Master Stimulus List of Ethical Dilemmas

SELF BENEFIC, Avoidable Death (ms=4.67, mw=95.33, range= 89-105)

1) BURNING BUILDING

Personal

You and five other people are trapped in a burning building. There is only one emergency exit through which all of you could escape to safety, but it is blocked by burning debris. You notice another person in the hallway leading to the exit who has been injured but is about to crawl to safety through a small hole at the bottom of the exit door.

You and the five people behind you do not have time to climb through the small hole.

You realize that you could grab the injured man and use his body as a battering-ram to break through the burning blockage in the hallway that is preventing your escape.

Doing this is certain to kill him.

However, if you do not do this, you and the five people behind you will die.

Is it appropriate for you to kill this man in order to save yourself and the other five people? (5, 89)

Impersonal-Incidental

You and five other people are trapped in a burning building. There is only one emergency exit through which all of you could escape to safety, but it is blocked by burning debris. You notice another person in the hallway leading to the exit who has been injured but is about to crawl to safety through a small hole at the bottom of the exit door.

You and the five people behind you do not have time to climb through the small hole.

The hallway's emergency system puts out fire by eliminating oxygen from the hall and you can activate the system by pressing a nearby button.

The fire will go out, but the injured person will suffocate and die.

However, if you do not do this, you and the five people behind you will die.

Is it appropriate for you to activate the system in order to save yourself and the other five people? (5, 89)

2) MODIFIED CRYING BABY

Personal

Enemy soldiers have taken over your village. They have orders to kill all remaining civilians over the age of two. You and some of your townspeople have sought refuge in two rooms of the cellar of a large house. Outside you hear the voices of soldiers who have come to search the house for valuables.

Your baby, who is with you in the room, begins to cry loudly.

You put your hand over his mouth to block the sound.

If you remove your hand from his mouth his crying will summon the attention of the soldiers who will spare your baby's life, but will kill you and the others hiding in both rooms.

To save yourself and the others you must keep your hand on his mouth and smother your baby to death.

Is it appropriate for you to smother your baby in order to save yourself and the other townspeople? (5, 96)

Impersonal-Incidental

Enemy soldiers have taken over your village. They have orders to kill all remaining civilians over the age of two. You and some of your townspeople have sought refuge in two rooms of the cellar of a large house. Outside you hear the voices of soldiers who have come to search the house for valuables.

Your baby begins to cry loudly in the other room.

His crying will summon the attention of the soldiers who will spare your baby's life, but will kill you and the others hiding in both rooms.

If you turn on the noisy furnace to block the sound, the other room will become uncomfortably hot for adults and children, but deadly for infants.

To save yourself and the others you must activate the furnace, which will kill your baby.

Is it appropriate for you to overheat your baby in order to save yourself and the other townspeople? (5, 96)

3) MODIFIED SUBMARINE

Personal

You are a crewperson on a marine-research submarine traveling underneath a large iceberg. An onboard explosion has damaged the ship, killed and injured several crewmembers. Additionally, it has collapsed the only access corridor between the upper and lower parts of the ship. The upper section, where you and most of the others are located, does not have enough oxygen remaining for all of you to survive until you reach the surface. Only one remaining crewmember is located in the lower section, where there is enough oxygen.

There is an emergency access hatch between the upper and lower sections of the ship.

If released, it will fall to the deck and allow oxygen to reach the upper section.

However, a crewmember in the lower section was knocked unconscious and is lying beneath the hatch while you and the rest of the crew are almost out of air.

If you shove the hatch open you and the others will have air, but it will fall to the deck, crushing the unconscious crewmember.

Is it appropriate for you to open the hatch and crush the crewmember below to save yourself and the other crewmembers? (5, 105)

Impersonal-Incidental

You are a crewperson on a marine-research submarine traveling underneath a large iceberg. An onboard explosion has damaged the ship, killed and injured several crewmembers. Additionally, it has collapsed the only access corridor between the upper and lower parts of the ship. The upper section, where you and most of the others are located, does not have enough oxygen remaining for all of you to survive until you reach the surface. Only one remaining crewmember is located in the lower section, where there is enough oxygen.

There is an emergency access hatch between the upper and lower sections of the ship.

If released by an emergency switch, it will fall to the deck and allow oxygen to reach the area where you and the others are.

However, the hatch will crush the crewmember below, since he was knocked unconscious and is lying beneath it.

You and the rest of the crew are almost out of air though, and you will all die if you do not do this.

Is it appropriate for you to release the hatch and crush the crewmember below to save yourself and the other crew members? (5, 104)

4) SHARK ATTACK

Personal

You are part of a U.N. humanitarian team of SCUBA divers who are deactivating old World War II underwater anti-ship mines. One member of your diving team scrapes himself while trying to deactivate a mine. The blood in the water has attracted several sharks in the area. A feeding frenzy is about to ensue, with the sharks eating everything and everyone in sight. You have a spear-gun, but only one spear and there are many sharks.

The bleeding diver is swimming toward the last protective shark cage and will reach it before you and the others.

The sharks, following the blood, are coming too close for you and the other divers to escape.

You realize that if you shoot and kill the injured diver with your spear-gun before he reaches the cage, the sharks would stop to eat him while you and the others escaped to safety.

Is it appropriate for you to kill this diver in order to save yourself and the rest of the group? (4, 91)

Impersonal-Instrumental

You are part of a U.N. humanitarian team of SCUBA divers who are deactivating old World War II underwater anti-ship mines. One member of your diving team scrapes himself while trying to deactivate a mine. The blood in the water has attracted several sharks in the area. A feeding frenzy is about to ensue, with the sharks eating everything and everyone in sight. You have a spear-gun, but only one spear and there are many sharks.

The bleeding diver is swimming toward the last protective shark cage and will reach it before you and the others.

The sharks, following the blood, are coming too close for you and the other divers to escape.

