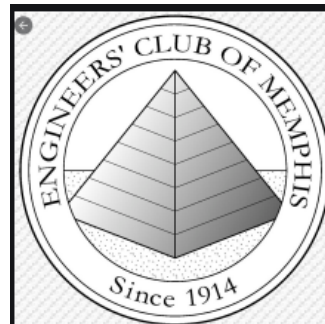




Morals, Ethics, and Integrity - Know your Line in the Sand

September 27, 2021

Presented by: Dale Smith, PE, F.ASCE



Morals, Ethics, and Integrity – Know your Line in the Sand

- **Defining morality, ethics,
and integrity**
- **Data**
- **Decision-making**
- **Practical applications**

Morality

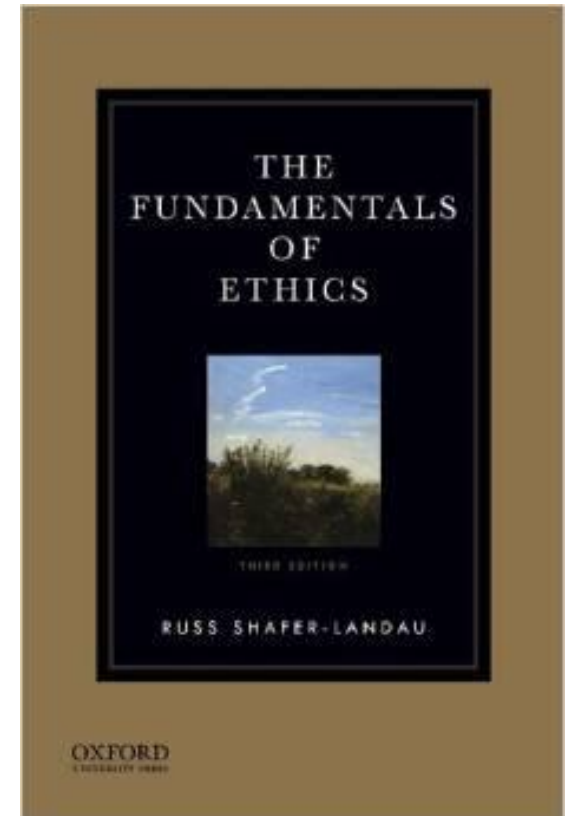
Conformity to ideals of right human conduct.

Morals often describes one's particular values concerning what is right and what is wrong:

It would go against my ***morals*** to help you cheat on the test.

Philosophical Perspective on Morals

- Defining the nature of our moral duty
- The good life: self interest and desire theory
- Natural law
- Consequentialism
- Religious
- Utilitarian



Source: Shafer-Landau, R. (2015). The Fundamentals of Ethics, Oxford University Press, New York, NY.

Ethics

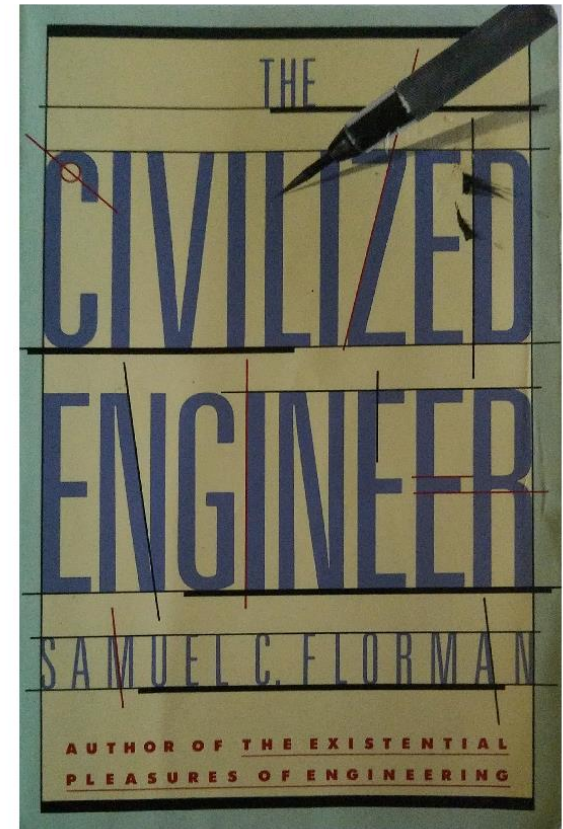
The principles of conduct governing an individual or a group.

Ethics are the moral standards you rely on when you make a decision.

The CEO had begun to lose sight of his ***ethics***: he no longer cared who he hurt in order to build his riches.

Sam Florman on Engineering Ethics

- Engineering Ethics is not:
 - High-sounding rhetoric
 - Compliance with laws and regulations
 - Compliance with “guild rules”
 - Individual opinions about moral issues – issues that are fundamentally societal not individual decisions



