

Example of case study on ethics : megan slake

[Sociology](#), [Women](#)



Identify the problem

Megan Slake is the mother of eight year old Nancy Slake. Nancy was raped in the past. Megan feels sure that her neighbor was the culprit but not enough proof was collected to achieve a conviction. At a restaurant with her husband one evening Megan sees her former neighbor. The next day Megan learns that the former neighbor was accused of murdering his wife at the same time Megan knows he was at the restaurant. Therefore he could not have committed the murder. (a) Megan could keep quiet about his location at the time of the murder. Or (b) she could speak up and tell authorities that he could not have committed the murder because at the time she saw him eating at a restaurant.

Identify those affected

Megan Slake, Nancy Slake, the former neighbor, Megan's family, the community, the judicial system, the family of the murder victim, the murderer, any future victims of the murderer, the police investigating the murder

Develop an ethical framework

CONSEQUENTIALISM

(a) Megan could gain revenge against her former neighbor for the rape of her daughter by not speaking up about his location at the time of the murder. Or (b) she could notify the police.

Under option (a) Megan would feel that she had punished the man for the rape by allowing him to be punished for a murder he did not commit. Megan expects this action could give her satisfaction and views that as a positive

result. The rest of the individuals and organizations would be negatively impacted because the wrong person would be accused and tried for murder. If Megan chooses option (b) she will be meeting the goals of the larger community which also plays a role in her life's happiness. Whereas (a) involves non-interference to reach a personal goal, (b) takes into account the necessity of " a social context that encourages the development of one's capacities and provides a reasonable expectation of happiness" (Cummiskey, 107).

Megan assumes she will gain happiness but not speaking out (action a) but the orderly resolution of problems by society is also a key ingredient of her happiness and others in the society (action b). Action (b) would lead to a result having the least harm

DEONTOLOGY

Megan must decide if she has a duty to serve justice and a perfect obligation to the neighbor who may have raped her daughter but Megan knows did not kill his wife. If she were deciding to be kind to the neighbor she could choose when and where which is a duty of " imperfect obligation" (Bloomfield, 15). But moral conduct is required in situations involving justice so she has a duty to perform a perfect obligation which is not only centered on her individual decisions. (Bloomfield, 15 & 245) Since telling a lie is a bad example of moral conduct, Megan should tell the truth because it is the right thing to do. The results of her action will sort themselves out.

10% Megan Slake – She has a duty to herself to act morally.

20% Nancy Slake, Megan's family - She has a duty to expect justice for her daughter.

20% Former neighbor - She has a social obligation to tell the truth which includes speaking out.

20% The community, the police investigating the murder, the judicial system - The community needs to be safe and the police and judicial system need to have the truth in order to make sure justice is served.

20% The family of the murder victim – Needs everyone associated in the case to take moral actions.

5% The murderer - As a member of society, the murderer, needs to assume that everyone with knowledge to take moral actions so the correct person is punished.

5% Potential future victims of the murderer - Potential victims need to expect that everyone with knowledge will take moral actions so the correct person is punished; if not the fabric of justice becomes a facade.

VIRTUE ETHICS

Megan is tempted to withhold vital information about a murder in order to gain revenge on a person she feels raped her daughter. Megan may feel that lying could be justified by replacing it with another virtue but revenge is not a virtue. An ideal person who lives a virtuous life is an honest person and would come forward to the police and tell the truth. Telling the truth will allow Megan to remain virtuous.

Make a decision

Megan decides she should be honest.

Take action

Megan tells the police the information she knows about the neighbor's location at the time of his wife's murder. When the former neighbor learns who came forward to substantiate his alibi he gave the police information about the daughter's rape.

Learn

Megan realized that if she were going to take responsibility for her decision and actions, then the only thing she could do is tell the truth. She could not spend the rest of her life making excuses to herself and others to cover up her lie therefore it was best to explain the situation clearly. She read many articles about other mothers who had their children harmed by a predator and learned from their experiences. The experiences with the best outcomes required the mother to act with dignity and honesty. Instead of treating the person who had victimized her daughter with revenge she learned to change her emotions to healthy emotions. By changing her attitude she hoped she would not allow another person to control her emotions in the future. Megan learned that honesty is the best action to take even if the result of telling the truth is unpredictable.

Works Cited

Cummiskey, David. *Kantian Consequentialism*. New York: Oxford UP, 1996.
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Bloomfield, Paul, ed. *Morality and Self-Interest*. New York: Oxford UP, 2008.
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