You realize that if you used the emergency remote to detonate one of the mines, the resulting explosion would kill the injured diver before he reached the cage, allowing you and the others to reach safety.

Is it appropriate for you to kill this diver in order to save yourself and the rest of the group? (4, 93)

5) ORPHANAGE

Personal

You work in an orphanage in a war torn country. Rebel soldiers have staged a successful takeover of the government and are now killing everyone who did not support their regime. Soldiers have entered your town and are burning and killing all those whose loyalty is in question. You and the children in the orphanage did not support this regime. Furthermore, this group of soldiers is conducting an 'ethnic cleansing' genocide campaign to kill everyone of a particular ethnic group in the country. You have one child of this ethnic group in your orphanage.

You know smugglers who could safely get her out of the country but there is no way for you and the other children to escape, and the soldiers will certainly kill you all.

You could smother the one child to death with a pillow while she is sleeping.

Since the soldiers hate the ethnic group she is part of, they would see this as supporting their regime.

Consequently, they would spare you and the other children.

Is it appropriate for you to smother this one child to death to save yourself and the rest of the children? (5, 97)

Impersonal-Instrumental

You work in an orphanage in a war torn country. Rebel soldiers have staged a successful takeover of the government and are now killing everyone who did not support their regime. Soldiers have entered your town and are burning and killing all those whose loyalty is in question. You and the children in the orphanage did not support this regime. Furthermore, this group of soldiers is conducting an 'ethnic cleansing' genocide campaign to kill everyone of a particular ethnic group in the country. You have one child of this ethnic group in your orphanage.

You know smugglers who could safely get her out of the country but there is no way for you and the other children to escape, and the soldiers will certainly kill you all.

You could order the nurse to lethally overdose the child on sleeping pills.

Since the soldiers hate the ethnic group she is part of, they would see this as supporting their regime.

Consequently, they would spare you and the other children.

Is it appropriate for you to order the nurse to overdose and kill this one child to save yourself and the rest of the children? (5, 99)

6) PREVENTING EBOLA

Personal

You are a Peace Corps health-worker who is volunteering in a rural African village. A prominent man from a nearby village has contracted an Ebola virus that is extremely contagious, incurable, and almost always fatal within a week. Miraculously, this man has survived for a month, and so he must be a rare carrier who is immune to the virus' deadly effects. However, this man wrongly believes that your health center can cure his disease.

You see him approaching and you know that if he enters the village he will spread the virus to hundreds of innocent people who, unlike him, will die.

There is a loaded gun in the health center.

You realize that the only way you can prevent him from entering the village and spreading the virus to you and the rest of the village is to shoot and kill him as he approaches.

Is it appropriate for you to kill the man in order to save yourself and the rest of the village? (4, 92)

Impersonal-Instrumental

You are a Peace Corps health-worker who is volunteering in a rural African village. A prominent man from a nearby village has contracted an Ebola virus that is extremely contagious, incurable, and almost always fatal within a week. Miraculously, this man has survived for a month, and so he must be a rare carrier who is immune to the virus' deadly effects. However, this man wrongly believes that your health center can cure his disease.

You see him approaching and you know that if he enters the village he will spread the virus to hundreds of innocent people who, unlike him, will die.

The only way you can prevent him from entering the village and spreading the virus to you and the rest of the village is to warn the village council that he is coming.

This will result in him being shot and killed as he approaches.

Is it appropriate for you to warn the council in order to save yourself and the rest of the village? (4, 93)

SELF BENEFIC, Inevitable Death (ms=4.67, mw= 100.917, range= 65-138)

7) RESCUE 911

Personal

You are the sole paramedic riding on a rescue helicopter, responding to a devastating flood. You have rescued several critically injured people and you have been treating them to keep them alive. Suddenly, the pilot notifies you that there has been an engine malfunction and the helicopter can no longer support the weight of you, the pilot, and all the injured people on board.

If the helicopter crashes, it will kill everyone on board including you, the pilot, and the injured people that you have rescued.

In order to avoid a crash that will kill everyone on the helicopter, you realize that you must lighten the load enough to keep the helicopter aloft.

Because all of the equipment is bolted down, and you are needed by the injured people, the only way to do this is to throw one of the injured people off the helicopter.

This will lighten the load enough to keep the helicopter in the air but will cause the death of the person thrown off.

Is it appropriate for you to kill this injured person in order to save yourself and everyone else on board? (5, 125)

Impersonal-Instrumental

You are the sole paramedic riding on a rescue helicopter, responding to a devastating flood. You have rescued several critically injured people and you have been treating them to keep them alive. Suddenly, the pilot notifies you that there has been an engine malfunction and the helicopter can no longer support the weight of you, the pilot, and all the injured people on board.

If the helicopter crashes, it will kill everyone on board including you, the pilot, and the injured people that you have rescued.

In order to avoid a crash that will kill everyone on the helicopter, you realize that you must lighten the load enough to keep the helicopter aloft.

Because all of the equipment is bolted down, and you are needed by the injured people, the only way to do this is to cut the cable that is raising up the last rescued person.

This will lighten the load enough to keep the helicopter in the air, but it will also kill the person who is dropped.

Is it appropriate for you to kill this injured person in order to save yourself and everyone else on board? (5, 127)

8) SPACE STATION

Personal

You are an engineer on the international space station, in orbit around the Earth. Suddenly, a fire breaks out in the cargo bay. The automatic fire safety system will open the outer door of the cargo bay, letting the oxygen out of the bay and thus putting out the fire. The automatic system only works when the inner portal to the rest of the station has been sealed. One member of the crew, a mechanic in the cargo bay, has put on half of his bulky space suit when the fire begins. He runs to the portal to climb through to safety, but the portal is too narrow to fit through while wearing a space suit.

You realize that if he tries to climb through, he will get stuck and the fire will spread through the rest of the station because the safety system will not operate with the portal open.

There is no time for him to take off the suit before the fire spreads.