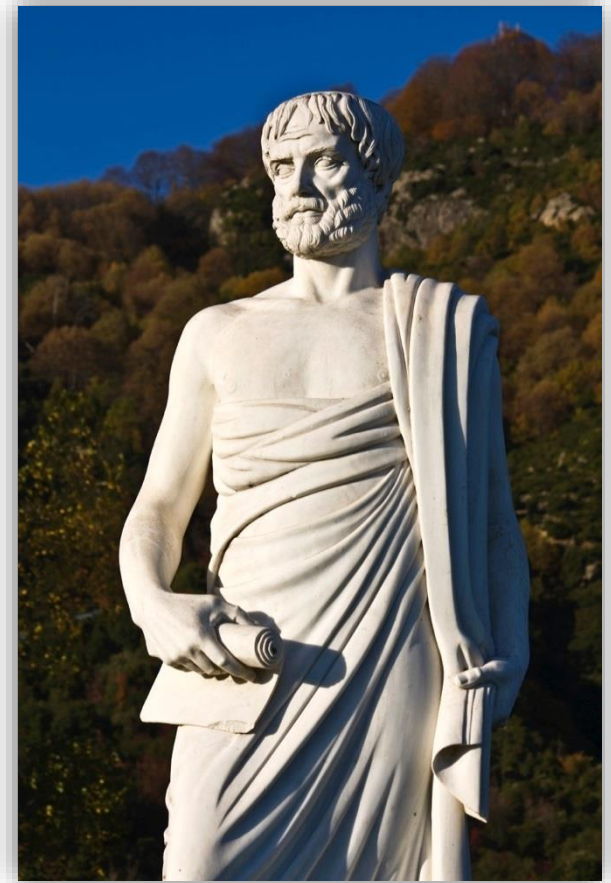
Scanned by CamScanner

Source: Florman, Sam (1988). *The Civilized Engineer*, St. Martin's Griffin, New York, NY

So what is ethics?

Ethics: theoretical definitions

- “Theory or system of moral values; guiding philosophy”
- “Ethical conduct is...behavior desired by society which is above and beyond the minimum standards established by law”
- “The study of moral decisions that must be made by engineers in the course of engineering practice”



Statue of Aristotle

Ethics: practical definition

- The process used to make “**value-laden**” **decisions beyond the law in professional matters.**
- Ethics involves doing the right thing even when it costs more than you want to pay. It is what we **should** do.

Integrity

The quality of being honest and having strong moral principles; moral uprightness.

She is known to be a woman of *integrity*.

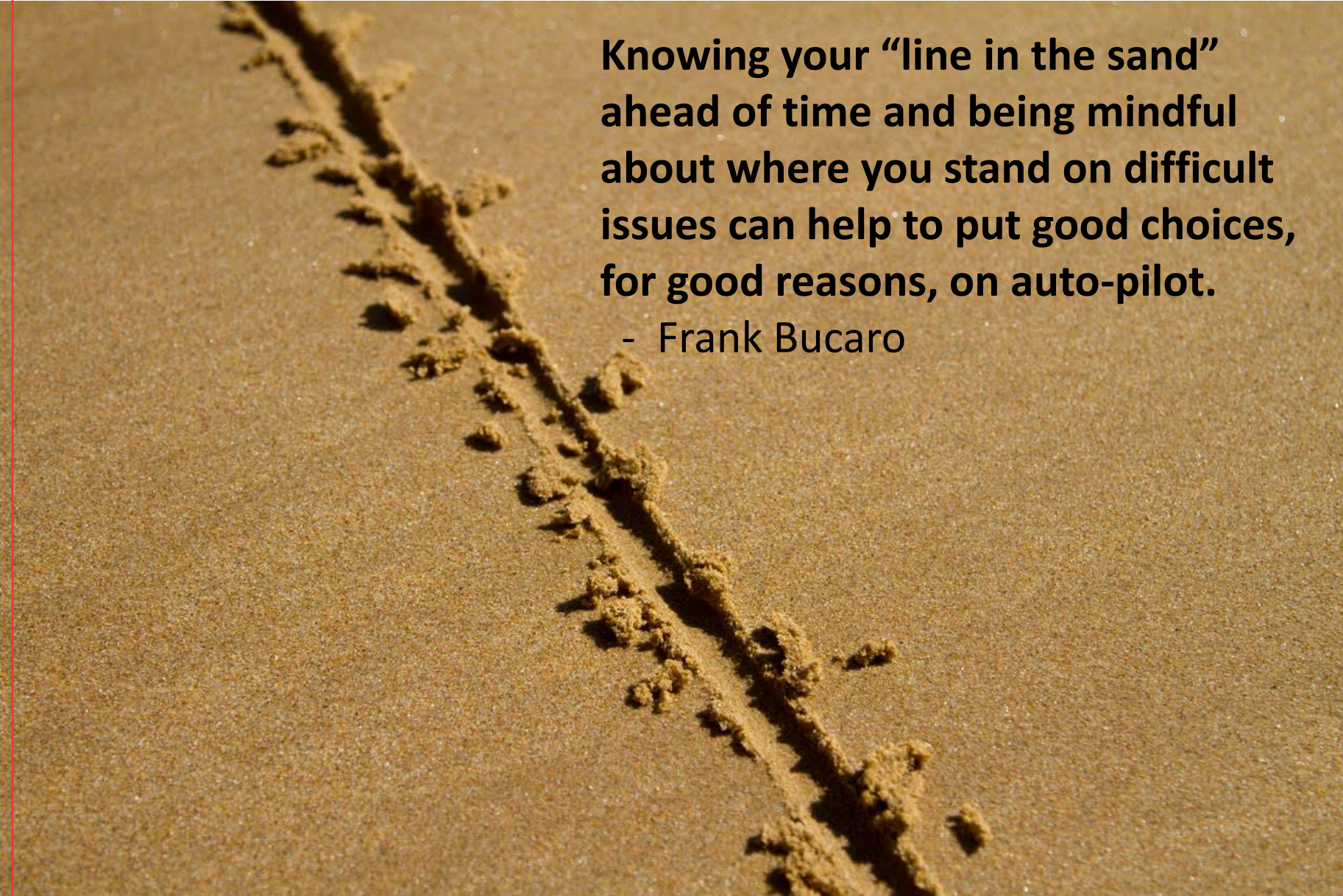


What's the difference?

Morals often describes one's particular values concerning what is right and what is wrong and usually connotes an element of subjective preference, while

Ethics tends to suggest aspects of universal fairness and the question of whether or not an action is responsible.

