

MANAGING ETHICAL BOUNDARIES



Ethics and the Law



A legal standard is not a moral standard

“I want to be ethical and I want to succeed
in my career with the City”

Is it possible?

Personal Values Affect Behavior

Decision Making

Risk Taking

Goal Setting

Conflict Resolution

Priority Determination

Financial and Resource Allocation





Integrity

Making sure that with every decision we make, our actions match our values.



Fiscal Responsibility

Ensuring that people can trust that we use public funds conscientiously, with the community's best interest in mind.



Transparency

Building an environment of trust by interacting with others honestly as well as collecting and sharing clear and concise information.



Outstanding Customer Service

Employing a holistic approach to problem-solving and providing responsive service that goes above and beyond expectations.

If you don't stick to
your values when
they're being tested,
they're not values...
they're hobbies.

~Jon Stewart





Generally, ethics refers to the study of right and wrong behaviors.

Is it ever OK to lie?

Is it ever OK to break the rules/violate policy?

Is it ever OK to cheat?

Is it ever OK to steal?

Is it ever OK to *not* address someone else's bad/unethical behavior?

Is it ever OK as long as no one knows or is hurt by your actions?



Should we care about government ethics?



Tangible Benefits/Intangible Benefits



Five Barriers to an Ethical Organization

	ILL-CONCEIVED GOALS	MOTIVATED BLINDNESS	INDIRECT BLINDNESS	THE SLIPPERY SLOPE	OVERVALUING OUTCOMES
DESCRIPTION	We set goals and incentives to promote a desired behavior, but they encourage a negative one.	We overlook the unethical behavior of others when it's in our interest to remain ignorant.	We hold others less accountable for unethical behavior when it's carried out through third parties.	We are less able to see others' unethical behavior when it develops gradually.	We give a pass to unethical behavior if the outcome is good.
EXAMPLE	The pressure to maximize billable hours in accounting, consulting, and law firms leads to unconscious padding.	Baseball officials failed to notice they'd created conditions that encouraged steroid use.	A drug company deflects attention from a price increase by selling rights to another company, which imposes the increase.	Auditors may be more likely to accept a client firm's questionable financial statements if infractions have accrued over time.	A researcher whose fraudulent clinical trial saves lives is considered more ethical than one whose fraudulent trial leads to deaths.
REMEDIES	Brainstorm unintended consequences when devising goals and incentives. Consider alternative goals that may be more important to reward.	Root out conflicts of interest. Simply being aware of them doesn't necessarily reduce their negative effect on decision making.	When handing off or outsourcing work, ask whether the assignment might invite unethical behavior and take ownership of the implications.	Be alert for even trivial ethical infractions and address them immediately. Investigate whether a change in behavior has occurred.	Examine both "good" and "bad" decisions for their ethical implications. Reward solid decision processes, not just good outcomes.

ILL-CONCEIVED GOALS

DESCRIPTION

We set goals and incentives to promote a desired behavior, but they encourage a negative one.

EXAMPLE

The pressure to maximize billable hours in accounting, consulting, and law firms leads to unconscious padding.

REMEDIES

Brainstorm unintended consequences when devising goals and incentives. Consider alternative goals that may be more important to reward.

Ill-Conceived Goals



MOTIVATED BLINDNESS

DESCRIPTION

We overlook the unethical behavior of others when it's in our interest to remain ignorant.

EXAMPLE

Baseball officials failed to notice they'd created conditions that encouraged steroid use.

REMEDIES

Root out conflicts of interest. Simply being aware of them doesn't necessarily reduce their negative effect on decision making.

Motivated Blindness



Do you want to hear the terrifying truth, or do you want to see me sock a few dingers?

INDIRECT BLINDNESS

DESCRIPTION

We hold others less accountable for unethical behavior when it's carried out through third parties.

EXAMPLE

A drug company deflects attention from a price increase by selling rights to another company, which imposes the increase.

REMEDIES

When handing off or outsourcing work, ask whether the assignment might invite unethical behavior and take ownership of the implications.

“Dieselgate”



THE SLIPPERY SLOPE

DESCRIPTION

We are less able to see others' unethical behavior when it develops gradually.

EXAMPLE

Auditors may be more likely to accept a client firm's questionable financial statements if infractions have accrued over time.

REMEDIES

Be alert for even trivial ethical infractions and address them immediately. Investigate whether a change in behavior has occurred.



OVERVALUING OUTCOMES

DESCRIPTION

We give a pass to unethical behavior if the outcome is good.

EXAMPLE

A researcher whose fraudulent clinical trial saves lives is considered more ethical than one whose fraudulent trial leads to deaths.

REMEDIES

Examine both “good” and “bad” decisions for their ethical implications. Reward solid decision processes, not just good outcomes.



Ethical Issues
are Seldom
Black or White



Create an Ethical Culture



How 
do we do it

Constant Integrity is Hard



When Good People Are Asked to Work in a Bad Culture



There are five ways organizations needlessly provoke good people to make unethical choices.

