



Values, Morals, Ethics

Values

A system of **personal beliefs** that define what an individual thinks is good or bad, how they choose what is right or wrong, or how they determine what they should or shouldn't do.

An **individual's** fundamental thoughts which guide their decisions.

Values are the “WHY” behind your actions.



Play Harbor Episode: Core Values (S5:E02)

<https://www.jostensrenaissance.com/theharbortv/?keyword=113>

Morals

Social and cultural principles around good and bad, right and wrong, should and shouldn't.

What is acceptable is decided by the “group” and judgement is placed on individuals for their conformity to those principles.

Groups define moral codes around the foundation of LIFE:

- Respect it
- Protect it
- Enhance it

Examples of Values:

Spirituality

Sense of self worth

What you find to be important

Self vs. group viewpoints

Sense of responsibility

Work ethic

Examples of Morals:

Do not steal

Be loyal

Always tell the truth

Be generous

Show compassion

Ethics

Values and Morals put into action



A Simple Example (excerpt from “Legacy vs. Likes” by Mike Smith and Andrew Norman)

Pages 32-36

“Here’s an important detail to share: I’m a deeply passionate person. I don’t do anything halfway. I live, work, and play hard. I’m a fighter, down to the last breath. When it comes to competition, I don’t hold back – and not just with basketball. I’m talking everything: ping-pong, darts, cards. Everything is a contest to me. I talk smack, and back it up. I hold myself to a high standard, and I’m always my harshest critic.

When it came to basketball, I was known to let my passion (let’s be honest; it was a temper) come out in colorful ways. I would chuck water bottles, yell at myself, mix it up with the other team, or even with my own teammates during practice.

“When you’re not the biggest or most athletic guy on the court, I figured you had to make up for it somehow. I brought extra heart.

But our biggest strengths often double as weaknesses.

During one of my first college practices as a freshman, I became really upset with myself after playing poorly. It was a pick-up game, and my team lost. After yelling a few words at myself you wouldn’t say in front of your grandma, I picked up a basketball and punted it as hard as I could toward a nearby wall. As mad as I was at myself, it felt good to let off a little steam.

That’s when I met John Jordan.

“I had heard stories about the 6’6, lanky dude who could jump out of the gym and shoot the lights out. There were rumors he could have walked on at the University of Kansas (a college basketball powerhouse) and that the only reason he was even at our small college was because he followed his wife there.

John carried this mystique that made him seem ten years older, though we were basically the same age. Along with being married, he seemed to have life, and himself, figured out. Meanwhile, I could barely wake up for 9:00 a.m. class and ate tortillas filled with cheese and hotdogs for nearly every meal.

As a basketball player, John was old school. He didn’t talk much or get overly excited. He rarely showed any kind of emotion. He played the game the way it was supposed to be played, with perfect fundamentals and a constant eye toward teamwork. He was head and shoulders the best player on our team, but he was also the best player in our conference and arguably one of the best in the country.

“Simply put, John was a legend.

So that basketball I’d dramatically punted into the gym wall to show my frustration?

John wasn’t having it.

He calmly approached me. He set his giant hand onto my shoulder, very stoically. And in his deep, almost fatherly voice, he said, ‘We don’t do that here.’

We. Don’t. Do. That. Here. Five words said evenly that landed with brutal force. Then, he walked away without another sound.

I instantly felt small inside. I was incredibly embarrassed. I remember thinking, ‘This guy’s in charge here, and I’d better learn from him.’ In that three-second interaction, I understood there were right and wrong ways to do things and that John Jordan was here to lead the way.”

Mike

His Values?

- Desire to be the 'winner' and to be the "best"
- Everything must be done with intense passion
- Failure is not an option

Displayed Morals?

- Aggressiveness and flashiness to gain attention
- Competitiveness - with self and others
- Show temper when things don't go perfectly
- Trash talk

John

His Values?

- Humbleness
- Bring honor to your responsibilities
- Let your work ethic and skills do their own talking

Displayed Morals?

- Focused on team and perfecting fundamentals
- Self control
- Respectfully confront problems

In the example, it was easy for Mike to see how his values led him to act in a way that was not accepted with the team's moral code and he figured out how harness his passion in a way that better aligned with the moral code in the future.

But, sometimes, it is not so easy to align your personal values with the accepted moral code. These situations create what is called an ethical dilemma. Ethical dilemmas require an individual to determine the right action to take when what is considered 'right' isn't clear or agreed upon.

Ethical dilemmas happen all the time. When the accepted moral code might be in direct conflict with individual values, “being ethical” comes at a consequence.