The only way you can prevent the spread of the fire, and save your life and the rest of the crew, is to push the mechanic back through the portal and into the cargo bay.

This way, the safety system will seal the door and decompress the cargo bay, but it will also suck the mechanic into space and kill him.

Is it appropriate for you to push the mechanic back through the portal, and into space, in order to save yourself and the rest of the crew? (5, 138)

Impersonal-Incidental

You are an engineer on the international space station, in orbit around the Earth. Suddenly, a fire breaks out in the cargo bay. The automatic fire safety system will open the outer door of the cargo bay, letting the oxygen out of the bay and thus putting out the fire. The automatic system only works when the inner portal to the rest of the station has been sealed. One member of the crew, a mechanic in the cargo bay, has put on half of his bulky space suit when the fire begins. He runs to the portal to climb through to safety, but the portal is too narrow to fit through while wearing a space suit.

You realize that if he tries to climb through, he will get stuck and the fire will spread through the rest of the station because the safety system will not operate with the portal open.

There is no time for him to take off the suit before the fire spreads.

The only way you can prevent the spread of the fire, and save your life and the rest of the crew, is to press a button in the control room that seals the portal before the mechanic gets there.

This way, the system will seal the door and put out the fire, but it will also suck the mechanic into space and kill him.

Is it appropriate for you to seal the portal and kill the mechanic in order to save yourself and the rest of the crew? (5, 138)

9) NUCLEAR REACTOR

Personal

You are the inspector of a nuclear power plant that you suspect has not met its safety requirements. The plant foreman and you are touring the facility when one of the nuclear fuel rods overheats. The emergency coolant system fails to activate, and a chain reaction is about to begin which will result in a nuclear meltdown. This will release lethal radiation into the nearby town, killing thousands of people.

You realize that the only way to stop the meltdown is to push the foreman into the fuel rod assembly.

This will remove just enough heat energy from the rod assembly to prevent the nuclear chain reaction.

However, it will also incinerate the foreman instantly.

Is it appropriate for you to push and kill the foreman in order to save yourself and the nearby town? (4, 65)

Impersonal-Incidental

You are the inspector of a nuclear power plant that you suspect has not met its safety requirements. The plant foreman and you are touring the facility when one of the nuclear fuel rods overheats. The emergency coolant system fails to activate, and a chain reaction is about to begin which will result in a nuclear meltdown. This will release lethal radiation into the nearby town, killing thousands of people.

You realize that the only way to stop the meltdown is to manually release liquid nitrogen into the fuel rod chamber.

This will remove just enough heat energy from the rod assembly to prevent the nuclear chain reaction.

However, it will also instantly kill an employee trapped nearby.

Is it appropriate for you to kill the employee in order to save yourself and the nearby town? (4, 66)

10) CINDERBLOCK

Personal

You are the explosives expert for a company that has been hired to demolish a skyscraper. You are examining the last of the explosive charges when you notice a teenager below who is about to accidentally detonate one of the charges out of sequence. This explosion will result in the building's uncontrolled collapse onto you, the teenager, and the crowd of spectators.

The teenager is several floors below you and cannot hear you because of the loud demolition noise.

You realize that the only way to stop the teenager from detonating the charge is to drop a heavy cinderblock on his head.

This will crush his skull and kill him almost instantly but will prevent the out-of-sequence explosion.

Is it appropriate for you to kill the teenager in order to save yourself and the crowd of spectators? (4, 75)

Impersonal-Instrumental

You are the explosives expert for a company that has been hired to demolish a skyscraper. You are examining the last of the explosive charges when you notice a teenager below who is about to accidentally detonate one of the charges out of sequence. This explosion will result in the building's uncontrolled collapse onto you, the teenager, and the crowd of spectators.

The teenager is several floors below you and cannot hear you because of the loud demolition noise.

You realize that the only way to stop the teenager from detonating the charge is to flip a switch that reactivates the building's electricity.

Because he is touching an open circuit, this will electrocute him but will prevent the explosion.

Is it appropriate for you to kill the teenager in order to save yourself and the crowd of spectators? (4, 76)

11) CLIFFHANGER

Personal

You are a construction worker. You and your crew are high on a scaffold, working on a skyscraper. Suddenly, the scaffolding partially collapses. You and several others are hanging on to a dangling crossbar, but it cannot hold all of your weight.

The worker next to you slips off the crossbar and grabs a hold of your one free arm.

However, you realize that the entire structure is about to give way.

The only way to avoid you and everyone else falling to your deaths is to repeatedly kick your co-worker in the stomach and chest until he lets go of your hand and falls to his certain death.

This will remove just enough weight that the rest of you can make it to safety before the scaffold collapses.

Is it appropriate for you to kill your co-worker in order to save yourself and the rest of the crew? (5, 107)

Impersonal-Instrumental

You are a construction worker. You and your crew are high on a scaffold, working on a skyscraper. Suddenly, the scaffolding partially collapses. You and several others are hanging on to a dangling crossbar, but it cannot hold all of your weight.

The worker next to you slips off the crossbar and catches himself on another portion of the scaffolding; however the entire structure is about to give way.

The only way to avoid you and everyone else falling to your deaths is to pull out a latch that will detach the section of scaffolding with your co-worker on it.

This will remove just enough weight that the rest of you can make it to safety before the scaffold collapses.

However, his fall will certainly kill him.

Is it appropriate for you to kill your co-worker in order to save yourself and the rest of the crew? (5, 105)

12) BUS PLUNGE

Personal

You are the bus driver for a kindergarten field trip to the zoo. On the way, faulty tires cause the bus to overturn and plunge off of a bridge and into a roaring river. You and three of the children are still in the sinking bus, but the rest of the passengers have been swept away down the river to their deaths. You grab the two children nearest to you and begin to swim toward the exit door.

The third remaining child grabs onto your leg.

You realize that you are not strong enough to fight the current and swim with all three children holding on to you.

