Outdoor Leadership

Theory and Practice

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chapter 7

Values and Ethics

"The worst sin towards our fellow creatures is not to hate them, but to be indifferent to them; that's the essence of inhumanity." —**George Bernard Shaw**

Chapter Concepts

- Values—Values are beliefs, not facts. They affect how people think, judge, feel, and act.
- Ethics—Ethics is the study of moral values and conduct.
- Kohlberg's model of moral development—This model identifies six stages that can be used to assess moral development.
- Ethic of care versus ethic of justice—An ethic of care is based on relationships. An ethic of justice, on the other hand, operates upon the principles of fairness and reciprocity.
- Profession versus professional—It has been argued that while outdoor leadership may be a profession, it is not yet professional.
- Model for making ethical decisions—This 5-step model relates to professional practice.

The chapter concepts relate to the following core competencies:

- Self-awareness and professional conduct (CC-2)—Acting mindfully and intentionally as an outdoor leader and developing a strong sense of personal and professional ethics are part of this competency.
- Decision making and judgment (CC-3)—Making ethical decisions is an important part of decision making.

It was Hilary's first season leading wilderness trips. She had just completed her degree in outdoor recreation and was keen to apply all that she had learned. Hilary received her contract from a wilderness trip company and was pleased to discover that she would be leading a number of trips with Seth. Seth was a seasoned veteran of the company. She had heard that he displayed great balance as an outdoor leader, possessing superb technical skills alongside exceptional interpersonal skills and leadership ability. Seth and Hilary were scheduled for an 8-day backcountry trip on Yellowstone Lake in Yellowstone National Park.

It was 10 p.m. on the fifth day of the trip and Hilary was thrilled with how well the trip had been going. The group was getting along and the scenery and wildlife were unbelievable. She and Seth were working well together as coleaders. She was particularly impressed by his willingness to share leadership responsibility. She was learning that Seth was a gracious, fair, and caring leader. Hilary was heading toward her tent that night, however, when she heard giggling and whispering coming from Seth's tent. She listened a bit more closely and heard a woman's voice. She wasn't sure what to do, especially since she was uncertain about what was really going on in Seth's tent. What she did know is that the company had emphasized throughout staff training that leaders were not allowed to be romantically involved with participants during the trip. The company policy was clear about this particular ethic. Hilary did not want to jump to any conclusions so she decided to wait and talk with Seth the next day.

Hilary approached Seth the next morning with her concern. Seth told her to mind her own business and walked off, leaving Hilary confused and somewhat irritated. It was clear that Seth did not want to talk about it and Hilary thought that it was probably best to let it go since the rest of the trip was going so well. During the rest of the trip, though, Hilary continued to notice Seth blatantly flirting with a particular woman and that the two of them would often excuse themselves early from the campfire, claiming that they were tired. Hilary wanted to maintain a good relationship with Seth while on the trip, so she decided to wait and bring the issue up again during their posttrip debriefing.

When the trip was finished and the two of them were meeting for the debriefing, Hilary decided that she would mention to Seth again what she had heard on that night and what she had observed throughout the trip. Again, Seth said that it was none of her business, refusing to talk about it. This behavior confused Hilary a great deal since it was so out of sync with the rest of his behavior on the trip. Hilary did not know what to do. Should she try to talk with Seth again? Should she tell him how much his breach of policy bothered her? Should she talk with the program director about her concern? Hilary was experiencing an ethical dilemma.

Outward Bound was founded in part as a response to an ethical dilemma. In 1932, Kurt Hahn, a German, spoke out publicly against Hitler and the Nazi movement (Richards 1999). Hahn's address was in direct response to Hitler's Beuthen telegram, in which Hitler demanded that five storm troopers be released despite their convictions and death sentences for trampling a young Communist to death in front of his mother. Specifically, Hahn wanted to better understand the motivation behind this killing. He wondered why people stood by and watched this brutal attack. He questioned the values and beliefs of the people who witnessed this attack and the values and beliefs of the attackers. As a result of these questions, Hahn was persecuted by the Nazis and imprisoned for his beliefs. He was later released at the request of the British government and exiled from Germany.

Hahn moved to the United Kingdom, where he turned his attention to solving the problem of the deaths of young sailors on torpedoed merchant ships in the Battle of the Atlantic during World War II. As noted in chapter 2, Hahn developed Outward Bound as a response to this problem. Outward Bound and Hahn's other educational initiatives (Gordonstoun School, United World Colleges, Salem Schule, and Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme) were all based on the notion that educating young people for the purpose of building moral character was just as important as training the intellect. Hahn developed these schools as a direct response to some of the questions he had regarding the ethics behind the attack of the young Communist in Germany and from the writings of William James. James (1949) saw that war, while producing a host of immoral actions and destructive consequences, also often produced behaviors that brought out the best in people. James believed that the aims of society would be advanced if some mechanism could be produced that continued to develop these moral qualities in people without the destructive and immoral aspects of war. The principles of Hahn's educational ideals were therefore constructed in part around this provision of a moral equivalent to war (Priest and Gass 1997). Hahn's aim was to use adventure education as a tool to arm young people against the allure of fascism and war.

