

# [Ethical autobiography essay](https://assignbuster.com/ethical-autobiography-essay/)

My father, one of eight children, was raised in a two room shack in the Appalachia. He struggled to be more as he grew up. He enlisted in the Army, traveling the world. He made it his goal to become as educated as possible. He received two Master’s degrees and received his Ph. D. in languages from the University of Pennsylvania in 1971. My mother came from a small town, blue collar family of 4 children raised by two immigrants. She has two Master’s degrees and several state certifications. The value of everything not being taken for granted was instilled in her from an early age.

The value of education was a high priority in her family also. My parents met in Mexico while they were both attending the Universidad de America in the late 1960’s. My parents always seemed odd to me as a child. They were very wordy and overbearing. I always wanted them to just ‘ stop’ with the explanations and reasons behind everything that they did. They always had a story, explanation or ditty to give you when they told you something that you did not know. Little did I know as a child that I was part of a limited group of people who were afforded such a luxury. The stories of struggle and choice.

The stories of importance and the value behind the choice to become something and to do right was always a topic in our household. There is nothing more important than doing right and choosing right was the explanation for everything in my childhood. My father read everything he could. He was in his glory when he could discuss the different concepts and ideas he had just devoured. One time as a child I remember him reading William Bennett. My mother gave him The Moral Compass and Book of Virtues for his birthday. This is when I remember the lessons about values and choices becoming common place in my life.

He began installing the 3 C’s—content, character, and choice that he learned in reading Bennett. Content or education was already paramount in our family, but it was clarified for him, believing that education helped the development of intellect and character go hand in hand. He defined character as strength of mind, individuality, independence, thoughtfulness, fidelity, kindness, honesty, respect for law and standards of right and wrong, diligence, fairness and self-discipline. So pointed out that habit and repetition develop virtue and morality.

Dedication to morality is taught by being dedicated to it. He started to espouse choice. So that parents have a choice as to what to expose their children to, and that is what they are responsible for (Bennett, 1988). My parents read and discussed Bennett and my world changed, I was going to be taught morals, ethics and values through choice. Growing up in a business environment In 1971, my father was working on his dissertation at the Penn State. He had a fellow teaching assistant read some of the work he had done. The teaching assistant took that work and submitted it as his own.

My father was devastated. He had spent many years working to get to this point in his education and his career. This man stole more than just writing from my father, he stole a piece of who he was. Completely disheartened my father completed his work with the University, but chose not to pursue teaching at the University. He and my mother in a radical shift bought a “ biker bar” in my mother’s home town. With no experience in the industry at all and nothing but sheer determination never be responsible to another person again, my parents made a go of things.

They turned the “ biker bar” into the most popular fine dining establishment in the area within a short amount of time. This is an environment that I was raised. We lived above the restaurant. The events and activity of The Brandywine Inn were my lives. This is where I learned about life. The restaurant and my parents brought forth lessons on how to treat people, how to handle disgruntled people, how to handle people who were inebriated. This magical land taught me that in order to be successful there was a method to the madness. I needed to conduct myself in a manner that was appropriate, cordial and calm.

Even if things were not always running smooth, I was to remain in control. Lashing out and acting a fool solved nothing. People would try to wrong you and steal from you, you must take the high road in how you handled them and the situation. This restaurant taught me the importance of family, team work, work ethic and the value of the dollar. It taught me that if you did right on a consistent basis that people valued that and became repeat customers. This restaurant was a school within itself. Then one, March 1, 1986, day we lost everything.

The restaurant burned to the ground in a freak accident involving children and matches in the restroom. It was a surreal day and a horrifying day at the same time. I learned so much. Who my parents were as people came through in a way that is odd for a thirteen year old to understand. We did not have insurance, as it was more to pay than we made a year, and my dad tore the building down truck load by truck load, never saying a word. So when the people called wanting their money for unredeemed gift certificates my mother handled it with grace and pride.

It was thought, that even though the world had crumbled, my parents continued to place respect and value on everyone. This was a lesson I will never forget. The restaurant and its lessons defined whom I became. After the fire, my mother went back to school to get another Master’s Degree that would allow her to become a Principal and my father taught language at the local schools, while he worked to secure another location for a second restaurant. This sheer commitment to never failing, proper choices, sacrifice and commitment where the lessons that continued for my teen years.

Within two years, my mother was a Principal and my father had opened a new restaurant, and we were back up and running as things had never changed. The lessons in this part of my life still resonate with me. People who worked for my parents twenty five years ago, at either restaurant, still speak with high regard off the experiences they had. It was a time of lessons for all who were a part of it. Experiences that Contributed to My Personal and Professional Development Life changing personal experiences It was a cold day in January; I was seven years old and wore a burgundy fur coat with a grey collar.