The only way to reach the surface before you and the children drown is to shake the third child off of your leg.

This will allow you to bring the two children to the surface with you, but the third child will drown.

Is it appropriate for you to shake the child off your leg in order to save yourself and the two other children? (5, 95)

Impersonal-Incidental

You are the bus driver for a kindergarten field trip to the zoo. On the way, faulty tires cause the bus to overturn and plunge off of a bridge and into a roaring river. You and three of the children are still in the sinking bus, but the rest of the passengers have been swept away down the river to their deaths. You grab the two children nearest to you and begin to swim toward the exit door.

The two children you're holding onto cannot swim, nor can they hold their breath much longer.

Unfortunately, the exit door is blocked by some mangled seats.

You realize that the only way out is to pull the seats away from the exit, allowing you and the two children to escape the bus.

However, this will trap the third child at the other end of the bus, causing him to drown.

Is it appropriate for you to pull the seats away, trapping the third child, in order to save yourself and the two other children? (5, 94)

OTHER BENEFIC, Avoidable Death (ms=4.5, mw= 101.17, range= 71-131)

1) MODIFIED TRANSPLANT

Personal

You are a doctor. You have five patients, each of whom is about to die due to a failing organ of some kind. A new person is rushed into the hospital after a serious car accident. This person is critically injured, and will die without immediate surgery.

It is likely you can save this accident victim, though it would involve long and complicated surgery.

You realize that if you purposely cut his carotid artery during surgery it would cause his death and no one would ever know.

Then you could harvest his organs for transplant into the bodies of the other five patients.

If you do this, the other five patients will live, but the accident victim will die.

Is it appropriate for you to kill the accident victim in order to save your five patients? (5, 89)

Impersonal-Instrumental

You are a doctor. You have five patients, each of whom is about to die due to a failing organ of some kind. A new person is rushed into the hospital after a serious car accident. This person is critically injured, and will die without immediate surgery.

While involved in long and complicated surgery on the accident victim, you notice that a nurse is about to give him an inappropriate medication.

You know that this error will be lethal and by ignoring this mistake and allowing it to happen, the patient will die.

This would allow you to harvest his organs for transplant into the bodies of the other five patients.

If you do this, the other five patients will live.

Is it appropriate for you to ignore the lethal mistake in order to save your five patients? (5, 91)

2) ON THE WATERFRONT

Personal

You are part of a shipyard dock team that attaches crane cables to huge transport containers that are to be unloaded from ships onto the shore. You and the others attach these cables and then ride on top of the containers, wearing safety harnesses, to make sure that the containers are unloaded properly. While you are riding on top of one container that is just being lifted out of the cargo bay, you see the red warning light that indicates that the crane cable is about to fail. You realize that if the cable fails and the container falls onto the deck of the ship, many of the crewmembers below will be crushed to death.

You see that the cable is in danger because two other crewmembers are fighting on top of the container, causing it to sway dangerously.

You could run over to the fight and push them apart, but one of the crewmembers has taken off his safety harness, and will certainly fall to his death.

However, if you do not do this, the continued swaying will cause the cable to fail and the container to fall onto the deck, killing several people below.

Is it appropriate for you to push the un-harnessed crewmember off the container to his death to save the people below? (4, 102)

Impersonal-Incidental

You are part of a shipyard dock team that attaches crane cables to huge transport containers that are to be unloaded from ships onto the shore. You and the others attach these cables and then ride on top of the containers, wearing safety harnesses, to make sure that the containers are unloaded properly. While you are riding on top of one container that is just being lifted out of the cargo bay, you see the red warning light that indicates that the crane cable is about to fail. You realize that if the cable fails and the container falls onto the deck of the ship, many of the crewmembers below will be crushed to death.

You could hit the emergency release button, thereby dropping the container back into the cargo bay while you and the others remain securely attached to the crane by your safety harness.

However, there is one person below you who is in the cargo bay and will be killed by the falling container because he has nowhere to go.

If you do not do this though, the container will fall onto the deck of the ship and kill several other crewmembers.

Is it appropriate for you to activate the emergency release, thereby killing the worker below, in order to save several other workers? (4, 102)

3) MODIFIED VACCINE TEST

Personal

A viral epidemic has spread across the globe killing thousands of people. You are a medical researcher and have developed two substances in your laboratory. You know that one of them is a vaccine, but you don't know which because both of the vials have been mislabeled as vaccine. You also know that the other substance is deadly.

Once you figure out which substance is the vaccine you can create more to save thousands of lives.

You have two lab assistants who work with you, and the only way to identify the vaccine with certainty is to inject the two substances into these people against their wishes.

One person will live, the other will die, and you will be able to start saving lives with your vaccine.

Is it appropriate for you to kill one of these people with a deadly injection in order to identify a vaccine that will save thousands of lives? (4, 96)

Impersonal-Instrumental

A viral epidemic has spread across the globe killing thousands of people. You are a medical researcher and have developed two substances in your laboratory. You know that one of them is a vaccine, but you don't know which because both of the vials have been mislabeled as vaccine. You also know that the other substance is deadly.

Once you figure out which substance is the vaccine you can create more to save thousands of lives.

You could allow another doctor to inject two unsuspecting patients, who need the vaccine, with these substances without warning them or the doctor that one of the substances is deadly.

One person will live, the other will die, and you will be able to start saving lives with your vaccine.

Is it appropriate for you to let one of these people die from a deadly injection in order to identify a vaccine that will save thousands of lives? (4, 98)

4) MODIFIED FOOTBRIDGE/TROLLEY

Personal

A runaway trolley is heading down the tracks toward five workmen who will be killed if the trolley proceeds on its present course. You are standing next to the track on which the trolley is traveling, but you are too far away from the workmen to warn them of the impending danger.

Next to you there is a very large stranger who is minding his own business.

It occurs to you that if you pushed this person onto the tracks in front of the trolley, it would stop the trolley and save the five workmen from certain death.

