



Dilemma: Examples of Dilemmas for Teachers

Instructions for Teachers:

Below are cards showing case studies and discussion questions for students.

These cards are intended for the discussion moderator. You can use these cases and questions as a base for presenting other cases and discussion questions as well.

מקורות - פרק ג' - מבחר דילמות מוסריות - משרד החינוך
<https://sites.google.com/site/dilemagt/001-1>



Dilemma: Example 1



Case Description:

Atara and her best friend Maya went to the mall to do some shopping. While looking at different items, Maya saw a shirt that she liked and told Atara that she was going to try it on. While Maya was going to try on the shirt, Atara continued looking around the store. After a little while, Maya came out of the dressing room wearing a coat. She signaled Atara with her eyes towards the shirt under the coat. without saying a word, Maya left the store.

After a few minutes, Atara was approached by a security officer, one of the saleswomen and a store manager. "It's her, she is one of the girls, check her bag", said the saleswoman. The security guard pointed to a sign above the exit door, which said that the store has the right to search all bags and packages. Atara gave him her bag to check. "There is no shirt in here", the officer told the manager. "So the second girl took it", said the saleswoman, "it is as clear as day that they did this together". The security guard asked the manager if he wanted to continue the investigation. "Of course", he replied. "Shoplifting is the main expense of a store like ours. I can't let thieves get away". The security guard turned to Atara and said, "What is the name of the girl who was with you?" Atara looked at him and stayed quiet. "If you don't tell us, you will be accused of aiding and abetting a crime", the police officer explained. Atara contemplated what she should do.

Discussion Questions:

Should Atara reveal the name of her friend to the security officer-yes or no?
Bring two reasons to support your position.



Dilemma: Example 1



Values To Consider:

- Truth
- Laws
- Social connection/belonging

Guiding Questions During Discussions:

- 💬 In your opinion, what is friendship? Are there limits to friendship? What are they?
- 💬 In your opinion, what is whistleblowing? What is loyalty?
- 💬 To whom does Atara have an obligation (her parents, the security officer, her friend Maya)? Which obligation should take priority in this case?
- 💬 What would each of the following characters want Atara to do: her parents, the police, the security officer? Why?
- 💬 Would you change your opinion in this situation if Maya had previously told Atara that she cheated on a test in school? Why?
- 💬 Are there situations where you are allowed to lie? To break the law? If yes, under what circumstances?
- 💬 What would happen if everyone acted following this belief?



Dilemma: Example 2



Case Description:

During a school Sports Day, there were competitions involving different stations that classes needed to complete together. Moshe's class successfully passed all eight stations in the competition and reached the station where each of the students needed to climb a tree.

With the smell of victory in their noses, the class decided to send the fastest in the group to climb two times, instead of using a slower student. The person in charge of the situation did not notice this change and the class won the most points in this task. They ended up winning the entire competition by one point and received the first place prize. Moshe, a student in the winning class, felt uncomfortable that his class had won dishonestly and he considered telling the competition organizers about what had happened. He knew he was risking receiving a very harsh reaction from his classmates, who would potentially turn against him if he told the truth.

Discussion Questions:

Should Moshe tell the competition organizers what happened? Yes or no?
Bring two reasons to support your position.



Dilemma: Example 2



Values To Consider:

- Truth
- Conscience
- Laws
- Social connection/belonging

Guiding Questions During Discussions:

- ☰ To whom does Moshe have an obligation? Who should take priority in this situation and why?
- ☰ If Moshe knew that similar situations had happened in other classes, would you change your opinion about what he should do?
- ☰ In your opinion, what is whistleblowing? What is loyalty to a friend? What are the limits of friendship?
- ☰ If Moshe was sure that his friends wouldn't find out that he told the truth, should this influence his decision? Why or why not?
- ☰ Should Moshe have reacted differently if he knew that another student in the class was feeling the same way that he felt?
- ☰ What would happen if all of the students cheated in the competition? Would your opinion change about what Moshe should do?
- ☰ Would your opinion change about what Moshe should do if this was a competition in an official sports league?



Dilemma: Example 3



Case Description:

Yossi was elected to represent his class in the school's student council. At the last student council meeting, the principal suggested that the students be responsible for cleaning the school after school hours. This change would allow the school to save a large portion of money that could be used instead for school programs. Yossi enthusiastically supported the idea, but the other students in his class did not agree and rejected the idea outright.