I remember all my life experiences by what I wore. We were going to the movies at the Theater, not the movie theater, but the fancy place downtown. It was me and all nine of my cousins. Each one of us was given fifty cents to purchase a piece of candy at the pharmacy prior to the show, as the theater did not sell candy. This was a huge event for all of us; a movie and candy were not something’s that happened often in our life. I remember vividly looking at the candy for a long time. I picked up the caramels. I also looked around, and none of the nine cousins was paying attention, so I picked up the Necco also.

I slide the Necco into the burgundy fur coat pocket. I walked up to the pharmacy counter and paid for my caramels. We all walked out of the pharmacy and across the street to the theater. I had done it; I had stolen something and no one knew. I was so proud of myself. When we got home, and I went to hang up my coat, the Necco fell out of my pocket. I stood in fear and horror. My mother looked at me in a very funny way. I knew right then I was in for something I would not forget. My mother put me in a chair and walked away. She called my father.

She returned and knelt down and said “ Jean Ellen I am so disappointed in you…. ” I remember her saying that, the sound in her voice and the look on her face. It was not what I expected. She explained to me that she was sad that I would steal, and disappointed that I was not happy with the fifty cents I was given. She explained to me that I had to take the candy back. What? I had to return to the store, speak to the cashier and apologize for being so selfish that I would take Necco without paying for them. I had to recite a speech to the cashier about my understanding of theft and why it was wrong.

My mother could have screamed at me. My mother could have smacked me. She could have done so many different things. However, my mother made me acknowledge what I did, explain why I did it and then apologize for my behaviors to the people that it affected. Mind you, this also included my cousins. I was mortified. I was terrified. However, most of all, I learned a lesson. Stealing did not just affect me. It was a reflection of those I was with, those who raised me and of myself. My mom made me take responsibility for doing wrong and making things right.

Another experience that shaped me as an individual is the experience of being raped as a teenager. The details of the experience are so very unimportant to me. The things that happened after are the most important. This is the event that shifted my life. This event is what changed me from a healthy happy child, was raised by hard-working, dedicated, morally sound parents, into the hot mess stealing drug addicted lying junkie that would need years of bad counseling and many relapses and being beaten to finally get it and move on with life. I did drugs. I lied. I stole. I stole a lot. I allowed others to abuse me.

I lied about the abuse. I dismissed any attempts at people trying to help me. I went to counseling; I went to crisis assistance. I had bad experiences with this process. I was not happy when the information that I shared was passed around my tiny little town as gossip. Knowing that it could have only come from the people that I passionately shared it with in counseling, I was devastated. It took me many years to get past this and move on with my life. In the process of this, I destroyed a piece of myself. The people I was to be able to trust, violated me in ways I could not imagine.

I was not the person I once was. I was broken. I was not a person with values. However deep down under all the pain, the lessons I learned as a child still lingered. I eventually found solace in the right counselor out of state. I found acceptance in all of the mess that had occurred. I found acceptance in the part I played in my ethical and moral downfall. I understood that the resentments that I held on to would only keep me sick. The greatest gift that I was given by this counselor was that moving forward from all of this debris was possible.

Suddenly the clouds opened, I was sober, the hate was lifted and I was ready. This series of life changing experiences had brought me to the point where I was now able to help others. I became a Pennsylvania Certified Recovery Specialist. I began volunteering at halfway houses and domestic abuse centers. I opened a GED tutoring and life skills center. I was going to make sure that if I could help one person, I was going to do that. My parents raised me to be strong, to be a fighter. So I was fighting back. You might have hurt me, but hurt heals.

Legal and Ethical Issues in Counseling Related to My Ethical Autobiography Confidentiality As a young person entering counseling, I was terrified. The session started with the woman I was seeing handing me a clipboard and telling me to sign some things. There was no explanation to what I was signing. I signed them and nervously waited for the woman to see me. She told me that whatever I told her was between the two of us and that I should relax and start in the beginning. That was the beginning of the end of me having any trust in a counselor for many years.

I poured my heart out to her about being raped and all of the things that were happening to my life, as a result. I saw this woman for several sessions. Soon after I began treatment I started to notice that my mother was acting strangely and I was hearing things through the gossip grapevine about things that I had shared only in counseling. This counselor had shared with my mother, and others in the school what I had shared with her. I was devastated. That was it. I was never going back. I shut down and had trust in no one. Now as a more informed student I am aware that many things occurred with this counseling.

I was a minor, and the counselor was allowed to disclose to my parents what I was sharing. The counselor did not provide properly informed consent at the start of our therapeutic relationship. What I assumed would be private was not, and what I felt was a safe relationship was not. The counselor violated my confidentiality, although she legally had the right to, ethically she failed in providing me the proper information. Special consideration needs to be given to confidentiality and informed consent when counselors provide services to minors.