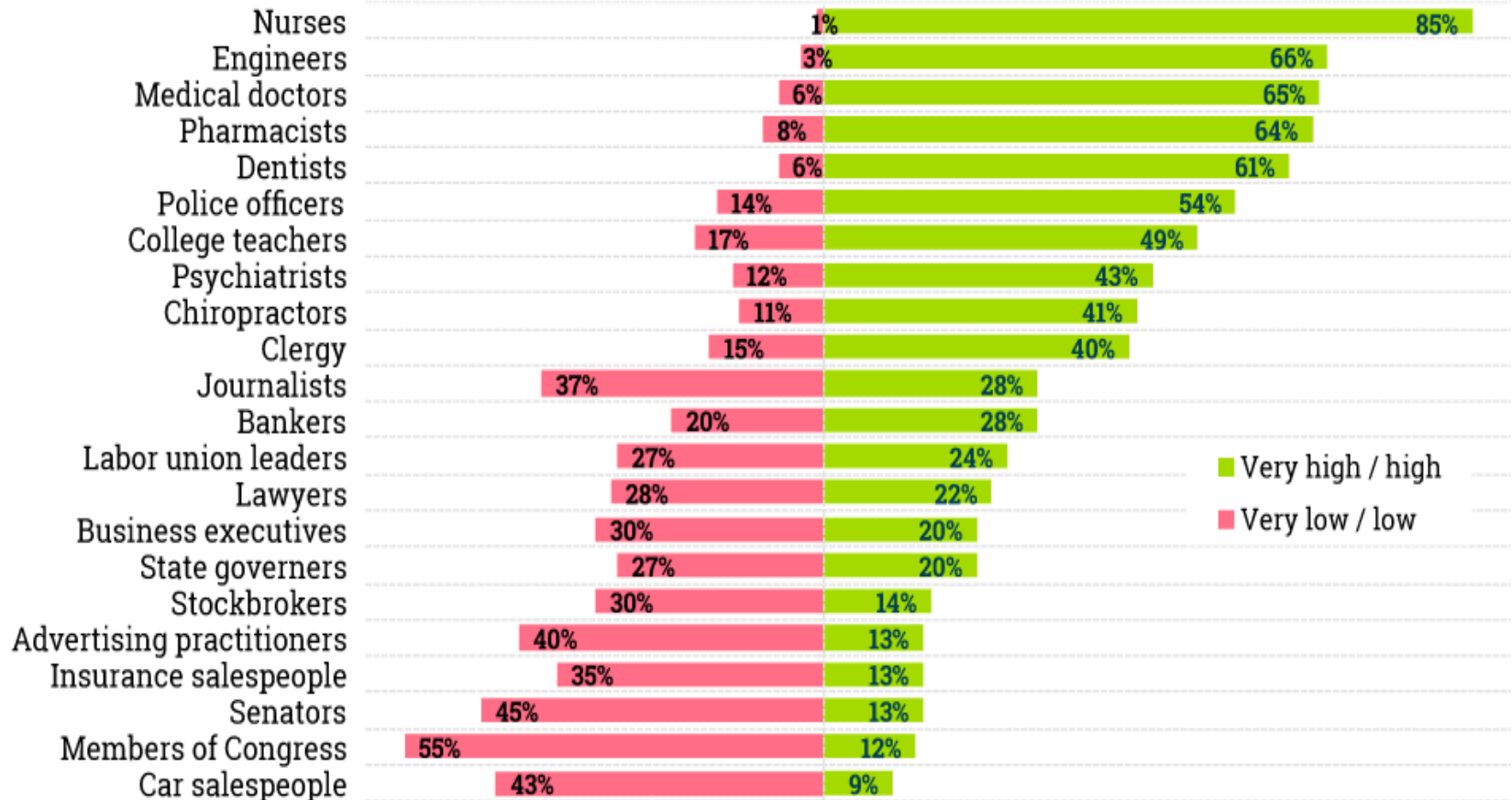
Integrity is more of a yes or no proposition.



**Knowing your “line in the sand”
ahead of time and being mindful
about where you stand on difficult
issues can help to put good choices,
for good reasons, on auto-pilot.**

- Frank Bucaro

Views of Honesty & Ethical Standards in Professions



Published on MarketingCharts.com in January 2020 | Data Source: Gallup

Based on telephone surveys conducted among 1,025 US adults (18+) | Remaining respondents answered "Average" or "No opinion"

Q: "Please tell me how you would rate the honesty and ethical standards of people in these different fields - very high, high, average, low, or very low?"

Choosing between good and bad (ethical and unethical) appears easy until it's not.

Unseen factors may apply such as:

- Time constraints
- Budget constraints
- Family
- Promotion opportunities
- Job security
- Peer pressure
- Supervisor pressure
- Professional reputation

Examples

“Ethics commission findings against Gov. Robert Bentley (Alabama) sent to state AGs office”

The Alabama Media Group – April 10, 2017

“The four findings by the Alabama Ethics Commission against Gov. Robert Bentley are now in the hands of the state attorney general's office.”



“New Jersey Judge Denies Ethics Violations”

New Jersey Law Journal – April 5, 2017

New Jersey Law Journal

“A New Jersey judge who is facing ethics charges for taping a conversation with another judge...is denying she knowingly violated ethics rules.”

“State Supreme Court issues longer suspension for Florida judge over ethics violations.”

Florida Record- April 5, 2017



“The Florida Supreme Court issued a longer-than-recommended suspension for a 3rd Judicial Circuit judge after reviewing alleged ethics violations that stemmed from 2012.”

