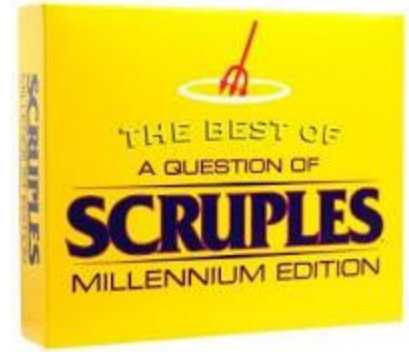


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[Leadership Scruples: What Would You Do? 20 Ethical Dilemmas for Leaders](#)

Posted by Dan McCarthy at [1/28/2009](#) 

Via the following website: <http://www.greatleadershipbydan.com/2009/01/leadership-scruples-what-would-you-do.html>



I've been watching an ABC News television series called "[What Would You Do?](#)" It's a fascinating study of human behavior. Everyday people are secretly filmed in situations where they are faced with a choice, usually involving an actor or actors staging a scenario.

It reminds me of "[Scruples](#)", the classic party game where players draw cards with a variety of moral dilemmas and discuss their answers. It then turned into a kind of online social networking meme in the "early days" of blogging.

Here are some of the ABC WWYD scenarios that have been aired:

- You see someone stealing at an open house... what would you do?
- You see a man putting a drug in his date's drink... WWYD?
- You witness someone stealing someone else's gas while they are in the store paying.... WWYD?
- You witness a racist deli clerk treating an immigrant customer rudely... WWYD?
- A child appears to be lost in the mall...WWYD?
- You accidentally receive a confidential email about your manager about to be laid off. You know he is about to close on an expensive house. WWYD?

When I saw the last one, I thought it might be interesting to resurrect the old Scruples game, and create a "Leadership Scruples" game, or a series of workplace "What Would You Do" scenarios for leaders. Actually, it doesn't have to be for just formal leaders... anyone can play... I've just tried to give it a leadership slant to better fit the purpose of this blog.

Here's my starter list. (Many of these are from the now defunct website, "Saturday Scruples"). You can use these as a part of a leadership development program, a leadership team meeting icebreaker, or just to challenge yourself or perhaps your co-workers. Please feel free to comment with your answer to any scenario, or add your own leadership WWYD.

Warning: I actually tried this once as a part of a business ethics workshop. While it worked pretty well for the majority of participants, two of them wouldn't let it go, and the "debate" ended up spilling into the evening dinner. So play it with others at your own risk.

1. You're at a hotel and conference center. You've arrived to your meeting early, and have not have a chance to eat breakfast yet. On your way to your meeting room, you walk by another meeting and there's a table full of food and beverages outside the room. Your meeting has no food. Would you help yourself?
2. Your manager congratulates you for a brilliant suggestion and hints at a promotion. Your employee gave you the idea. Do you mention this to the manager?
3. You've made a verbal agreement with a supplier. A competitor offers you a deal for 50% less. Do you take it the deal?
4. A colleague is out of her office. You notice her paycheck stub on her desk. Do you glance at it?

5. Your manager demands to know what a co-worker is saying behind her back. It's not flattering. Do you tell her?
6. You're reviewing the results of an employee survey and accidentally discover a way to see individual responses and comments. Do you keep reading or report the problem?
7. You're traveling in Elbonia on business when you're invited to a feast by shepherds. You're given the sheep's eyeball, the greatest delicacy. To refuse it is the greatest insult. Everyone's watching. Do you gulp it down?
8. As a joke, a co-worker sends anonymous love letters to another co-worker who takes them seriously. Everyone is enjoying the prank. Do you expose it?
9. A disgruntled worker is brandishing an automatic weapon. You're near a door. If you try to warn others you may not escape. Do you save yourself?
10. After closing a big deal, your manager surprises you with a warm, lingering hug. Do you tell your manager you're not comfortable with this?
11. You're playing tennis with your manager for the first time. You're winning and your manager is getting angry. Do you let him win?
12. You want to quit a job without notice but you need a good reference from your employer. Do you invent a family health emergency?
13. You decide not to hire someone because he's wearing a nose ring. When he asks why he didn't make it, do you give the real reason?
14. You find an expensive pen in an airport lounge. Do you keep it?
15. A close friend will be interviewed for a job with your employer. He asks you for a list of the questions in advance. Do you supply it?
16. You have a struggling young company. You have to choose between two equal candidates for a job, a man and a woman. The woman will work for \$2000 per year less than the man. Do you hire her for that reason?
17. You've just been promoted to manager at the branch where you work. The person you're dating has applied for a job there and would be reporting to you. Is this OK?
18. The customer wants a refund. You agree that a refund is called for but company policy says "No." If you go to Corporate, the customer's refund will be denied. If you act on your own authority, the customer will be satisfied, but you may get in trouble. What would you do?
19. The company procedure is very clear but you know a "better" way to do the job. Your productivity results are a bit low this month. If you use your new approach (and violate the "rules") you can raise your results to an acceptable level. What would you do?
20. You are working to correct a mistake that your manager doesn't know about. If you tell your manager, you will be blamed for the mistake. If you don't tell your manager, you'll miss your deadline. Do you tell?

Have fun!