Hahn was greatly influenced by the writings of Plato. In *The Republic* (360 b.c.e.), Plato suggests that the fundamental goal of education is the development of human character to attain "just" citizens to exist in and rule an ideal state. Plato became devoted to better understanding ethics through an examination of justice and notions of right and wrong. He sought to define and identify good, bad, and virtue, and emphasized the necessity of turning thoughts and beliefs into direct action. Leadership therefore occurs within a practice, or actions. Plato asks "What is the right way to live?" and encourages people to question whether their practice (beliefs and actions) is ethical.

What, then, is the role of values and ethics within the context of outdoor leadership? At the Association for Experiential Education (AEE) Conference in the fall of 2000, speaker Dan Garvey asked the members in attendance, "How many of you think that you do 'good' in your work?" He further posited, "What good do you do and how do you know?" These may not have been his exact words, but the intention behind those questions was to encourage outdoor leaders to thoughtfully examine their professional practice. The basic premise of this chapter is that a person who has thought about ethical matters is better able to handle these matters than someone who has never thought about them.

This chapter introduces ethical theories, helping you clarify your worldview and its influence on your practice. Many discussions on professional ethics focus on the potentially destructive results of certain practices, advising leaders what not to do. Instead, this discussion will center on what leaders should do. We will begin by identifying the role of values and ethics in outdoor leadership. Kohlberg's theory of moral development will be introduced as a means to differentiate between an ethic of care and an ethic of justice. The chapter will end with a discussion of professionalism in outdoor leadership.

Values and Ethics in Outdoor Leadership

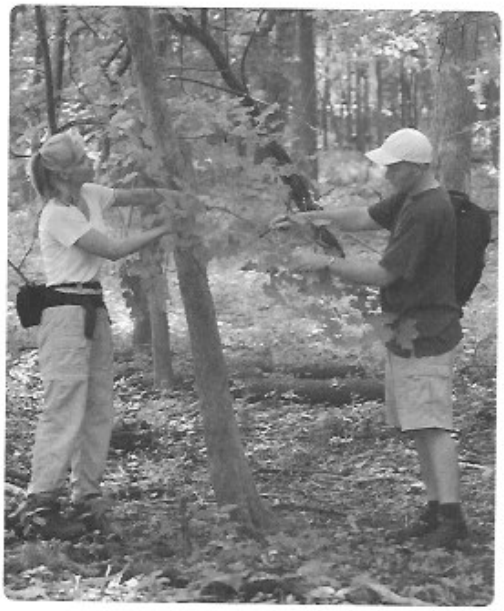
Few people would question that a leader ought to be ethical. The difficult part is defining what constitutes ethics. Whose values determine whether a practice is ethical? We may find it hard to describe what it means to be an ethical leader beyond simple words such as honest and fair. Jasper Hunt is an educational philosopher who has contributed enormous insight into ethics in outdoor and experiential education. He provides a good starting point to look at the role of values and ethics in outdoor leadership.

Hunt (1994) argues that the distinction between morals and ethics is historical and the terms may

Learning Activity 7.1

What are your values? Make a list of the 10 things that you value most in life. This list may include family, religion, wilderness, peace, and so on. How might these inform and influence, either directly or indirectly, your own leadership and the decisions that you make?

be used interchangeably. He maintains that "the study of ethics is the study of why one state of affairs is morally better or worse than another state of affairs" (p. 5). He suggests that there is a distinction between values and ethics, however. A set of values guides a person's life, and any description of a person's ethics would be based on an understanding of the person's values. To understand ethics and what influences ethical conduct, leaders need to gain an understanding of values. The next section will take a brief look at values.



Outdoor leaders must prepare to handle different kinds of ethical dilemmas, such as group members breaking branches from live trees.

Sources of Values

We often hear that a person who has strong values makes for a good leader. But, what are values? Where do they come from? What role do they play in leadership? Are they fixed or modifiable? These are some of the questions to ask yourself as you begin to explore the role of values in outdoor leadership. It has been shown that leaders' values influence their decisions and the directions they take; therefore, an exploration of values is a good place to begin an understanding of leadership practice.