Examples

“Federal Prosecutors Investigating Wells Fargo Over Sales Tactics”

The Wall Street Journal - September 14, 2016

“widespread illegal activity... employees had opened as many as two million accounts without customers’ knowledge.”



**WELLS
FARGO**



“FIFA Corruption: Top Officials Arrested in Pre-Dawn Raid at Zurich Hotel”

New York Times - December 3, 2015

“...charges include racketeering, money laundering and fraud.”

Examples

“James Cape & Sons alerted authorities to alleged bid rigging”

Associated Press - January 15, 2004 “... Both Stren and Cape are no longer in business”

“Wisconsin Architectural Firm to Plead Guilty and Pay \$3 Million to Resolve Criminal and Civil Claims”

U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Public Affairs - January 6, 2016

“...improper use of foreign materials on construction projects involving federal funds.”

“U.S. Attorney’s Office Reaches Settlement with Miron Construction Company Inc.”

U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Public Affairs - April 16, 2014

“\$4 million settlement... concludes a multi-year investigation by the FBI of Miron’s billing practices in Wisconsin public school construction projects”

Examples

“Volkswagen reaches \$1.2 billion settlement with U.S. dealers over emissions scandal”

Los Angeles Times - October 1, 2016

“...up to \$10 billion buying back or repairing about 475,000 vehicles”



“Four more officials charged with felonies in Flint water crisis”

The Washington Post – December 20, 2016

“...exposed children to lead-tainted water and resulted in the death of a dozen people from Legionnaire’s disease.”

Examples

“Designers Face Collapse Fallout”

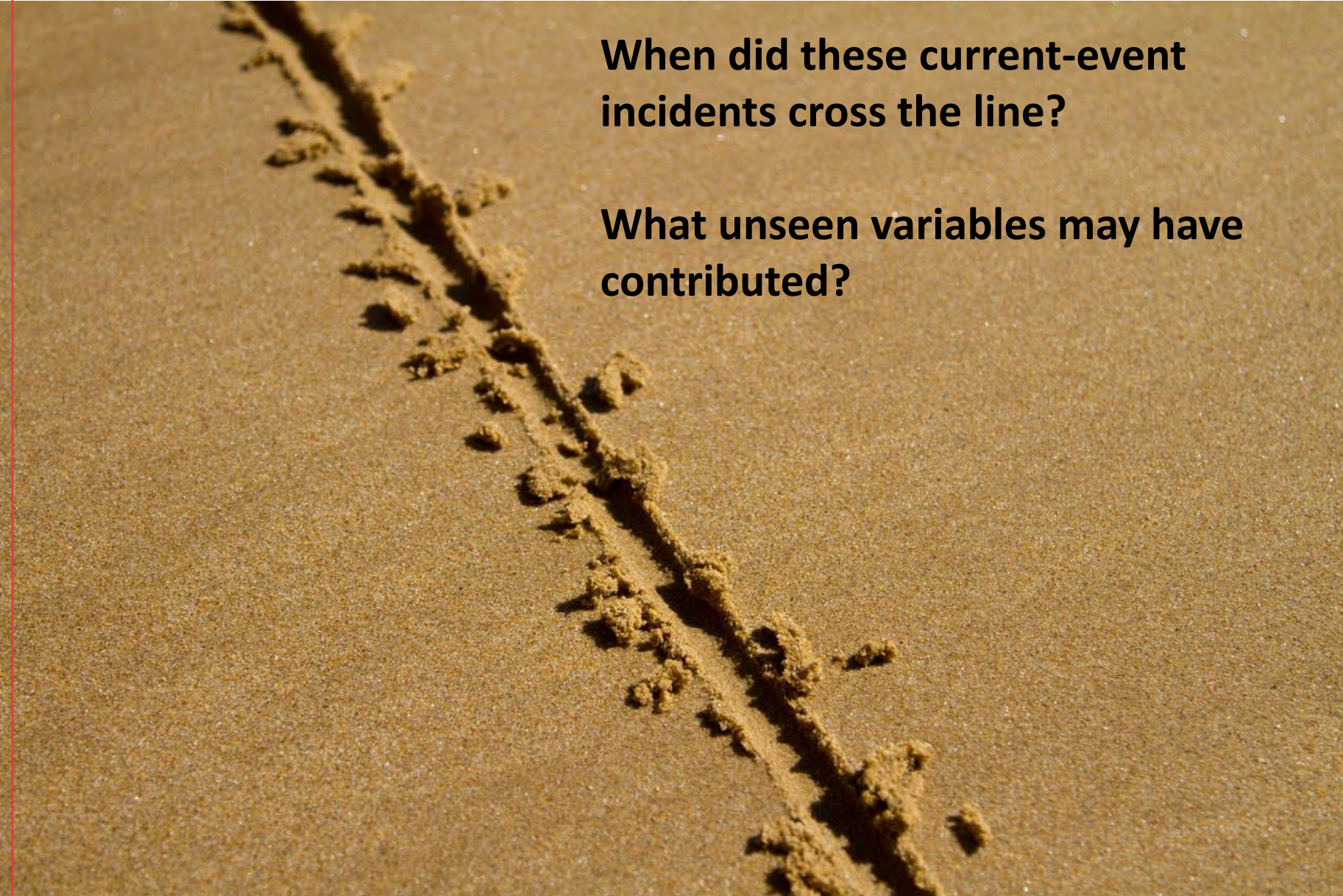
ENR Magazine - December 12, 2016

“...pair of partly completed pedestrian bridges crash to the ground, killing one worker...”

"Innovative" FIU bridge was a modern take on an old design. And vulnerable to failure.

Miami Herald – March 20, 2018

“The Florida International University pedestrian overpass that collapsed catastrophically during construction last week was advertised as a “cable-stayed” bridge, but it actually wasn’t: Instead, it was a modern take on an old bridge design that experts say is vulnerable to failure when a single structural piece is damaged.