However, this would most certainly kill the stranger.

Is it appropriate for you to push this stranger onto the tracks to save the five workmen? (4, 71)

Impersonal-Incidental

A runaway trolley is heading down the tracks toward five workmen who will be killed if the trolley proceeds on its present course. You are standing next to the track on which the trolley is traveling, but you are too far away from the workmen to warn them of the impending danger.

Next to you there is a control switch for the tracks that can reroute the trolley.

You could divert the trolley onto another track and spare the five workmen from certain death.

However, there is another workman on the new track that will certainly die if you divert the trolley.

Is it appropriate for you to divert the trolley and kill the lone workman in order to save the five workmen? (4, 71)

5) NOBEL PRIZE

Personal

You and a fellow researcher have discovered a powerful new energy source that is cheap, safe, and clean. You realize that this could lead to the elimination of pollution and poverty around the world. However, your colleague wants to sell this discovery.

You know your colleague well enough to know that he will sell the discovery to the highest bidder at the first opportunity.

You know that he plans to contact the potential buyers today, some of whom will certainly try to use this as a horrible weapon.

The only way that you can prevent him from doing so is to poison him with an extremely deadly chemical normally found in the lab working on these types of projects.

Everyone will think that it was just a lab accident, and the discovery will not be sold to those who might create a weapon out of it.

Is it appropriate for you to poison your colleague to keep this energy source out of the hands of those who might use it as a weapon? (5, 131)

Impersonal-Instrumental

You and a fellow researcher have discovered a powerful new energy source that is cheap, safe, and clean. You realize that this could lead to the elimination of pollution and poverty around the world. However, your colleague wants to sell this discovery to the military, which will turn it into a powerful new weapon.

You know your colleague well enough to know that he will sell the discovery to the highest bidder at the first opportunity.

You know that he plans to contact the potential buyers through email, some of whom will certainly try to use this as a horrible weapon.

You can prevent this by releasing a flammable gas in the lab, so that when he turns on his computer, it will cause an explosion.

Everyone will think that it was just a lab accident, and the discovery will not be sold to those who might create a weapon out of it.

Is it appropriate for you to release the gas, leading to an explosion, to keep this discovery out of the hands of those who might use it as a weapon? (5, 129)

6) BIKE WEEK

Personal

You are an expert motorcycle rider and you have gone on vacation in order to participate in Bike Week. Thousands of other motorcycle riders from across the country have come to ride in this event. As you are riding down the road in the front of a large group of other riders you see that someone up ahead is losing control of their bike.

As you speed up to pull alongside the unstable rider, you realize that this person is going to crash at any second.

This would certainly result in a large pile-up and several deaths as the riders behind you run over each other trying to avoid the crashed rider.

You realize that you could physically run this rider off the road and into some trees.

This would cause him to crash and, at your current speed, almost certainly die, but it would prevent a crash in the middle of the street and the large pile-up of riders behind you.

Is it appropriate for you to crash the other rider to avoid the deaths of the riders behind you? (5, 117)

Impersonal-Incidental

You are an expert motorcycle rider and you have gone on vacation in order to participate in Bike Week. Thousands of other motorcycle riders from across the country have come to ride in this event. As you are riding down the road in the front of a large group of other riders you see that someone up ahead is losing control of his bike.

As you watch him fall, you know that you could easily ride around the fallen rider but if you do, the riders behind you will run over each other trying to avoid the crash.

This would result in a large pile-up and several deaths.

You, as an expert, could lay your bike over on its side while throwing yourself clear, allowing the bike to slide into the fallen rider.

This would warn the riders behind you of a wreck and prevent a large pile-up, but would also certainly kill the fallen rider.

Is it appropriate for you to allow your bike to kill the rider ahead of you to prevent the deaths of the riders behind you? (5, 117)

OTHER BENEFIC, Inevitable Death (ms=4.5, mw=93.25, range= 80-112)

7) MODIFIED EUTHANASIA

Personal

You are the leader of a small group of soldiers, and all of you are out of ammunition. You are on your way back from a completed mission deep in enemy territory when one of your men steps in a trap set by the enemy. His leg is badly injured and caught in the trap. You cannot free him from this trap without killing him. However, if you leave him behind, the enemy troops will find him and torture him to death.

This soldier begs you not to leave him behind to be cruelly tortured to death.

The enemy troops are closing in on your position.

It is not safe for you or your men to remain with your trapped comrade any longer.

In order to prevent this man's needless suffering at the hands of the enemy, you could kill him yourself by stabbing him in the heart.

Is it appropriate for you to stab this man in the heart in order to prevent his needless suffering? (5, 85)

Impersonal-Instrumental

You are the leader of a small group of soldiers, and all of you are out of ammunition. You are on your way back from a completed mission deep in enemy territory when one of your men steps in a trap set by the enemy. His leg is badly injured and caught in the trap. You cannot free him from this trap without killing him. However, if you leave him behind, the enemy troops will find him and torture him to death.

This soldier begs you not to leave him behind to be cruelly tortured to death.

The enemy troops are closing in on your position.

It is not safe for you or your men to remain with your trapped comrade any longer.

By programming his location into your missile-targeting computer, the area would then be bombed and he would die without being tortured to death.

Is it appropriate for you to program his location into the targeting computer in order to prevent his needless suffering? (5, 84)

8) MODIFIED FUMES

Personal

You are an orderly in a hospital during the night shift. You notice that a chemical has just been spilled in a room containing six patients. This chemical is highly toxic and if left on the floor will rapidly evaporate creating a poisonous gas. This will inevitably kill all the patients in the room. This chemical cannot simply be mopped up, nor can it be soaked up with towels or sheets.

However, because you have worked around this chemical before, you know that this chemical absorbs into human skin very rapidly.

You could pull one of the patients out of bed onto the spill so that the chemical will completely soak into this person's skin instead of evaporating into the air in the room.