Values Defined

Values are beliefs, not facts. They affect how one thinks, judges, feels, and acts. Values are determined and identified by a number of factors. Many of these factors relate to individual upbringing, including home environment, education, religious belief, and socioeconomic class. Leaders communicate what they value through what they say as well as how they act and interact. Leaders communicate their values through the clothes they wear, the questions they ask, the people they respond to, the way they respond to people, and the behaviors that they recognize and reward. Outdoor leaders build trust and respect by behaving ethically and consistently from a solid value base. Developing this base may require some time and attention.

Axiology

The question of values deals with notions of what a person or a society conceives of as "good." **Axiology** is the branch of philosophy that seeks to answer the question, "What is of value?" (Knight 1989). In *The Nature of Human Values*, Rokeach defines a value as "an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end-state of existence" (1973, p. 5). Modes of conduct may include end-values as goals and as standards, such

Learning Activity 7.2

Draw your "lens" (see figure 7.1) considering the sources of your values: religion, education, travel, upbringing, environment, socioeconomic class, gender, sexuality, race, and so on. What is your epistemology or way of knowing (and seeing) the world?

as honor, courage, civility, honesty, and fairness. A value system is the organization of these beliefs along a continuum of relative importance.

Epistemology

Epistemology is the branch of philosophy that studies the nature, sources, and validity of knowledge (Knight 1989). Roughly translated, epistemology means "ways of knowing." It seeks to answer such questions as "What is true?" and "How do we know?" Epistemology is therefore rooted in an understanding of the sources of truth. (Also see figure 7.1.)

All leaders have a set of values that guides them in the selection of objectives and in the decision-making process. Once the sources of values have been identified and understood, attention should be directed toward the sources of ethics.

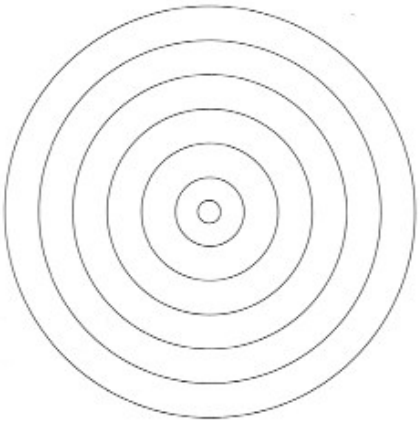


Figure 7.1 In order to better understand values and their influence, people need to develop an understanding of the lens through which they "see" the world and interpret sources of truth.

Sources of Ethics

Leaders who are aware of and consistent in their ethics are generally well-respected and effective. But, what is ethics? What role does it play in leadership? What does it mean to be an ethical person? Ethics is the study of both moral values and conduct. For the most part it is focused on moral reasoning. A study of ethical behavior seeks to provide answers to such questions as "What should I do?" and "What is the good life for all people?" Ethical theory is concerned with providing the "right" values as the foundation for the "right" actions (Knight 1989). It suggests that certain actions are more appropriate than others.

The questions at hand are, "How does a leader go about determining ethical conduct?" and "How does a leader determine the 'right' action in a given situation?" In thinking back to the opening vignette, for example, was Seth's behavior ethical? Why or why not? How should Hilary proceed with her knowledge about Seth's apparent ethical breach? This section will introduce you to ethical principles and theories as a means to understand how to respond to those questions.

Principle Ethics

Principle ethics are guided by a set of rules, often proactively determined by a governing professional organization or by the current professional standards of behavior (Jordan and Meara 1990). Hunt (1994) refers to this as ethical objectivism: "The ethical objectivist maintains that in order for an act to be a good act, it must have been made in accordance with some source of morality that transcends the limitation of a particular person or set of limited circumstances" (p. 10). In other words, a principle ethic is an ethic that is established by a governing body. The governing body, be it a church, government, or company, determines whether or not an act is ethical.

One source of objectivism is the Judeo-Christian religious tradition. Within this tradition, the good

Learning Activity 7.3

Give an example of each kind of ethic below, and list some weaknesses of each ethical stance.

- Principle ethic
- Virtue ethic
- Consequentialist ethic
- Nonconsequentialist ethic

act is action taken in accord with the will of God. One example of a principle ethic within this tradition is the Ten Commandments. Principle ethics and ethical objectivism impel individuals to look outside the situation in order to determine right from wrong. Laws represent another form of principle ethics. If this principle were applied to the ethical dilemma in the opening vignette, Seth's behavior would be determined to be unethical because the company policy clearly states that romantic involvement of any kind is unacceptable.