When did these current-event incidents cross the line?

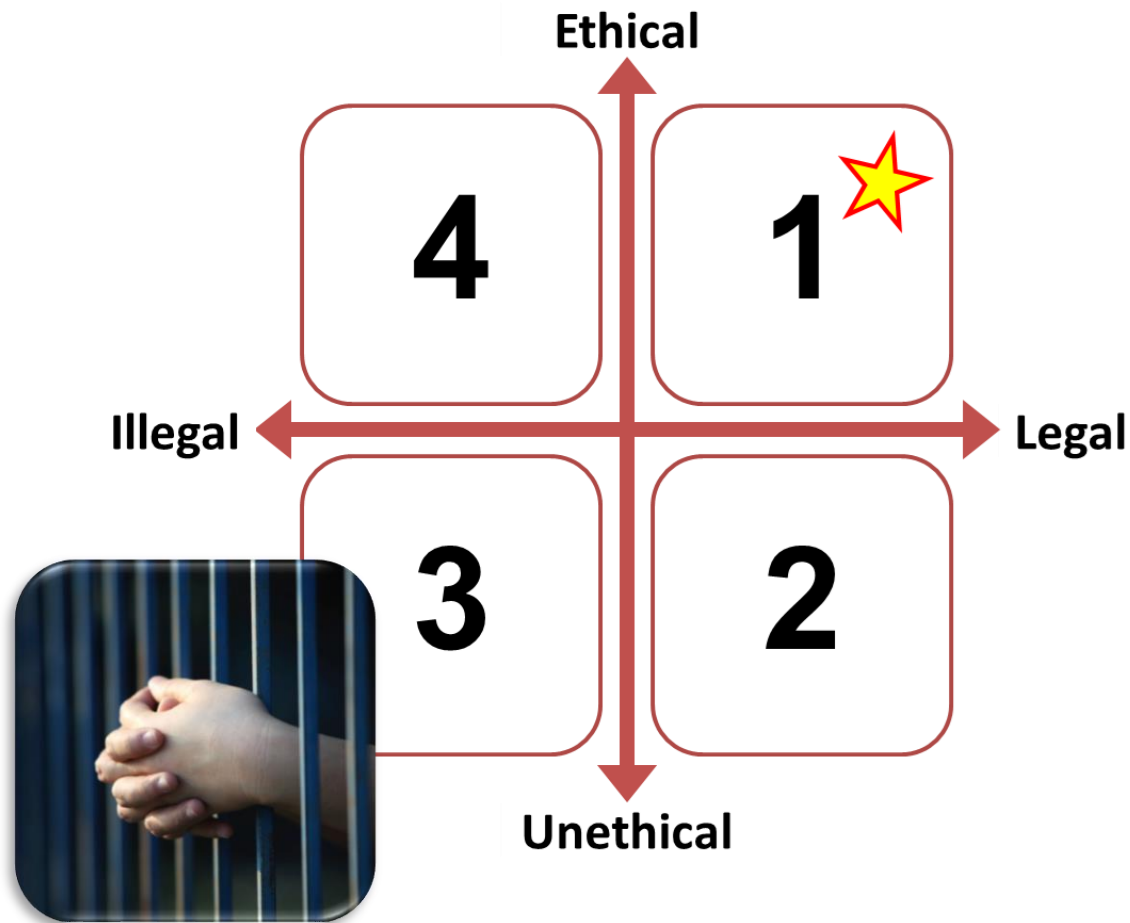
What unseen variables may have contributed?