This will quickly kill the one patient but save the other five patients from the gas.

Is it appropriate to put this person onto the spilled chemical in order to save the other five patients? (4, 88)

Impersonal-Incidental

You are an orderly in a hospital during the night shift. You notice that a chemical has just been spilled in a room containing five patients. This chemical is highly toxic and if left on the floor will rapidly evaporate creating a poisonous gas. This will inevitably kill all the patients in the room. This chemical cannot simply be mopped up, nor can it be soaked up with towels or sheets.

You can flip a switch controlling the ventilation system that will draw the poisonous fumes out of the room in which the spill has occurred, saving the five patients.

However, the exhaust duct leads to a room upstairs containing one other patient in critical condition.

This patient will certainly die from exposure to the poisonous fumes before you can get to her, and there isn't anyone else around to help.

Is it appropriate to flip the switch to divert the air flow, killing one patient but saving five? (4, 88)

9) MODIFIED ROWBOAT

Personal

You are in a rowboat with a tour guide while sight-seeing on a lake in Alaska. You notice that three children have overturned their boat nearby. They are now in danger of quickly freezing to death in the icy water. You begin to row over to rescue them when you realize that your boat will not hold you, the tour guide, and the three children.

Two of the children are closer to your boat than the third child.

As you and the tour guide pull in the first two it is obvious that one of them is too heavy and if you keep him on board your boat will sink and all of the children will die.

Neither you nor the guide can get out because you are rowing and the guide is performing CPR.

The only way to save two children is to throw the large child off the boat and rescue the third one.

Is it appropriate to throw one child off the boat to die in order to save the other two? (5, 112)

Impersonal-Incidental

You are in a rowboat with a tour guide while sight-seeing on a lake in Alaska. You notice that three children have overturned their boat nearby. They are now in danger of quickly freezing to death in the icy water. You begin to row over to rescue them when you realize that your boat will not hold you, the tour guide, and the three children.

Two of the children are closer to your boat than the third child.

As you and the tour guide pull in the first two it is obvious that they are too heavy and if you try to rescue the third child your boat will sink and all of the children will die.

Neither you nor the guide can get out because you are rowing and the guide is performing CPR.

The only way to save the two children is to row quickly away from the third one, leaving him to die.

Is it appropriate to leave the one child behind to die in order to save the other two? (5, 111)

10) MINE SHAFT

Personal

You are a worker in a mine. The only way to exit the mine is to ride up in rock-buckets that can hold up to three people at a time. It is the end of the workday and miners from lower levels are riding up past you. As you are waiting for a bucket to ride in, you notice that the cable supporting the rock buckets is about to snap.

If the cable snaps, all of the miners in the buckets will fall to their deaths.

The only way to prevent this is to use your axe to hit the last bucket causing it to flip over and dump its contents, lightening the load enough to save the miners above.

There is one miner in this bucket who will be killed as a result.

Is it appropriate to flip over the last miner's bucket, killing him, to save the other miners? (4, 81)

Impersonal-Incidental

You are a worker in a mine. The only way to exit the mine is to ride up in rock-buckets that can hold up to three people at a time. It is the end of the workday and miners from lower levels are riding up past you. As you are waiting for a bucket to ride in, you notice that the cable supporting the rock buckets is about to snap.

If the cable snaps, all of the miners in the buckets will fall to their deaths.

The only way to prevent this is to hit the emergency bucket release switch which will automatically detach the last bucket from the cable, lightening the load just enough to save the miners above.

There is one miner in this bucket who will be killed as a result.

Is it appropriate to detach the last miner's bucket, killing him, to save the other miners? (4, 80)

11) TYCOON

Personal

You are an electrician who has been hired to fix an electrical problem in the home of a very wealthy steel tycoon who is terminally ill with a very slow-growing cancer. Recently it had been publicly announced that when this man eventually dies, his enormous personal fortune is to be given to the local children's hospital. You know that there are many children at this hospital who could be saved with this money, but who cannot wait much longer before they die.

It occurs to you that while you're in the house, fixing the electrical problem, you could quietly slip into the tycoon's room while he is sleeping and suffocate him by covering his nose and mouth with your gloved hands.

This would look exactly like he had died from a heart attack.

Then his money would go to the children's hospital where it would save many lives.

Is it appropriate for you to kill this man so that the children's hospital will get the money that it needs? (4, 87)

Impersonal-Instrumental

You are an electrician who has been hired to fix an electrical problem in the home of a very wealthy steel tycoon who is terminally ill with a very slow-growing cancer. Recently it had been publicly

announced that when this man eventually dies, his enormous personal fortune is to be given to the local children's hospital. You know that there are many children at this hospital who could be saved with this money, but who cannot wait much longer before they die.

It occurs to you that while in the house, instead of fixing the electrical problem, you could overload the circuits.

The next time someone turned on something electrical, it would short out the tycoon's life support equipment, causing him to die.

It would look like an accident, and the money would go to save the lives of children.

Is it appropriate for you to short circuit this man's house, which will lead to his death, so that the children's hospital will get the money that it needs? (4, 87)

12) ENEMY SPY

Personal

You are an officer in the military during a war. Your soldiers have found a high-ranking enemy spy trapped and injured inside of a partially collapsed building. You have been informed over the radio that a large group of enemy soldiers is planning a surprise attack on one of several nearby towns. These soldiers will kill all the civilians in the town if you and your soldiers do not stop them, but you do not know which town they plan to attack.

You have questioned the trapped spy who is high ranking and surely knows these plans, but he has refused to tell you which town is the target of the impending enemy attack.

He will die soon from his many injuries.

You could begin to beat, burn, cut, and otherwise painfully torture him in order to force him to reveal this information.

He would die from this painful torture, but you and your soldiers could then protect the town from the surprise attack, saving hundreds of innocent lives.