Virtue Ethics

Virtue ethics are guided by the virtues associated with being a moral outdoor leader rather than the principles of being ethical. Virtue ethics are concerned with professional character traits, focusing on the questions of "Who shall I be?" and "Am I doing the best for my participants?" (Jordan and Meara 1990). According to this ethic, an individual must examine the factors and influences of each act, maintaining that the right decision is defined by each situation and cannot be linked to any decision made in other situations. Hunt (1994) refers to this as ethical subjectivism, whereby a good action is one that any individual holds to be good. The source of ethics for the subjectivist is the individual person: "The ethical subjectivist maintains that if a person claims that an act is a good act, then that claim is a sufficient condition for the act being good" (p. 9). In the opening vignette, for example, Seth may reason that his behavior is ethical, arguing that he knows right from wrong and that his ethical behavior depends on the situation.

Consequentialist Ethics

One of the most common approaches in determining right from wrong is to make judgments in terms of the highest good. The highest good is also called the **summum bonum,** or the supreme good from which all others are derived (Hunt 1994). Ethical consequentialism provides an application for the practice of normative ethics. Normative ethics is not only objective; it is universal: "The consequentalist reasons that the only way to apply the summum bonum to specific cases is in terms of the results of a given act" (Hunt 1994, p. 15). Therefore, if the end result of an act has good consequences in terms of the highest good, then the act itself is judged to be a good act. If the act results in bad consequences, then the act is a bad act. The focus is on the end result of the action.

Utilitarianism is a **consequentialist theory of ethics** that maintains that an act is good only if it brings about the greatest good for the greatest number. There are two fundamental pillars of a utilitarian approach to ethics. "Happiness" is the first pillar and "for the greatest number" is the second pillar (Mill 1962). Imagine yourself on a wilderness trip where the group's main goal is to have a relaxing experience. From a utilitarian perspective, you would most likely not impel this group to paddle long distances every day. Rather, you might set up a base camp and take day trips, providing the option to relax at camp or go on short day paddles.

Nonconsequentialist Ethics

The **nonconsequentalist theory of ethics** is concerned with the acts themselves, or the means. The nonconsequentialist argues that the emphasis for ethical decision making should be the nature of specific acts. The fundamental question asked by the nonconsequentialist is "What did I do?" (Hunt 1994). Acts within this tradition are predetermined to be good or bad based on the standard set by the summum bonum. For example, telling lies is bad, regardless of the end result of the lies.

Learning Activity 7.4

You are the leader of a training trip for outdoor leaders. The trip is 30 days long and designed to address and assess a number of outdoor leadership competencies. One of these competencies is the ability to respond in a first aid scenario. You decide to stage a scenario by asking one member of the group to simulate a broken bone. You ask the student to fake an injury for a sustained period of time, thus allowing you to assess the ability of the group to react to the first aid emergency. You insist that this student maintain the role-play so that other group members don't realize the emergency is staged. Is this ethical? Use some of the terminology and information from the previous section on sources of ethics in your response.

Imagine yourself on a 16-day paddling trip in northern Ontario. This trip is a requirement of an advanced university course. You have been told by the leaders of this trip that smoking is not allowed. According to the leaders, the rationale behind this rule is that smoking is bad for your health; cigarette butts can start fires; and some members of the group may be adversely affected by the smoke. You have been a smoker for 6 years. You are convinced that you will be unable to quit; you have tried to quit before. You make the decision that you will limit yourself to two cigarettes a day. You decide that you will smoke far away from the rest of the group and you will hide the fact that you are smoking from the leaders. You are pretty sure that you will be able to keep this a secret and that no one else will be affected by your decision. Additionally, you will take all of your cigarette butts with you so that there is no environmental damage from your decision. Is this ethical? What ethical principles and theories would best support this type of decision? Use terminology and information from the previous section on sources of ethics in your response.

The previous overview of sources of values and ethics is summarized in table 7.1. This overview is an attempt to provide a foundational understanding of the ethical principles and theories that should be considered before beginning the decision-making process. Consideration of the good, the means, and the end will contribute to the development of a methodology and framework to help guide leaders toward making ethical decisions. There is widespread agreement that moral and ethical decisions need to be made. However, there is great disparity among leaders about *how* these decisions should be made. Garvey (1999) argues that we already teach morals and values either intentionally or unintentionally in our outdoor programs. Developing an understanding of ethical principles and theories will help you transcend a reliance on pure emotion to settle conflicts. The following discussion of the stages of moral development should also help.

Six Stages of Moral Development

Theories of personal development that explain the process of value formation abound. One of the most well-known of these theories is **Kohlberg's six stages of moral development** (1981).

