

UNCLASSIFIED

THOUGHT PAPER ON ETHICS

SGM CHOU, CHIH-MING

3rd Battalion 298 Brigade

Motorized Infantry of Taiwan Army

10 December 2006

Class #57

UNCLASSIFIED

THOUGHT PAPER ON ETHICS

You could say Ethics is nothing more than looking at a problem, determine if its wrong, and then making the right decision based on our values. So what is the right thing to do in an ethical situation? We all posses our own set of ethics so does that mean we are right every time we make a decision. Maybe not to everyone, but in our mind there is usually no doubt that we have made the right ethical choice.

I was learned from army, when faced with an ethical decision to use the army values as our guide. Fortunately, most of us had these same values instilled in us by our parents, but our parents also had a tremendous influence over how we prioritized these values. This prioritizing is the single best or at times the single worst factor when trying to make the right ethical decision. I believe the first step a leader must take is to realize that all the army values are of equal importance, only than can we make the best ethical decision.

Placing an equal importance on our values allows us to define ethical violations. The ability to define an ethical problem does not make reaching an ethical decision easier. The way we precede once we define a problem is perhaps the hardest part in making the right ethical choice and it

It is here that our personal values play the largest role. A few months back I had to confront such a dilemma.

In my idea, learning an ethics is not the learning of profound theories. On the contrary, it should be very practical, very down- to-earth. It's a living ethics and can be realized in our daily life. Let's try to recall what's happened and what's happening in our life. We learn from family, from friends, from school, and from the society. We take in new ideas and grow into a more mature human being. We may come to a contradiction between ideas and discard the useless ones. This process of generalizing is the most valuable fortune we accumulate in life.

However, what's the meaning behind all of this ethics and values learning? When I look back, I realize that I've given myself more chances to keep on searching the meaning and values of my own life. I'm growing and I believe that I am going in the right direction.

Defining the ethical problem was easy; recommending a fair and ethical solution was extremely difficult. Using the army values as my guide, I was able to define the ethical problem with ease. My personal ethics, values, and my sense of what I perceived as the greater wrong played the largest role in recommending a fair solution. Some of you may think my recommendations were

sound, some of you may not. It will depend largely on if we share the same personal values and sense of ethics.

Fortunately many ethical problems are clear cut and once defined using the army values as our guide we can easily reach the right decision. There will be times however when personal feelings about an individual may interfere with our decision making abilities. During these times, we most relay on the army values more then ever. It is imperative that we look past our own personal feelings and do what's right for the army. Allowing someone to escape from established standards and discard the benefits of corrective training or discipline not only hurts us in the eyes of our soldiers but also hurts the army as these soldiers progress through the ranks. Not allowing a soldier to deviate from the standards enforces our ethical beliefs and teaches him not to allow other soldiers to deviate from them when he faces the same ethical situations in the future.

The Army values are our foundation and our key to defining Ethical problems. Most of us will make different recommendations and decisions based on our personal values and experience when solving these problems. The important point to remember is that we are able to recognize there is a problem and act to correct it. The decisions we implement and how impartial these decision's are, will directly reflect on our leadership and how our soldiers react to similar situations. Our decision to act on an ethical problem directly reflects our desire to maintain and enforce the army standards.

Most importantly, we instill in our soldiers the need to maintain these standards even when it means doing the hard right over the easy wrong. As leaders, we may allow our personal values to implement or recommend solutions to an ethical problem, but we must never allow them to interfere with our ability to define an ethical problem.