Is it appropriate for you to torture and kill this enemy spy in order to protect one of the nearby towns? (5, 108)

Impersonal-Instrumental

You are an officer in the military during a war. Your soldiers have found a high-ranking enemy spy trapped and injured inside of a partially collapsed building. You have been informed over the radio that a large group of enemy soldiers is planning a surprise attack on one of several nearby towns. These soldiers will kill all the civilians in the town if you and your soldiers do not stop them, but you do not know which town they plan to attack.

You have questioned the trapped spy who is high ranking and surely knows these plans, but he has refused to tell you which town is the target of the impending enemy attack.

However, rats have begun to chew at the spy and he is in agony.

You could do nothing and leave him to the rats until he reveals this information.

He would almost certainly die from this, but you and your soldiers could then protect the town from the surprise attack, saving hundreds of innocent lives.

Is it appropriate for you to leave this spy to the rats in order to protect one of the nearby towns? (5, 108)

FILLER

1) INSURANCE FRAUD

You have a cell phone but it is old and you do not like it very much. It is worn out and ugly, and it does not have the ability to use new ring-tones. The other day you saw a new one that you would like to have. It is much nicer and even takes pictures and allows you to access the Internet. However, you cannot buy it because you do not have enough money.

It occurs to you that you have insurance on your current phone.

You also realize that if you called your cell phone company and told them that your cell phone was broken, the insurance will pay you for the cost of replacing it.

This is one of the reasons that cellular phone insurance is so expensive.

However, it would allow you to purchase the new cell phone that you like at almost no cost to you.

Is it appropriate for you to defraud your cell phone company in order to get a new cell phone?

2) EMPLOYEE MORALE

You are involved in important corporate negotiations regarding the purchase of your company. If your company is bought, you stand to profit handsomely. However, the morale of your coworkers is very low and this could negatively impact the chances that your company will be bought.

You could lie to the prospective buyers about the morale of the employees at this company.

This would almost guarantee that your company would be bought.

Consequently, you would make enough money to retire.

Is it appropriate for you to lie about employee morale in order to sell your company?

3) BEEN CAUGHT STEALIN'

You are going through some financially rough times. You have lost you job and were recently divorced. As you try to balance your budget, you realize that you don't have enough money to both pay your bills and buy groceries.

It occurs to you that you could steal food from the grocery store rather than pay for it, and still have enough money left to pay your bills.

This would allow you to eat and to maintain your credit rating, since you will not have failed to pay your debts.

Having a good credit rating is important to finding a new job.

Is it appropriate to steal food in order to pay your bills?

4) ILLEGAL LUNCH

You are a lawyer working on a big case. The judge presiding over the trial happens to be someone you knew from law school. The two of you were rather friendly back then, but now, decades later, it seems that your old friend barely remembers you.

You know that your side in this case will not win based on the facts alone.

You're quite sure that if you were to talk to him over lunch, you could jog her memory and she would begin to see you as an old buddy.

Your meeting with this judge would definitely alter the outcome of the case in your favor.

Is it appropriate for you to meet with this judge socially in order to help you win your case?

5) DONATION

You are at home one day when the mail arrives. You receive a letter from a reputable international aid organization. The letter asks you to make a donation of two hundred dollars to their organization. The letter explains that a two-hundred dollar donation will allow this organization to provide medical attention to some poor people in another part of the world.

You have a good job which pays you well.

Recently, you paid off the last of your car payments and you inherited your house from your parents.

After thinking about it, you realize that you really don't need the two hundred dollars for yourself and that you could easily spare it.

Is it appropriate for you to donate two hundred dollars that you do not really need to a reputable international charity?

6) SCULPTURE

You are visiting the sculpture garden of a wealthy art collector. The garden is built into the side of a hill and has multiple levels that overlook one another. As you are standing on one of the upper levels looking down at one of the lower levels, you see that an old gardener is about to be seriously injured by a runaway lawnmower.

The old gardener is almost completely deaf and does not see the lawnmower coming.

The only way to save the workman's life is to push one of the art collector's prized sculptures down into the path of the lawnmower.

This will stop the lawnmower before it hurts the old gardener, but it will destroy the lawnmower and the statue as well.

Is it appropriate for you to destroy the sculpture and the lawnmower in order to prevent the old gardener's injuries?

7) SINGLE MOM

You are a single mother working as an assistant accountant at a successful company. However, you are having difficulty providing for your family on your current salary alone. You have been passed over for promotion in favor of another accountant whom you do not like due to their deceitful ways.

One day at work you realize that this other employee has been embezzling from the company.

They have diverted large amounts of money out of the company's account into a private account of their own.

You know that if you reported this crime to management, this employee would be fired and prosecuted, and that you would then receive the promotion.

This extra money from your new position would help you take care of your kids.

Is it appropriate for you to report your co-worker's theft, knowing that you will be rewarded for your actions?

8) RESUME

You have been trying to find a job lately without much success. It becomes apparent to you that you would be more likely to get hired if you had a more impressive resume. This is a problem, though, because you were fired from a job several years ago. However, you were fired because you accidentally walked in on your boss cheating on his wife.

You could leave out the fact that you had been fired from your resume in order to make it more impressive.

By doing this you will almost certainly manage to get hired.

This new job will be crucial to your long-term career plans.

Is it appropriate for you to leave out the information from your resume in order to get this job?

9) PLASMA SCREEN

Your friend tells you about an opportunity to make some fast money. He plans to steal a shipment of plasma screen TVs from a local electronics store. He also knows someone who works there that has told your friend how to get in and avoid the security cameras.

Your friend wants you to drive your van to the robbery and use it to load the TVs.

You will then drive him to where he is going to unload the TVs.

In exchange for this, he will give you a cut of the money after the TVs have been sold.

Is it appropriate for you to help your friend steal TVs in order to make some easy money?

10) TAXES

You are the owner of a small business. Your company is making ends meet, but it is not terribly profitable. You would like very much to buy the new sports car that you saw your neighbor driving the other day. However, it is beyond your price range.