Key questions

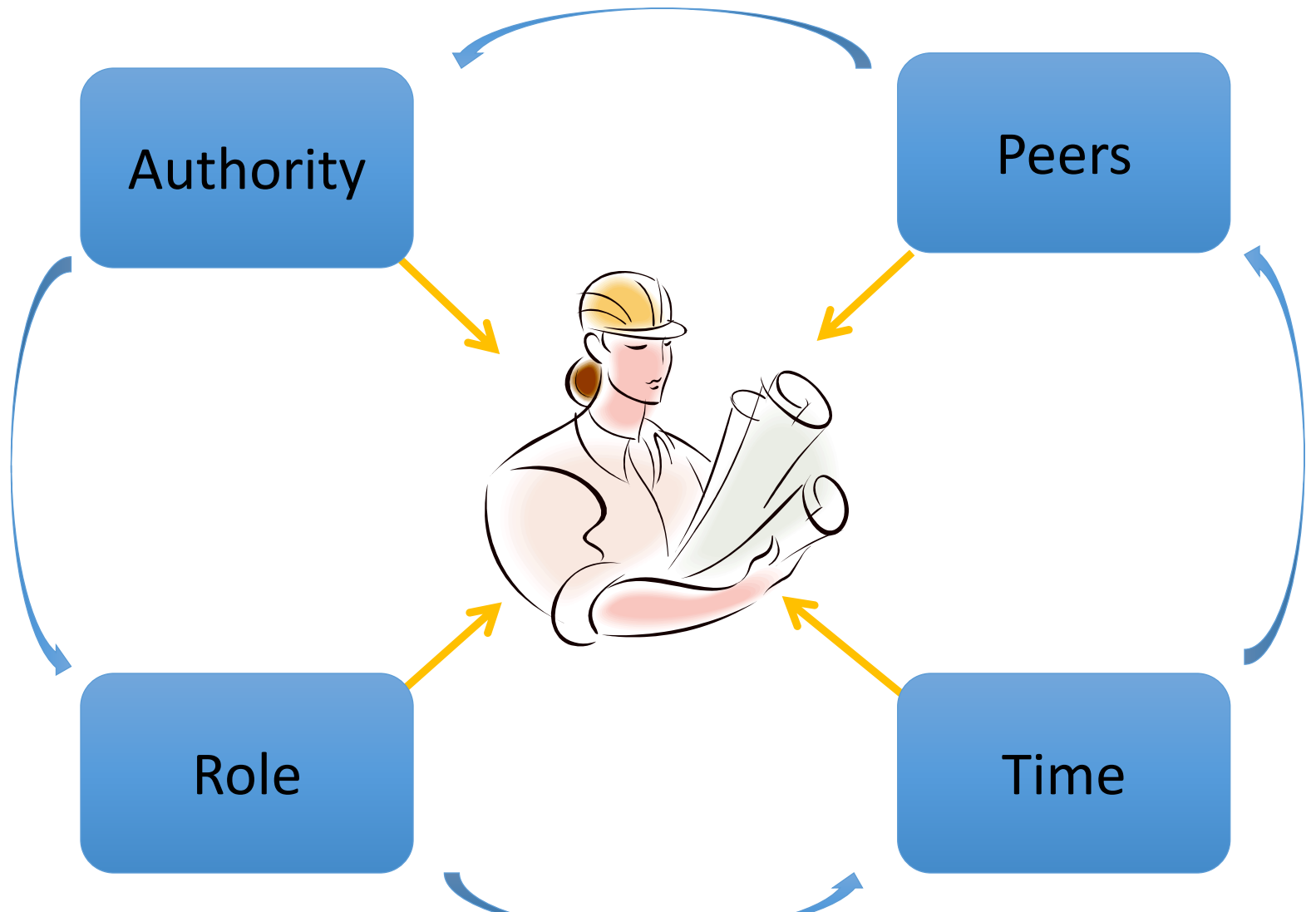
- Does morality matter?
- Does ethical practice matter?
- What are the costs and impacts of unethical behaviors?
- Is it my job to make sure peers behave ethically?
- What role does my profession have in ethics?
- What are my expectations of organizations I'm affiliated with, in regard to ethical behavior?
- Who are my ethical role models?



Ethics and the law



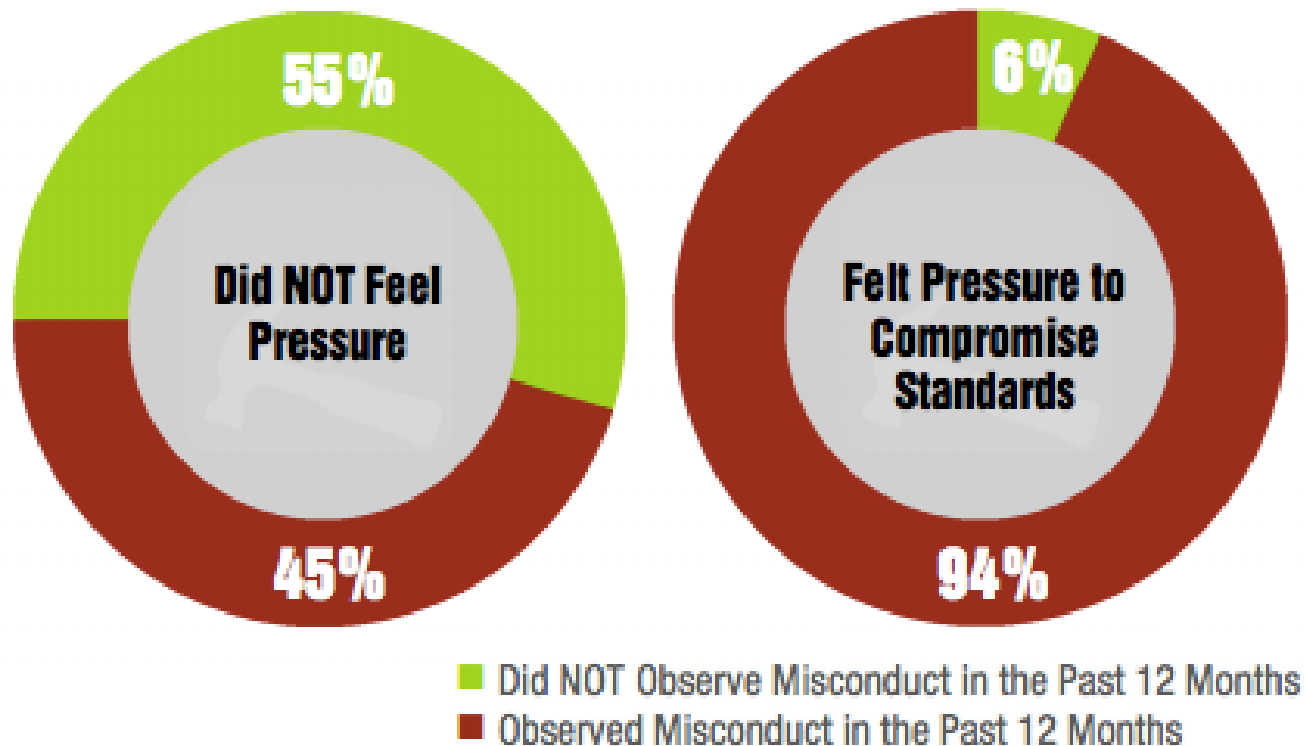
Pressures and decision-making



Pressures by intensity

- Adhering to a project timeline
- Trying to keep a project on budget
- Meeting your personal financial obligations
- Ensuring the financial stability and success of your task/project/company
- Keeping your job
- Wanting to make your boss look good
- Advancing your career
- Committing safety violations
- Ignoring wrongdoing you witness
- Violating the law

EMPLOYEES WHO FEEL PRESSURE ARE FAR MORE LIKELY TO OBSERVE MISCONDUCT



Source: National Business Ethics Survey of the U.S. Construction Industry: Gauging Industry Practices & Identifying Ethics Challenges. Rep. Ethics Resource Center, 2013. [Online] [18 May 2015] page 13.

