” is.
- Wrong actions are beyond it. You have a duty to avoid wrong actions.
- Trouble is, in practice “The line” is more often a broad zone of grey, not a clear bright line.

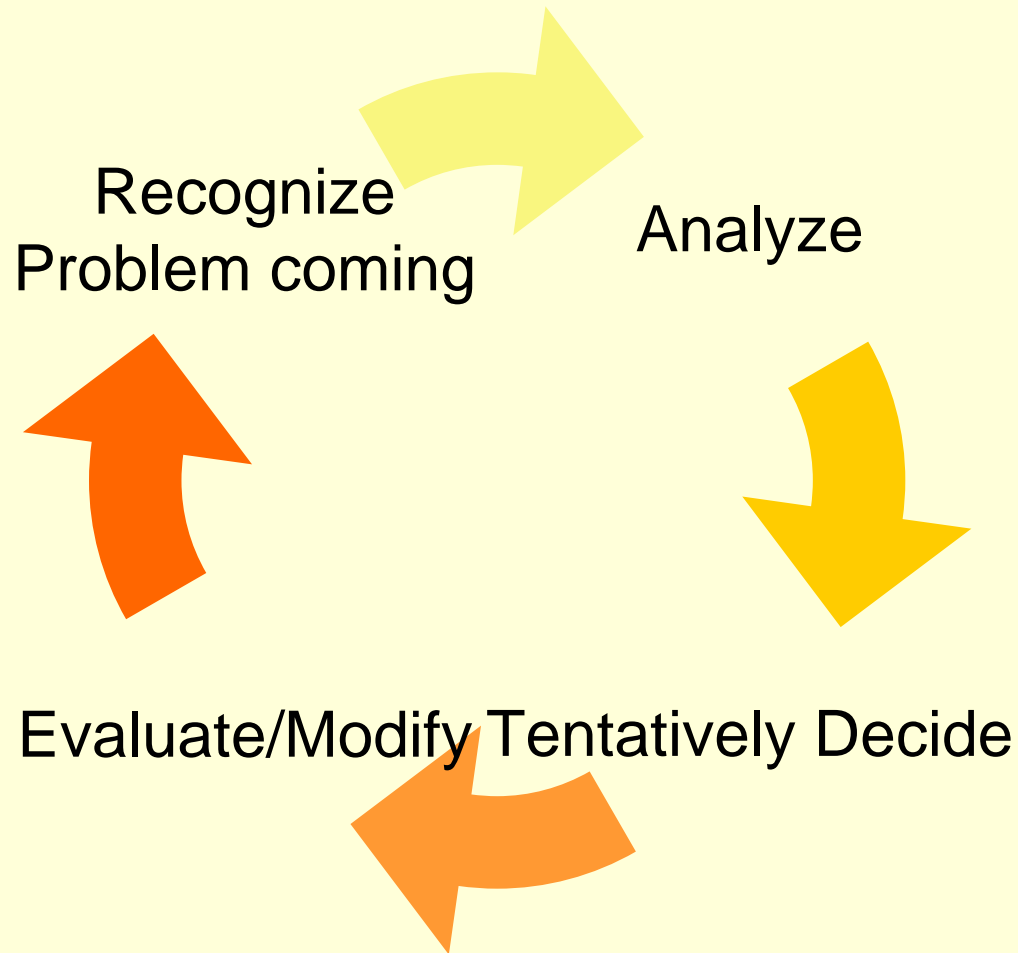
Drawing Lines

- Defining “where the line is” can be difficult, context-sensitive, and may be controversial.
- First thing is to realize that there IS a line out there – this is ethical awareness.
- Reflection helps you try to find it.

Detecting a Problem

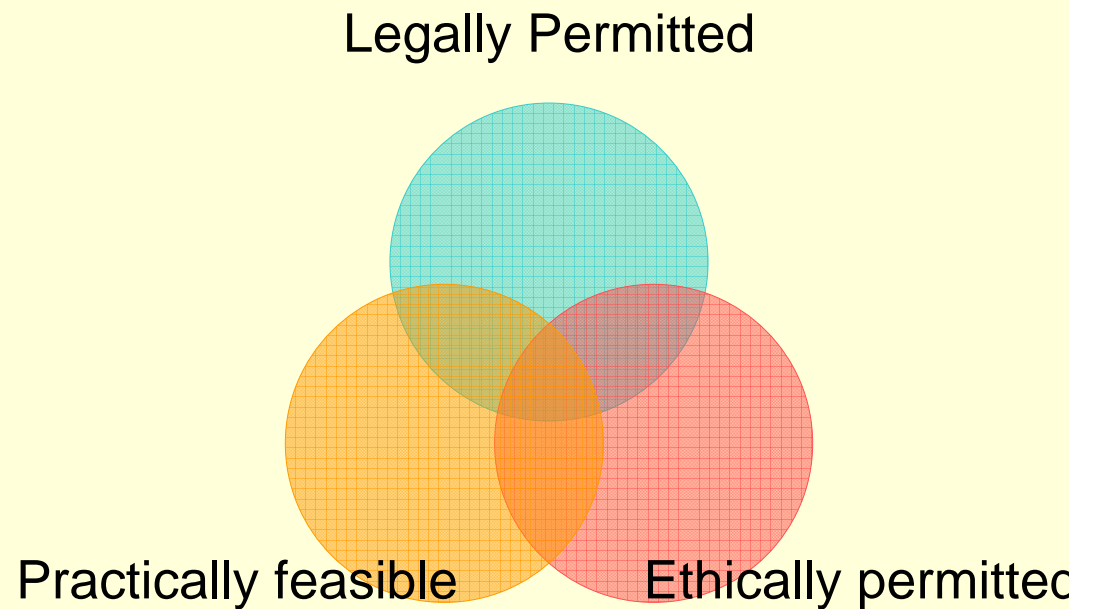
- Most ethics texts assume this is automatic
- But problem detection/foresight is NOT automatic
- Ethical training/study will help you to detect upcoming situations or dilemmas
- If you do not **detect** the problem, you won't even think about it till it's too late!