Yossi was very disappointed and thought that his friends' motives were selfish, not wanting to take on responsibility or be bothered with this task. They demanded that Yossi vote against this proposal at the next student council meeting. Yossi did not want to vote against the idea, which he supported. However, he felt that he needed to vote based on the demands of the class since he represented them.

Discussion Questions:

Does Yossi need to vote in favor of the principal's proposal? Yes or no?
Bring two reasons to support your position.



Dilemma: Example 3



Values To Consider:

- Social connection/belonging
- Conscience, contracts

Guiding Questions During Discussions:

- To whom does Yossi have an obligation? (For example, the voters/classmates, the student council, the principal, himself)
- Which obligation should take priority in this situation? Why?
- Does the class representative always need to vote based on the opinions of the people he or she represents? Why or why not?
- Would you make decisions the same way for every topic that comes up in student council discussion?
- Does a person always need to follow his or her conscience? Why? If not, in what situations should a person follow his or her conscience?
- What would happen if all elected representatives ignored the opinions of his or her voters?
- What would happen if an elected representative always had to give up his or her own opinion?



Dilemma: Example 4



Case Description:

Morah Nira is in her second year of teaching ninth grade. She decided to change her method of supervising tests in her class and introduced an honor system, without teacher supervision. Nira presented the idea to the students in her class. At first, there were different opinions about the idea, but after some discussion everyone agreed that this new method would be put in place. The students agreed that at the end of each test, Morah Nira would ask if each student had indeed fulfilled the “contract” of the class and not cheated on the test. At first, the students felt that this decision represented their strong moral compass as a group and therefore felt that it was fitting to demonstrate the trust their teacher had placed in them.

After some time, the class had a history test and Yitzchak noticed that his best friend Shaul was copying an answer that he had completed. Yitzchak was very disappointed that his good friend was ruining the efforts of the entire class. When Morah Nira returned to the class, she collected the tests and asked, “Did you uphold the contract?” The students responded no. Morah Nira told them that she would therefore need to cancel the test unless she knew the names of the students who had cheated. There was silence in the room and no one volunteered to give over the information. Yitzchak debated whether he should give the name of his good friend Shaul in order to preserve the trust system between the class and Morah Nira.

Discussion Questions:

Do you think Yitzchak should share what he knows? Yes or no?
Bring two reasons to support your position.



Dilemma: Example 4



Values To Consider:

- Truth
- Contracts
- Social connection/belonging

Guiding Questions During Discussions:

- In your opinion, what is loyalty in friendship? What are the limits of friendship? What is whistleblowing?
- To whom does Yitzchak have an obligation? Which obligation should take priority in this situation?
- What do you think the students in the class would want Yitzchak to do? What might their reasoning be?
- What do you think the teacher would want Yitzchak to do? Why?
- If the situation did not involve cheating on a test, but involved another type of cheating or theft, would your opinion change on what Yitzchak should do?
- What would happen if people did not abide by the contracts they agreed to?

Dilemma: Example 5



Case Description:

Mr. Mishori shifted nervously in his armchair. In a few minutes, the National Committee for Planning and Construction, which he has chaired for the past few years, will convene. The committee is about to decide whether to approve the construction of tens of thousands of housing units in the heart of the coastal plains, in order to absorb the huge wave of immigration in Israel, and to develop additional employment opportunities for the immigrants. Mr. Mishori knew that his voice would make the decision. He was hesitating until the last moment, which was really unlike him. The new immigrants were insisting on their right to settle near their relatives in the center of the country and near their sources of livelihood. The Contractors Association was pushing to approve the construction, since the economy had been in a deep recession and unemployment has been on the rise for a long time.

Of course, as an economist, Mr. Mishori knows that such a huge construction project would set the wheels of the economy in motion and bring prosperity to the thousands of families of the workers and service providers. On the other hand, the officials of the Ministry of Environmental Quality warned that the level of air and water pollution in the coastal plains had already crossed the red line according to the international standard, and this is therefore a danger to public health. Any additional construction would only worsen the situation.

Mr. Mishori, who is himself a resident of the center of the country, is familiar with this pollution problem.

The members of the committee differ in their opinions and there is a lot of tension felt throughout. He will need to be decisive and clear with his thoughts.