Kohlberg used this model to measure moral development. In the first two stages (the preconventional level), the preadolescent is oriented toward punishment, defers to superior power, and sees proper actions as those that satisfy needs, mainly one's own. In the next two stages (the conventional level), the emphasis is on conformity and gaining approval, which merges into a concern with authority and fixed rules. In the last two stages (the postconventional level), moral orientation is more principled. The focus is on general ethical standards, on principles that are logical, comprehensive, universal, and consistent. It is in the congruence

Table 7.1

Ethical Principles

Ethical principle or theory	Definition	Example
Principle ethics (ethical objectivism)	• guided by a predetermined set of rules • encourages individuals to look beyond the situation in order to determine "right" from "wrong"	• a company's policies and procedures manual • the Ten Commandments
Virtue ethics (ethical subjectivism)	• guided by the individual • concerned with the question of what is moral, virtuous, and "right" • situationally dependent	• in the vignette, Seth was operating under this principle, claiming that his decision to become involved with a trip participant was situationally dependent and superseded the company's policy
Consequentialist theory of ethics (normative ethics) • Utilitarianism	• focused on the end result of the decision • guided by determining the greatest good for the greatest number	• some may justify the necessity for war, arguing that regardless of the means, if the end result serves the intended purpose and outcome and serves the greatest number of people then the act of war is justified
Nonconsequentialist theory of ethics	• focused on the acts themselves (the means)	• a pacifist would argue that regardless of the end result of war, any act of war is "wrong" and unjustified

of the levels of need and other motivations and of the states of moral development that leadership becomes enlivened with moral purpose.

Consider the character Jean Valjean from Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables*. Valjean was caught and imprisoned for stealing a loaf of bread to feed his family. Studies have shown that adolescent boys and girls would address this ethical dilemma in very different ways. In her seminal book, *In a Different Voice*, Gilligan (1982) highlights this disparity. Gilligan suggests that a boy would locate truth in logic. He would most likely derive a solution to this dilemma in the same way he would solve a mathematical problem. The preadolescent boy would reason that laws have mistakes and you can't have laws written for every possible scenario. Therefore, the boy would reason that it is acceptable for Valjean to steal the bread because his family would otherwise go hungry. The boy is scored at the conventional stage of Kohlberg's scale (see figure 7.2), a mixture of stages 3 and 4, for his ability to use deductive logic to solve the dilemma, to differentiate morality from law, and to see how laws can have limitations concerning what is just.

In contrast, Gilligan suggests that a preadolescent girl's response to this dilemma would convey a very different impression of moral development. When asked if Valjean should have taken the bread, her reply would mostly likely seem evasive and unsure. She would most likely consider neither property nor law but rather the effect that the theft would have on the relationship between Valjean and his family and society. A preadolescent girl might reason that if Valjean steals the bread, he may prevent his family from being hungry for the day, but he may also end up in jail and then his family would be in an even worse situation. She would approach this ethical dilemma not as a mathematical problem to be solved but as a dilemma involving humans in a narrative of relationships that extends over a period of time. She would consider other solutions to the dilemma, suggesting that Valjean talk with other people in the community about his problem before taking the bread, concluding that stealing is not right. Her solution lacks moral logic and structure. It is based more on an intuitive feeling or sense of right and wrong. It considers options that supersede laws or rules. She considers both long-term effects and

alternative solutions. The preadolescent girl in this example does not quite fit Kohlberg's scale but may be scored somewhere between Kohlberg's preconventional and conventional stages of moral development. She displays an inability to think systematically about the concepts of morality or law and displays a reluctance to challenge authority or examine the logic of "truth." When considered in the light of Kohlberg's definition of the stages of moral development, her moral judgments appear to be a full stage lower in maturity than those of the boy.

These two children see two very different moral problems. Kohlberg's theory of moral development provides a ready response to the boy's logic but seems to be unable to address the girl's approach to solving this dilemma. Her response appears to lie outside the moral domain. Both of these preadolescents are intelligent and are perceptive about life. The disparity lies in the way that they think about conflict and choice and in their different modes of moral understanding. There is something highly limiting about Kohlberg's theory of moral development concerning the girl's ability to develop higher levels of moral judgment.

This disparity lies at the heart of a discussion of an ethic of care versus an ethic of justice. Gilligan argues that the sexes differ in moral reasoning; women focus on care and responsibility while men are preoccupied with rights and justice. Neither method of reasoning is superior to another, but Gilligan suggests that both need to be considered.

Ethic of Care and Ethic of Justice

An **ethic of care** is based on relationships. One person responds to another out of love or natural inclination. An ethic of justice operates upon the principles of fairness and reciprocity, giving credence to the summum bonum, which gives ethics a mathematical and logical appearance and moves the discussion beyond the sphere of actual human activity. It has been argued that Kohlberg's model of moral development overemphasizes a hierarchy of moral reasoning (Noddings 1984).