Cognitive Dissonance

Cognitive dissonance occurs when the mind feels tension from holding two conflicting thoughts.

Moral disengagement occurs when the **cognitive mind** is convinced its actions aren't considered unethical behavior.

Cognitive Dissonance

Cognitive dissonance creates a battle about exhibiting the right behavior during ethical dilemmas.

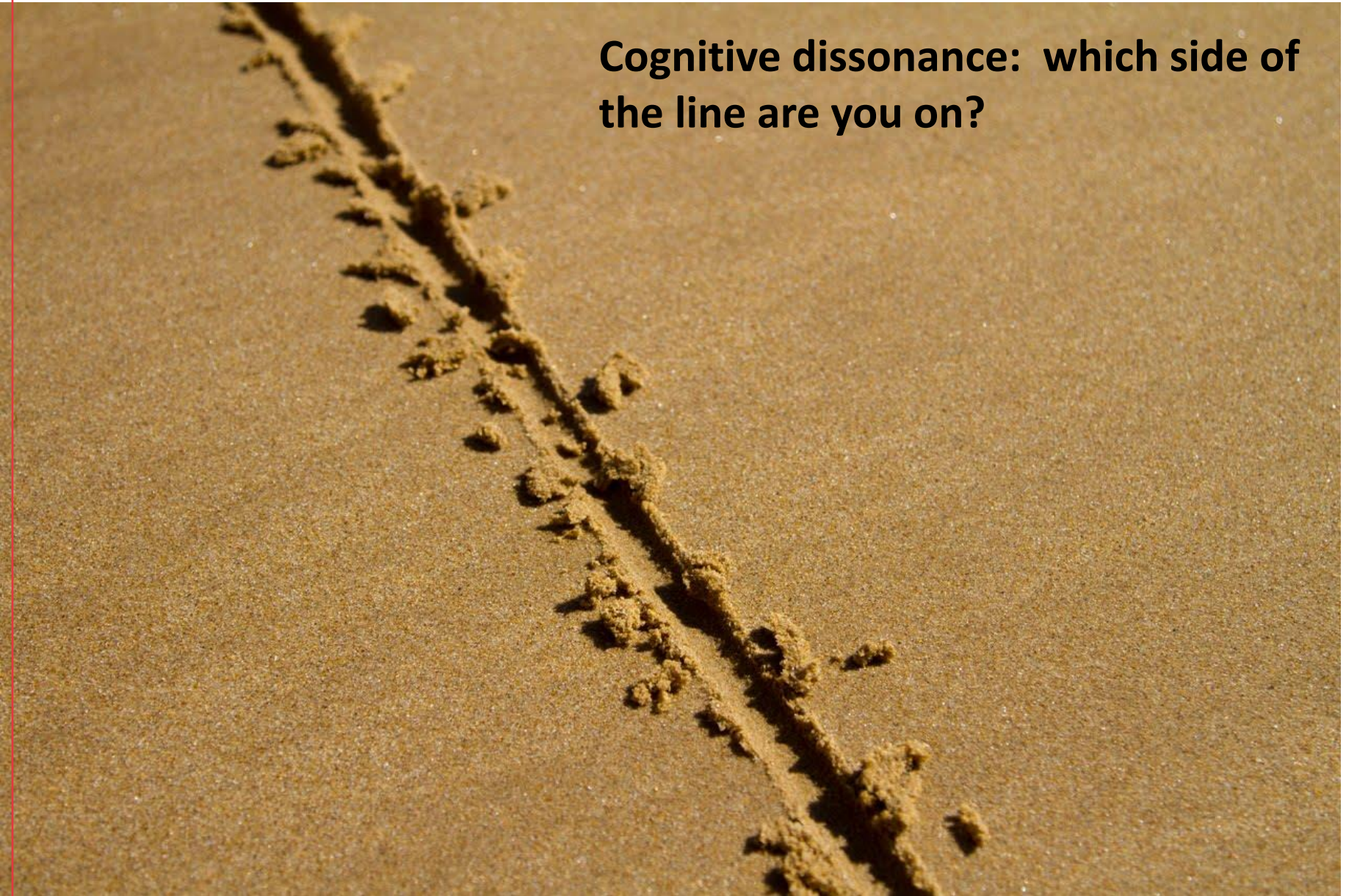
Listen to NPR's Psychology of Fraud: Why Good People Do Bad Things

Four Stages to Denial

- It won't happen.
- If it happens, it won't happen to me.
- If it happens, and happens to me, it won't be that bad.
- If it happens to me and it's bad, there is nothing I could do to stop it anyway.