Discussion Questions:

Should Mr. Mishori vote in favor of approving the proposed construction - yes or no?



Dilemma: Example 5



Values To Consider:

- Human and civil rights (between individual rights and the rights of all citizens)
- Conscience

Guiding Questions During Discussions:

- What are the rights of the individuals in this case?
- Who has rights that may be affected by this decision?
- Whose rights are more important in this situation? Why?
- To whom does Mr. Mishori have an obligation? (To the needs of the new immigrants, to the quality of life and the environment) Which obligation comes first in this situation?
- What would happen if everyone ignored environmental hazards?
- What would happen if everyone ignored legitimate needs of citizens?



Dilemma: Example 6



This dilemma is based on a real situation that occurred in an American community and is included in their social studies curriculum.

Case Description:

Ms. Rice is a twelfth grade social studies teacher. With the approval of the school administration, she included a unit about current problems in American society in her class curriculum. She encouraged her students to be active, responsible and involved citizens in society. The students volunteered for activities in police stations, courts, hospitals and nursing homes and gave of their own time to help others.

A number of students decided to help senior citizens get free bus rides. The students believed that this was a fair request and appealed to the municipality, which they felt should subsidize the costs of the bus rides. The students prepared for their campaign. They approached politicians and businessmen, and also appeared on television. However, the community leaders ignored the students and their demands. After months of growing frustration, the students decided to start a protest. They convinced a large number of students to avoid using the special school transportation and to use public transportation. On the first day of the protest, the buses, specifically for transporting students, arrived empty at the school. Reports poured in to the school administration that all the public bus lines were full of excited students.

The principal of the school wrote a scathing letter to Ms. Rice, informing her that the politicians completely reject the actions taken by her students. He ordered her to demand that her students immediately stop the protest they had started in order to avoid creating congestion on the city's bus lines. If the students did not agree with this demand, the principal stated, the administration would take measures against her and fire her.

Discussion Questions:

Should Ms. Rice stop the protest that her students created? Yes or no?
Bring two reasons to support your position.



Dilemma: Example 6



Values To Consider:

- Authority
- Human rights and rights of citizens (right to protest)

Guiding Questions During Discussions:

- To whom does Ms. Rice have an obligation? (For example: her students, the administration, the pensioners in the community, her values, the transportation company)
- What are the obligations that Ms. Rice needs to consider? Which should take priority in this situation and why?
- What would everyone involved in the situation want Ms. Rice to do?
- What is good citizenship in your opinion?
- What is the right to protest in your opinion? Does protesting have limits? If so, what are they?
- What is the responsibility of a teacher and his or her students for a public matter such as this?
- What would happen if everyone ignored public standards and rules in order to promote their own beliefs?



Dilemma: Example 7



The Dilemma of Tevye the Milkman (from Fiddler on the Roof)
This dilemma is based on the book by Shalom Aleichem

Case Description:

In this story, a Jewish girl named Chava falls in love with a Christian named Fyedka. Tevye, Chava's father, is a very religious man and is opposed to the idea of his daughter marrying a non-Jew. His daughter Chava, tells her father all about her love for Fyedka and her decision to marry him. She says to him, "Dad, I want to speak to you, stop! At least listen to me. Dad, please accept us!" Tevye turns to the heavens and says, "Accept them?! How?! Am I supposed to abandon everything that I believe in? But how can I leave my child? And how can I deny my religion, my nation? If I extend myself in this way, I will break, but...there is no but. No Chava, no, no no!"

Discussion Questions:

Should Tevye accept his daughter, even though she is going to marry a non-Jew? Yes or no?
Bring two reasons to support your position.



Dilemma: Example 7



Values To Consider:

- Conscience (religious beliefs)
- Social connection/belonging

Guiding Questions During Discussions:

- What are a father's duties towards his daughter? What are a daughter's duties towards her father?
- Should Tevye understand and accept his daughter Chava, even though she is acting against his faith?
- Should Chava prioritize her love for this man over her commitment to her mother and father?
- Should Tevye consider the opinions of her neighbors and friends?
- Tevye treasures the ancient and precious traditions of marriage between members of the Jewish people. Under what circumstances, if any, can traditions be violated? Are there any traditions that should never be broken? Why?

The entire story can be read to the participants before or after the discussion.