

Making Ethical Decisions

Ethical Decision Making

The mission statement of the
Boy Scouts of America:

*The mission of the Boy Scouts of America
is to prepare young people to make
ethical and moral choices over
their lifetimes by instilling in
them the values of the
Scout Oath and Law.*

Mission Statement

- A mission statement is the primary goal of an organization.
- “Make ethical and moral choices” is the key element of the BSA mission statement.

Ethics

- Ethics are:
 - An understanding of what is right and wrong for an individual and for groups of people
 - The standards by which we act, both when we are around others and when we are alone

Source of Ethics

- Where do ethics come from?
 - Ethics develop as a result of the values a person learns from family and society.

*“We hold these truths to be self-evident,
that all men are created equal,
that they are endowed by their Creator
with certain unalienable Rights,
that among these are Life, Liberty
and the pursuit of Happiness ...”
~ Declaration of Independence*

Codes of Conduct

- Some schools have codes of conduct.
- A code of conduct is an agreement about a generally accepted standard of behavior.
- Without generally accepted standards, it would be difficult to function as a society.

The BSA and Ethics

- Boy Scouts code of conduct:
 - Scout Oath
 - Scout Law
 - Scout Slogan
 - Scout Motto

Scout Code of Conduct

The ideals of Boy Scouting are spelled out in the Scout Oath, the Scout Law, the Scout motto, and the Scout slogan. The Boy Scout measures himself against these ideals and continually tries to improve. The goals are high, and as he reaches for them, he has some control over what and who he becomes.

Steps to Ethical Decision-Making

- Step one: Get the facts straight.
- Step two: Figure out what kind of choice it is.
 - Trivial
 - Right vs. Wrong
 - Right vs. Right

Ethical Decisions Checklist

Be Checks:

- Does it conform with the Scout Oath and Law?
- Is it legal? Am I being obedient?
- Am I being brave?
- Does it conform with the Golden Rule?

Ethical Decisions Checklist

Know Checks:

- Will this choice help me build trust with others?
- Does it allow me to remain loyal to my values and to others?
- Does making this choice compromise my religious beliefs?
- Am I being helpful?
- Are my actions friendly, courteous, cheerful, and kind?

Ethical Decisions Checklist

Do Checks:

- Am I performing my duty to God and to my country?
- Does this choice help me stay physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight?
- Does it conform to the principles of the Outdoor Code?

Summary

- Ethical decision making is at the heart of the Boy Scouts of America.
- The first step is to get the facts of the situation straight.
- For trivial choices, simply do the right thing.
- For right vs. wrong choices, do what you know is right.
- For right vs. right choices, use the checklist.