

## THE MORAL MINIMUM

Now that we have presented most of the major ethical theories along with their shortcomings, students often ask us what a moral minimum standard would entail. Based on our study of ethics we believe that a moral minimum would consist of a number of components. However, we must caution that any such list of components is just a minimum. We believe that an acceptable moral minimum would entail the following:

1. When faced with an ethical dilemma you must, to the extent possible, be objective.
2. You must be willing to analyze the situation and develop possible solutions, and you must be willing to consider other people's ideas if they are presented.
3. You must be willing to consider the impact your decision will have on all parties involved.
4. Your decision should be based on a logical analysis of your known possible solutions.
5. Finally, you must be willing to act on this rational analysis.

## THE CASE STUDY METHOD

Now that we have provided you with an overview of the major ethical theories, for the remainder of the text we have provided fact patterns that present a variety of managerial and ethical issues in public administration. The discussion questions ask you to analyze these case studies from a variety of perspectives and, using the various ethical theories, determine what you think is the best possible solution to the situation.

In thinking about these cases and the ethical theories, we believe that a useful method is the IRAC method. IRAC stands for issue, rule, application, and conclusion.

First, as you read the cases, you should identify all the issues involved. Some of the cases present only one or two issues, while others are more complex and present multiple issues that you should identify.

Second, based on the ethical theories, what rules or principles would apply to the situation? You should think about each theory.

The third step is the application. How would the rules/principles of each theory apply to the fact pattern presented?

Finally, you should reach a conclusion. You should think about the conclusion that would be reached by a theorist from each of the major theories, and then develop the conclusion that you think is the best.

# Managing Employees

## CASE 1: FLOGGINGS WILL CONTINUE

For the very first time in the history of the State Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), a governor was taking the time to visit the agency. The DEQ Director escorted the governor and a small entourage. They walked around the offices and the governor visited with various state employees. He went to the basement and visited workers in the Air Quality Control Division. As he went inside one office to shake an inspector's hand, he saw a cartoon on the worker's bulletin board. It looked like an old-fashioned woodprint illustrating sailors and naval officers on the deck of a wooden sailing ship. In the picture, the master-at-arms stood stiffly by as the chief boatswain's mate took a cat o' nine tails (basically, nine small leather whips attached to a wooden baton) across the bare back of an errant sailor. The caption below the picture read in big letters, "The Floggings Will Continue Until Morale Improves."

The governor stopped and stiffened. Then he asked the worker, "Do you really feel this way?"

"It's just a joke . . . it's just meant to be funny."

"What's your name?"

"I'm Dan . . . uh, . . . Daniel. Daniel Welles."

"Dan, if you have any concerns that you think should come to my attention, give me a call directly." The governor wrote a number on a sticky pad and handed it to Dan. The governor then left to visit the rest of the agency.

The DEQ Director motioned Dan's supervisor to come forward and he whispered in her ear, "I want you to terminate Daniel's employment by the end of this week. That was embarrassing. Do whatever you need to do."

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Is the governor's style of leadership—walking around and talking directly with frontline workers—admirable? What are the advantages and disadvantages of this strategy?
2. Did the governor cross a line by talking directly with a state employee and not going through the normal chain of command?