An ethic of care takes a relationship-oriented approach to moral development. Girls and women tend to choose this ethic more often than boys and men. An ethic of care considers not only relationships but the effects of decisions over a period of time (Mitten 1996). Mitten maintains that while an ethic of care is a feeling mode, it is not necessarily an emotional one: "At the heart of this ethic is the maintenance of the caring relationship" (p. 166). The universal aspect of this ethic is the caring attitude, or being able to be cared for and being able to care about.

Within an **ethic of justice,** decisions are based upon principles of fairness and reciprocity. For the most part, this approach concentrates on a hierarchical structure of moral reasoning. It focuses on the establishment of principles and that which can be logically derived from them. According to this ethic, using principles keeps ethical decision

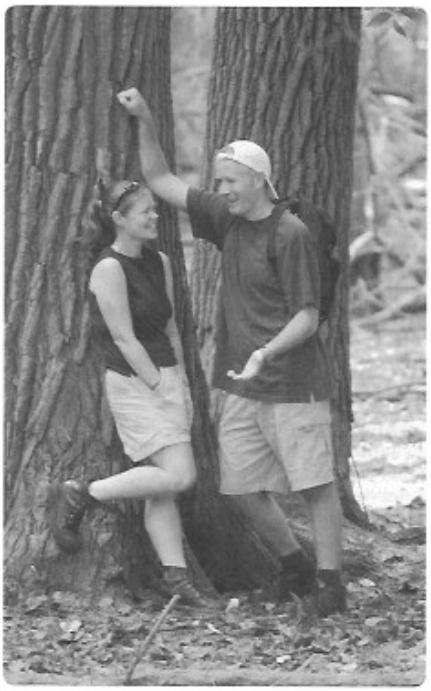
Preconventional level	**Stage 1.** The focus is on punishment and obedience. **Stage 2.** The focus is on satisfying needs, mainly one's own.
Conventional level	**Stage 3.** The focus is on conformity and gaining approval. **Stage 4.** The focus is on authority and fixed rules.
Postconventional level	**Stage 5.** The focus is on the social contract and public interest. **Stage 6.** The focus is on moral principles.

Figure 7.2 Kohlberg's six stages of moral development.

making rational and objective rather than emotional. This ethic fits well into Kohlberg's theory of moral development.

It has been argued that an ethic of care represents a more feminine ethic and an ethic of justice represents a more masculine ethic. The goal of outdoor leadership should be to embrace an ethic of care that supersedes these gendered prescriptions. The relationship-oriented nature of outdoor leadership impels us to develop an ethic of care within our practice.

Professors often deal with ethical dilemmas that highlight this distinction. For example, it may be clearly stated in a course syllabus that students will receive a 10% reduction for each day that an assignment is late. Inevitably, a few students hand in late assignments throughout the course of a semester. Some students would appear to have a valid reason for turning in their assignment late. If a professor were to operate using an ethic of justice, she may tell students that regardless of their reason, they will receive a 10% reduction per day late because the professor feels the need to maintain the same level of fairness for all students. If a professor were to adopt a more relationship-oriented approach based on an ethic of care, the professor would most likely hear the student out first and then make a decision based on care for that student. In other words, in some cases a student may have a compelling reason as to why an assignment is late. An ethic of care allows a professor to care for that student at that moment in time, regardless of what principle ethic or rule may be in place.



An ethical leader should treat group members consistently rather than cultivate special relationships with individuals.

Professionalism in Outdoor Leadership

It was suggested earlier that leadership as a professional and ethical practice need to be better understood. The question that needs to be answered is "Is outdoor leadership a profession or a set of techniques?" Priest and Gass (1999) suggest that the outdoor leadership profession is becoming more professional. They indicate that one important step toward this professionalism is the development of a unique body of knowledge. They further maintain that a profession follows an ethical code of conduct that cares for client welfare. The ethical issues that are relevant here are the special moral obligations of practitioners of outdoor leadership and the specific set of moral standards that govern outdoor activities. Professional associations often develop a code of ethics to aid individuals in subscribing to a consistent professional ethic.

Code of Ethics

While there is no universal code of ethics or conduct in place for the outdoor leadership profession, Hackman and Johnson (1991) offer the following six criteria that they believe are important to ethical leadership:

- A leader should not intentionally send deceptive or harmful messages.
- A leader should place concern for others above concern for personal gain.
- A leader should respect the opinions and attitudes of group members and allow them the freedom to consider the consequences of their actions.

- A leader should stand behind members when they carry out policies and actions approved by the leader and the group.
- A leader should treat members consistently, regardless of sex, ethnicity, or social background.
- A leader should establish clear policies that all group members are expected to follow.