It occurs to you that you could lower your taxes by pretending that some of your personal expenses are business expenses.

For example, you could pretend that the stereo in your bedroom is being used in the lounge at the office, or that dinners out with your wife are dinners with clients.

This would allow you to hide enough money from the IRS to buy the new car.

Is it appropriate for you to pretend that certain personal expenses are business expenses in order to buy a new car?

11) STOCK TIP

You are a management consultant working on a case for a large corporate client. You have access to confidential information that would be very useful to investors. You have a friend who plays the stock market. You owe this friend a sizable sum of money.

By providing her with certain confidential information you could help her make a lot of money, considerably more that you owe her.

If you did this, she would cancel your debt.

Releasing information in this way would cause other investors to lose a great deal of money, but it would alleviate your debt.

Is it appropriate for you to release this information to your friend so that she will cancel your debt?

12) LOST WALLET

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You are walking down the street when you come across a wallet lying on the ground. You look around, but the street is deserted. After opening the wallet, you find that it contains several hundred dollars in cash as well as the owner's driver's license.

From the pictures and other items in the wallet it's very clear that the wallet's owner is elderly and just cashed their social security check.

You, on the other hand, though you are not rich, you are financially comfortable.

You consider sending the wallet back to the owner without the cash, keeping the cash for yourself.

Is it appropriate for you to keep the money you found in the wallet in order to have more money for yourself?

SPOILERS

1) COLLATERAL DAMAGE

You are a young lawyer who has been working for a prestigious law firm in a large city. For years you have sacrificed and put work before anything else, even your personal life. Now, however, you have been invited to the partners' board meeting. The only reason that a non-partner is ever invited to a meeting like this is to be promoted to partner. This would be a huge step up for you allowing you to take some time for yourself and not work quite so much.

As you are driving to work, however, traffic is very slow and you are coming close to running late as you approach a traffic light that you hate because it takes forever to change.

It is turning yellow, and if you are caught, you will be late for your own promotion and that would look extremely bad.

You speed up to get through the light when you see an old man crossing in front of you, blocking the way.

If you stop to let him cross, you will miss most of the meeting and lose your promotion, but if you keep going you will run over the old man and probably kill him.

Is it appropriate for you to run over the old man and kill him in order to get to your meeting on time?

2) VAN O' DEATH

You are driving along when you notice a person slowly crossing the road ahead at the crosswalk. There is a yield to pedestrian sign, so he has the right of way. You also notice that the driver of the mini-van in the lane next to you is distracted. She is turning to face her children in the back because they are being a nuisance. The driver is therefore unaware of the pedestrian just ahead.

The mini-van is traveling too fast to stop before it reaches the crosswalk.

The pedestrian is talking on a cell phone and does not see that the oncoming mini-van is not coming to a stop.

You realize that you could run this mini-van off the road into a telephone pole.

This would save the pedestrian's life, but would also certainly kill the family inside the mini-van.

Is it appropriate to run the mini-van, containing a family, off the road in order to save the pedestrian?

OLD / PILOT DILEMMAS, USED AS *PRACTICE* IN FALL 2005

2) PREVENTING THE SPREAD

Personal

You are a doctor. One of your patients, whom you have diagnosed as HIV positive, is about to receive a blood transfusion prior to being released from the hospital. He has told you, in the confidence of your doctor-patient relationship, that after he gets his transfusion, and his medicine from you, he intends to infect as many people as possible with HIV starting that evening.

Because you are bound by doctor-patient confidentiality, there is no legal way to stop this man from carrying out his plan.

Even if you warned the police, they would not be able to arrest him, since his medical information is protected.

It occurs to you that you could contaminate his medication by putting an untraceable poison in it that will kill him before he gets a chance to infect others.

Is it appropriate for you to poison this man in order to prevent him from spreading HIV? (4, 87)

Impersonal

You are a doctor. One of your patients, whom you have diagnosed as HIV positive, is about to receive a blood transfusion prior to being released from the hospital. He has told you, in the confidence of your doctor-patient relationship, that after he gets his transfusion, and his medicine from you, he intends to infect as many people as possible with HIV starting that evening.

Because you are bound by doctor-patient confidentiality, there is no legal way to stop this man from carrying out his plan.

Even if you warned the police, they would not be able to arrest him, since his medical information is protected.

You know that you could change his blood-type in the hospital's computer which would result in his receiving the wrong blood-type.

Is it appropriate for you to change this man's blood-type in the computer, thereby killing him, in order to prevent him from spreading HIV? (4, 86)

6) TERROR ON THE ROOF

Personal

You are negotiating with an armed and disturbed man on the roof of a building. Down below there is a large crowd of people at the city's art and music festival. He has just stated that he is going to start shooting people in the crowd and you are sure that you cannot talk him out of it.

The people in the large crowd below do not realize that he is a threat and you have no way to warn them.

From where he is standing, he could easily kill a dozen or more people before the crowd ran to safety, not counting those who would be trampled in the chaos.

However, given your position, you could run over and shove him off the roof of the building before he starts shooting at people in the crowd.

The lives of many others will be spared by this act, but the disturbed man will die.

Is it appropriate to shove this man off the roof to save the lives of other people? (5, 113)

Impersonal

You are negotiating with an armed and disturbed man on the roof of a building. Down below there is a large crowd of people at the city's art and music festival. He has just stated that he is going to start shooting people in the crowd and you are sure that you cannot talk him out of it.

The people in the large crowd below do not realize that he is a threat and you have no way to warn them.

From where he is standing, he could easily kill a dozen or more people before the crowd ran to safety, not counting those who would be trampled in the chaos.

However, you can call the police and warn them about the man and that you will not be able to stop him.

They will then order their officers to shoot him, saving the lives of many others, but killing the disturbed man.

Is it appropriate to call the police, leading to the man's death, to save the lives of other people? (5, 114)