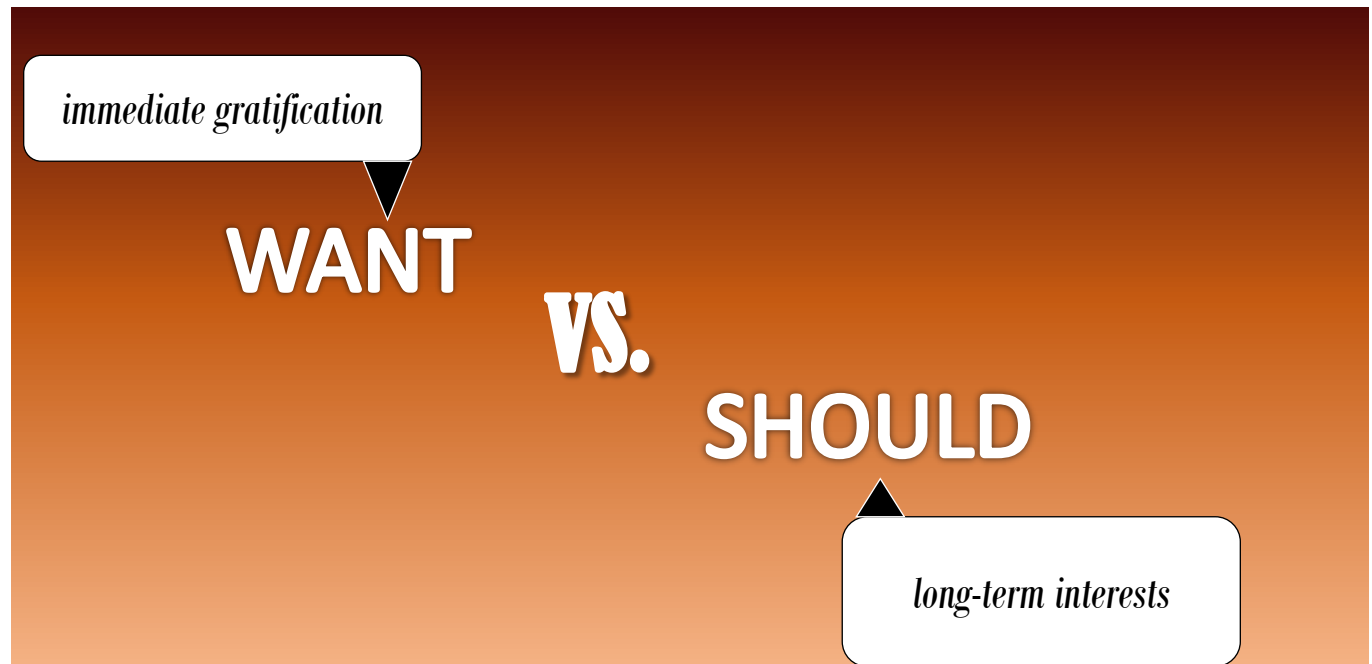
Source: Ripley, A. and Kluger J. (2006). "Katrina, One Year Later," *Time*, Aug 28.

Cognitive dissonance: which side of the line are you on?



Practical applications

- Would vs. should (hypothetical)



- Consider consequences

Questions to ask yourself before deciding:

- Is it right?
- Is it fair?
- Am I hurting anyone?
- Could I disclose this to the public or a respected mentor?
- Would I tell a family member to do this?
- Does it pass the stink test?

Moral Stretching



The right behaviors result from the constant training of your character.

Training, experience, practice

“Excellence is an art won by training and habituation. We do not act rightly because we have virtue or excellence, but we rather have those because we have acted rightly. We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence then, is not an act but a habit.”

~Will Durant, paraphrasing Aristotle's
Nicomachean Ethics

Source: Durant, W. (1926). *The Story of Philosophy*. Simon and Schuster, New York, NY. pg.98.
para Aristotle (350 B.C.E.). *Nicomachean Ethics*. Book 1.
Available at: <http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/nicomachaen.html>

A practical conclusion

Remember:

- We judge ourselves by our best intentions, most noble acts, most virtuous habits, and we are judged by our worst last act(s).
- Treat people based upon who you are, **not** who they are or how they act.
- It takes courage to walk away.



Summary

- Why do good people do bad things?
- Why do organizations make bad decisions?
- Ethical challenges have always been with us, will always be, and are around us daily. Just read the news!

Summary

- Laws, rules, and regulations are written while ways of behaving - ethics - are usually unwritten.
- Ethics, practically, is about doing the right thing even when it costs you more than you want to pay.
- Context can be stronger than reason, values, and good intentions. Do not underestimate the “power of the situation.”

Summary

- Leaders, role models, and peers can affect our own behavior, as can organizational culture, context, and socialization.
- The way we frame our decisions can cause cognitive blind spots. Through mental models we may construct reality the way we want it to be, rather than the way it is.
- Ethical development is both habitual and reflective.

Florman's Credo for a New Age

If the Principal goal of engineering ethics is to serve
the greater public good...

...then the ***ethical engineer*** is one who fulfills their
responsibilities with ***diligence, conscientiousness,***
and ***inventiveness***—beyond mere compliance with
codes and regulations.

Source: Florman, Sam (1988). *The Civilized Engineer*, St. Martin's Griffin, New
York, NY

Questions to ask when making an Ethical Decision

1. Would I want to see it on social media tonight – or the headlines tomorrow?
2. Is it legal?
3. Does it comply with my employer's core values?
4. Would I be comfortable discussing it with your coworkers?
5. Would I be comfortable discussing it with my family?
6. Is it a good example for my own future decisions?
7. Would I be comfortable with the decision if my role was reversed?
8. Does it feel right?

Special Thanks to

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Founding President, ASCE Geo-Institute

Professor Jeffrey Russell, Ph.D., PE
Professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering
Vice Provost for Lifelong Learning
Dean of Continuing Studies
University of Wisconsin - Madison

Engineering is an important and learned profession. As members of this profession, engineers are expected to exhibit the highest standards of honesty and integrity. Engineering has a direct and vital impact on the quality of life for all people. Accordingly, the services provided by engineers require honesty, impartiality, fairness, and equity, and must be dedicated to the protection of the public health, safety, and welfare. **Engineers must perform under a standard of professional behavior that requires adherence to the highest principles of ethical conduct.**

- Preamble to NSPE Code of Ethics

THANK YOU