Refer to chapter 3 for examples of the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) and the therapeutic adventure professional group (TAPG) of the Association for Experiential Education (AEE) codes of ethics.

While the general criteria provided by Hackman and Johnson and the more specific criteria found in the NRPA and AEE codes of ethics may serve as a good starting point, it is clear that development of the overall outdoor leadership profession's code of ethics needs continued attention. Consider, for example, the role of psychiatrists, doctors, and nurses. Are there a code of ethics and set of standards that guide their professional practice? Could you say the same for outdoor leaders? If doctors, nurses, and other professional practitioners are operating under an ethical code of conduct, do outdoor leaders need the same kind of code in their own practice? Priest and Gass (1999) impel us to consider that while outdoor leadership may be a profession, it may not yet be professional.

Outdoor Leadership as Professional Practice

Outdoor leadership as professional practice is where the study of ethics begins to merge with the practice of outdoor leadership. A discussion of outdoor leadership as professional practice must begin with a definition of what is meant by practice. McIntyre (1984) describes a practice as any coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity. The "goods" internal to that form of activity are realized in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence that are appropriate to the activity. Using this definition, Hunt and Wurdinger (1999) suggest that coiling a climbing rope is not a practice but teaching rock climbing is. An outdoor leader may have the ability to effectively coil a rope but may be unable to work toward achieving goods internal to the practice. For outdoor leaders to excel, they must be able to do more than simply master a set of technical skills; they must be able to work toward achieving the ideal ends associated with that practice. In the case of an outdoor trip, the ends may include group safety and group satisfaction.

The goods or standards of excellence achieved by an outdoor leader are attainable only by those who practice outdoor education. According to McIntyre (1984), external goods are those that are, in essence, outside the practice. Hunt and Wurdinger (1999) give an example of this. If an outdoor leader takes a job guiding climbing trips in order to finance a personal mountaineering expedition and the instructor does an adequate job, is paid for the job, and goes on the expedition, then the good that the instructor receives is the money. On the other hand, internal goods are attained purely because of the excellence achieved by participating fully in a practice. An outdoor leader will receive satisfaction by being recognized as achieving a high level of excellence in leadership ability.

McIntyre suggests that entering into a practice involves standards of excellence and obedience to rules as well as the achievement of internal goods. In thinking back to Aristotle's view of ethics and virtue that was presented in chapter 4, you may remember that Aristotle believed that the development of ethics and virtue is the development of the right habits expressed through practice. The question then becomes "Which habits are right and virtuous within the practice of outdoor leadership?"

Virtues of Outdoor Leadership Practice

Certain virtues may be common for all outdoor leaders concerning both the technical and moral areas of professional practice (Hunt and

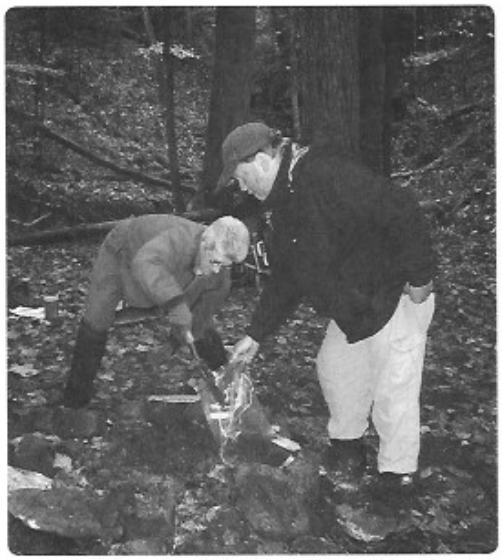
Learning Activity 7.5

List some other virtues that you see as important to outdoor leadership.

Wurdinger 1999). Certifications have provided one means of assessing leaders' qualifications in specific outdoor activities (Ewert 1985). Program accreditation is another indicator that an adventure provider or organization has met certain criteria for safety, ethics, and curriculum. Both certification and accreditation represent one step in the direction of better defining outdoor leadership as a professional practice.

However, if McIntyre (1984) is correct about moral virtues being essential for the achievement of excellence within a practice, then it would follow that a professional outdoor leader is obligated to begin to define what is virtuous within the practice. One precondition for entering a professional practice is that practitioners be honest. Justice is another virtue essential for the practice of outdoor education. And compassion lies at the heart of the aforementioned ethic of care.

While it may be easy for individuals to identify what virtues they believe are important to the practice of outdoor leadership, the fact remains that there are no universal standards that define acceptable practice across the broad range of programs that currently exist. Hunt (1995) argues that while outdoor education is on the way to becoming a practice, it is not quite there yet.