Some answers are never final...



Define Problem

- Is this an Ethical Problem?
- Won't help at all to ignore ethical dimensions
- Keep ethics in perspective



Kinds of dilemmas

- Business, administrative, or legal
- Political
- Personal loyalties or viewpoints
- Ethical
- Policy
 - Not all of these are ETHICAL ISSUES
 - THO THEY MAY HAVE ETHICAL ASPECTS

Patterson's 4 Questions

- What if everybody did it?
- Would I want to read about it in the paper tomorrow?
- What does my conscience say?
- What will it look like tomorrow?
- *Irland's addition: Would I be comfortable explaining this to my 12-year old?*

In conclusion....

- You can be ethical without being a Saint
- Would you rather be remembered as the forester who could always rationalize being at the line,
- Or, as someone who never went near the line?
- Which person would you prefer as an example for your children?

SAF Code of Ethics

Preamble

Service to society is the cornerstone of any profession. The profession of forestry serves society by fostering stewardship of the world's forests. Because forests provide valuable resources and perform critical ecological functions, they are vital to the well being of both society and the biosphere.

Members of the Society of American Foresters have a deep and enduring love for the land, and are inspired by the profession's historic traditions, such as Gifford Pinchot's (1947, 2000) utilitarianism and Aldo Leopold's (1949) ecological conscience. In their various roles as practitioners, teachers, researchers, advisers, and administrators, foresters seek to sustain and protect a variety of forest uses and attributes, such as aesthetic values, air and water quality, biodiversity, recreation, timber production, and wildlife habitat.

The purpose of this Code of Ethics is to protect and serve society by inspiring, guiding, and governing members in the conduct of their professional lives. Compliance with the code demonstrates members' respect for the land and their commitment to the long-term management of ecosystems, and ensures just and honorable professional and human relationships, mutual confidence and respect, and competent service to society.

On joining the Society of American Foresters, members assume a special responsibility to the profession and to society by promising to uphold and abide by the following:

Principles and Pledges

1. Foresters have a responsibility to manage land for both current and future generations. We pledge to practice and advocate management that will maintain the long-term capacity of the land to provide the variety of materials, uses, and values desired by landowners and society.
2. Society must respect forest landowners' rights and correspondingly, landowners have a land stewardship responsibility to society. We pledge to practice and advocate forest management in accordance with landowner objectives and professional standards, and to advise landowners of the consequences of deviating from such standards.

3. Sound science is the foundation of the forestry profession. We pledge to strive for continuous improvement of our methods and our personal knowledge and skills; to perform only those services for which we are qualified; and in the biological, physical, and social sciences to use the most appropriate data, methods, and technology.
4. Public policy related to forests must be based on both scientific principles and social values. We pledge to use our knowledge and skills to help formulate sound forest policies and laws; to challenge and correct untrue statements about forestry; and to foster dialogue among foresters, other professionals, landowners, and the public regarding forest policies.
5. Honest and open communication, coupled with respect for information given in confidence, is essential to good service. We pledge to always present, to the best of our ability, accurate and complete information; to indicate on whose behalf any public statements are made; to fully disclose and resolve any existing or potential conflicts of interest; and to keep proprietary information confidential unless the appropriate person authorizes its disclosure.

6. Professional and civic behavior must be based on honesty, fairness, good will, and respect for the law. We pledge to conduct ourselves in a civil and dignified manner; to respect the needs, contributions, and viewpoints of others; and to give due credit to others for their methods, ideas, or assistance.

The Society of American Foresters' Bylaws specify processes through which a member's violation of the code may lead to reprimand, censure, expulsion from the Society, or other disciplinary action. Any two persons, whether or not SAF members, may charge a member with violation of the code. Such a charge must be made in writing to the SAF President and must refer to the specific Pledges alleged to have been violated.

Adopted by the Society of American Foresters by Member Referendum, November 3, 2000, replacing the code adopted June 23, 1976, as amended November 4, 1986, and November 2, 1992. The 1976 code replaced the code adopted November 12, 1948, as amended December 4, 1971.