Historical examples:

- Holocaust
- The Crusades
- Expansionism
- Trail of Tears
- Gladiator Games of Ancient Rome
- Tuskegee Syphilis Study

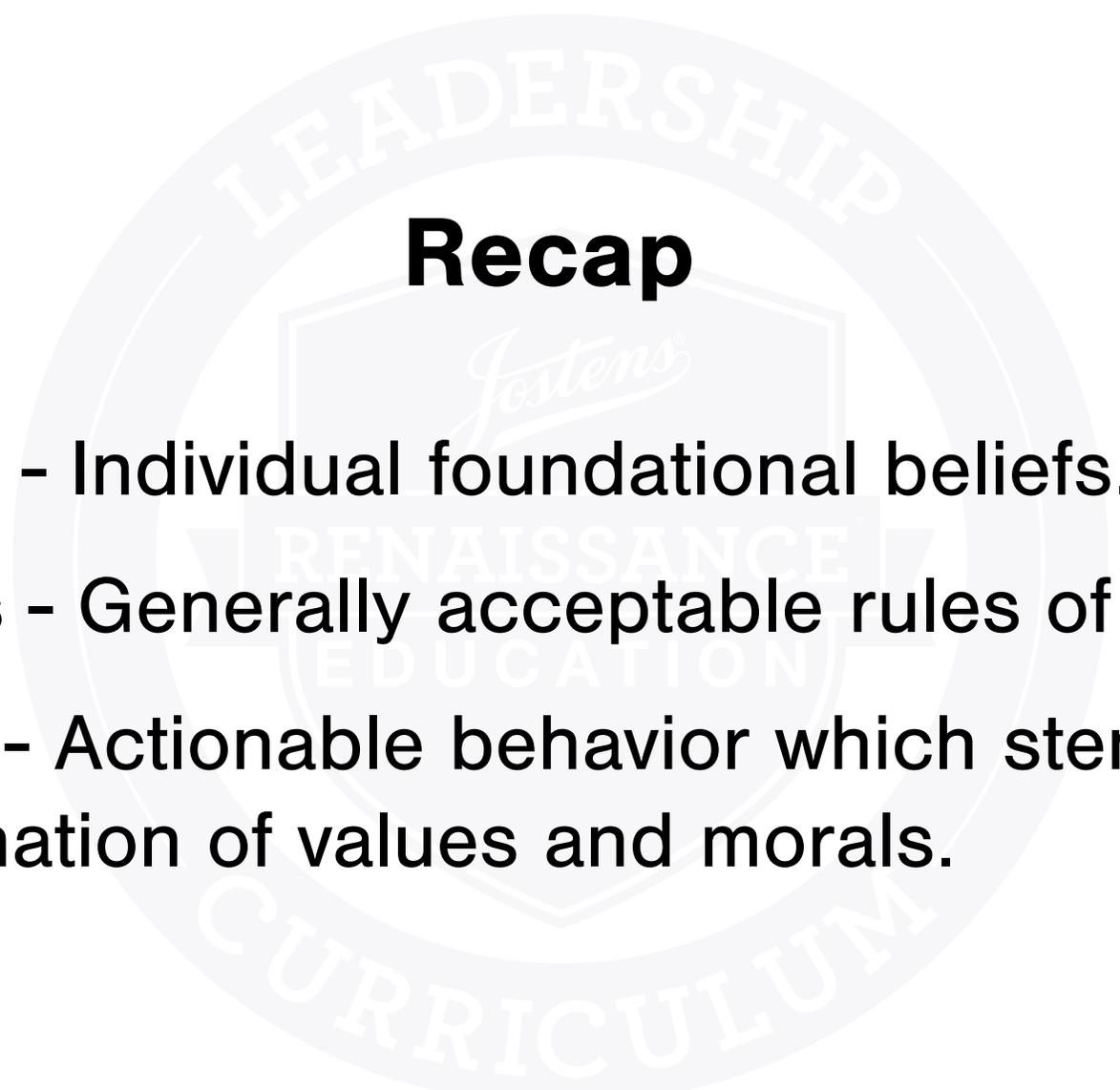
Other times, you might have two or more individual values that, given a moral social dilemma, creates an internal conflict making it hard for you to know what is or is not an ethical action to take.

Moral Dilemma: You are a parent of two children experiencing the worst levels of poverty at the height of the Great Depression. Your children are starving and haven't eaten in days. You have no job and are living in a tent city under a bridge. You see an opportunity to take food off an unattended table while walking down the street in town.

Values: Two of the values ingrained in your core are:

1. The most important job of parenthood is to protect your child.
2. Stealing is wrong.

What is your most ethical action to take in this moment? Why?



Recap

Values - Individual foundational beliefs.

Morals - Generally acceptable rules of conduct.

Ethics - Actionable behavior which stems from combination of values and morals.