Ethical practice is displayed through ethical decision making and action; ethical campers know to pack out ashes before leaving the area.

Model for Ethical Decisions

The previous chapter addressed decision making in great detail. This section will present one model for making ethical decisions specifically related to professional practice. The first step in making ethical decisions is to ask, "What is the practice I am engaged in?" and "What is the ideal end of the practice?" If, for example, the goal of a particular trip is to provide opportunities to enhance students' self-esteem through positive peer interactions and one student is consistently putting down others, it may be important for you to act quickly to resolve the problem even though there is no real threat to physical safety. Once you have identified the practice and the ends, the next step is to list your options, considering your obligations to the group and the potential effects of your decision.

The third step is to consider the ethical guidelines under which you are operating. If you are working for an organization or under an association that has an established code of conduct, then apply that code to the decision-making process. For example, NRPA members agree to abide by a code of ethics that includes adhering to the highest standards of integrity and honesty in public and personal activities and striving for personal and professional excellence (Clark 1995). Policy and procedure manuals represent another source of guidelines.

The fourth step in the decision-making process is to employ the ethical principles and theories in this chapter and use them to help determine which factors are relevant. For example, should your decision be based on the greatest good for the greatest number (utilitarianism)? Or are there situations when concern for an individual's safety outweighs your decision to seek the summum bonum? If you are operating under a professional code of conduct, should you employ it even if it does not fit the situation? Are there times when employing a virtue ethic would supersede this principle ethic (code of conduct)?

As outdoor professionals, it is important to make objective ethical decisions. Yet you will most likely have a personal opinion, a personal investment, and a natural inclination that will also contribute to the decision-making process. For this reason, you must consider and recognize your own epistemology, the lens through which

A Model for Ethical Decisions

Step 1—Identify the ideal end or objective of the activity.
Step 2—List options.
Step 3—Identify the ethical guidelines under which you are operating.
Step 4—Employ the ethical principles and theories (see table 7.1).
Step 5—Identify your own bias and how it may affect the decision.

Figure 7.3 Summary of the 5-step model for making ethical decisions.

Learning Activity 7.6

Apply the 5-step model of ethical decision making to the following scenarios:

- You are a recent graduate from an outdoor recreation program. You will be spending your first summer as an Outward Bound instructor. Your first trip is with a group of teenagers from the inner city of Toronto. Your "book" knowledge of this particular group is that these at-risk youths may require an autocratic leadership approach so that you can maintain order. Your coleader has 10 years of experience and you have heard great things about her. However, you finish the first day of the trip a bit shaken up. As previously agreed, your coleader has just introduced the topics of the full-value contract and challenge by choice and presented the information in a manner that offered the participants no real voice in the process. In fact, she repeatedly raised her voice and yelled at the group, telling them to shut up. A number of participants have been acting out and pushing her buttons as a result. It is day 1 of a 28-day trip.

What should you do?

- You are 25 years old and are guiding a Smithsonian-sponsored trip on the Green River in Utah. You are the primary guide of this group of nine, although a paid naturalist is on the trip as well who will provide the group with interpretive talks and walks. Because of the natural environment in which you are traveling, there is a Leave No Trace environmental ethic of "pack it in, pack it out," including human waste. On day 3 of the trip, you overhear a female participant telling her husband that she is squeamish about using the "rocket box" to go to the bathroom. He responds by telling her to just go behind a big rock nearby because no one will know.

How do you respond to this ethical dilemma?

you see the world, and weigh that alongside the other components of the process. Understanding your own bias will only contribute to making the right decision. Neglecting your bias will only detract from that process. This fifth and final step in the decision-making process may be the most challenging. Figure 7.3 illustrates this five-step process.

Summary

Values and ethics define a person. Participants and coleaders look for high standards, clear ethics, and the exercise of appropriate values in leadership. An understanding of some ethical principles and theories will help you develop these high standards and make ethical decisions. There are

Professional-Development Portfolio Activity

Consider how your personal lens (from activity 7.2 on page 91) influences your values and beliefs. What are your personal values and ethics? How might they influence you as a person? As a leader?

Use this information and some of the knowledge that you have been acquiring over the course of the readings to build upon the essay on your philosophy of leadership that you started in chapter 4.

policies and procedures in place to help with this process, but they represent only part of the equation. You will need to examine your own values and beliefs and superimpose those on the principle ethics that are already in place.

Studying values and ethics and thinking about ethical matters will make you a better leader. You must then put your ethics into practice. As an outdoor leader, you are involved in developing not only your own practice but also helping to establish outdoor leadership as a professional practice. Your individual efforts and attention to ethical matters will contribute to developing the profession.

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