- It is psychologically unsafe to speak up
- There is excessive pressure to reach unrealistic performance targets
- Conflicting goals provoke a sense of unfairness
- Ethical behavior is not part of routine conversation
- A positive example isn't being set



If you want people to behave ethically, you've got to give them a reason to do it, and they have to believe that the reason is more important than any of the reasons they have not to do it.

How Ethical am I?

I am *always* ethical

I am *mostly* ethical

I am *seldom* ethical


I am *never* ethical

We Rationalize our Choices.



Inaction is also a decision

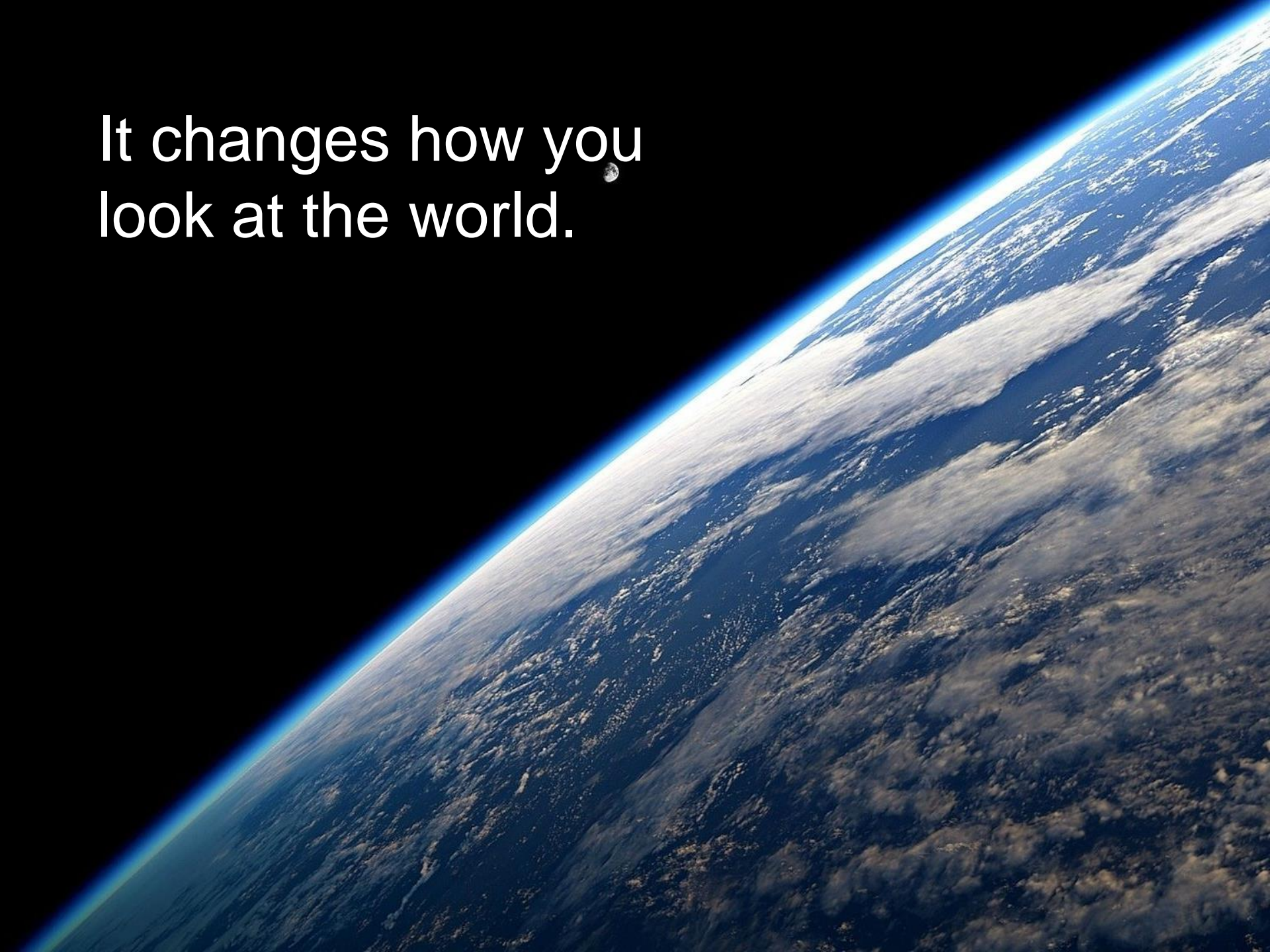


A group of approximately 15 ants is arranged in a loose circle on a white background. The ants are dark brown with lighter-colored legs and antennae. In the center of the circle, the text "The more people involved..." is written in a black, sans-serif font.

The more people
involved...

How 
do we do it

It changes how you
look at the world.



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Thank you!