The counselor that I met with did not review any information about the confidentiality, who she might be responsible for reporting, or what she was actually able to keep between the two of us. This was a counselor that obviously fell short in the ethics department. The American Counseling Association’s Code of Ethics standard A. 1. a discusses the primary responsibility of the counselor is to respect the dignity of the client and to promote the client’s welfare (2005). There was no respect for me in the sessions, or she would have reviewed the informed consent process with me.

Standard B. 5. b informs us that the counselor will inform the parents and legal guardians about confidentiality as it applied to the minor’s counseling sessions and work toward establishing a collaborative relationship with the parents (ACA, 2005) nor was any of this information covered. The most important code being Standard A. 2. a. Informs us that all clients have the right for informed consent and the freedom to decide to enter and remain in therapy after understanding their rights and responsibilities, as well as the responsibilities of the counselor (ACA, 2005).

Had the counselor I saw taken the time to review informed consent procedures and given me an explanation that there might be certain information she would not be able to keep confidential, this may have eased the sting. The fact that the information was shared, and then that was passed on again made it intolerable and devastating. The experience I had with a breach of confidentiality and not being given proper informed consent was painful.

Now that I have a fuller understanding of it and the extreme importance that it plays in the role of a successful therapeutic relationship, It gives me a stronger value to place on giving my clients a complete understanding of informed consent and confidentiality when the choose counseling. The ACA Code of Ethics Standard A. 3. a speaks to client rights when counseling is initiated and throughout the counseling process: counselors inform clients of the purposes, goals, techniques, procedure, limitations, potential risks, benefits of services to be performed, and other pertinent information.

Clients have the right to expect confidentiality and to be provided with an explanation of its limitations, including supervision and/or treatment team professionals; to obtain clear information about their case records; to participate in the ongoing counseling plans, and to refuse any recommended services and be advised on the consequence of such refusal (2005). As a counselor, I am ultimately responsible for my clients understanding my duties and limitations, I must make it a priority to explain my duties and limitations to them. Boundaries

I have been to lots types of different counseling styles, groups, sessions and offshoots of counseling. I was very open minded to anything someone offered that would ease my pain and stop the madness in my head. With this open-mindedness came interactions with people who truly had no business in the therapeutic field. I came across situations where boundaries became an issue. People practicing outside of their counseling abilities, making sexual innuendos, and cracking jokes about me being a woman. I now have a greater understanding of boundaries and counseling. At the time I was so desperate to be better, that these things were tolerated.

Now I would walk right out of the room if anything similar were to occur. The moral principles that help set boundaries for the therapeutic relationship are essential in defining moral and ethical work as a counselor. The five standards should never be deviated from and nothing less than should be tolerated by the client. These five moral principles outline by Herlihly and Corey (2006) are:

1. Beneficence: a counselor must accept responsibility for promoting what is good for the client with the expectation that the client will benefit from the counseling sessions. 2. Nonmalefiecence: “ doing no harm”. The counselor must avoid at all times, (even inadvertently) any activities or situations with the client that could cause a conflict of interest. 3. Autonomy: the counselor’s ethical responsibility to encourage client independent thinking and decision-making, and to deter all forms of client dependency. 4. Justice: the counselor’s responsibility to provide an equal and fair service to all clients regardless of age, gender, race, ethnicity, culture, disability and socioeconomic status. 5. Fidelity: being honest with clients and faithfully honoring the counselor’s commitment to the client’s progress.

Now that I better understand that there are boundaries in counseling, I fully understand that I never had to tolerate any of the behaviors that I experienced in the different counseling sessions that I sought out. I was so desperate for solace from the problems that I was experiencing, that I tolerated ignorance and injustice. I will work diligently to incorporate all of the moral principles into my practice and never work outside of my abilities.

The ACA points out in standard C. 2. a Boundaries of Competence counselors may practice only within the boundaries of their competence, based on their education, training and supervised experiences (2005). This was something that I was unaware of at the time I sought certain counsel. My experiences with counselors that said they we were specialized or had knowledge of the topic were somewhat comical and horrifying at times. The experiences I have had just cemented the importance principle ethics and practicing within my boundaries. Transference/Countertransference

The classic use of the term transference comes from psychoanalysis and includes: “ the redirection of feelings and desires and especially of those unconsciously retained from childhood toward a new object. ” (Howes, 2012, p. 1) Transference is where the client reacts to the therapist in a manner dealing with a significant figure from the client’s past. Transference causes us to treat others like a cookie cutter cut out of something or someone else. We transfer our feeling toward another on to the person in front of us. Although this can be positive in nature, most often it is negative.

The projection of feelings causes us to not connect with the person in front of us, causing disconnect. Countertransference occurs in counseling when a therapist transfers emotions to a client. This often occurs as a reaction to transference, a phenomenon in which a client redirects his or her feelings for others onto the therapist (“ Countertransference,” 2014). Often time’s counselors will openly share their own feelings with their clients and may use countertransference, in a conscious manner, to understand differences between their own experiences and the client’s experiences.

Disclosure must be done carefully. The ACA (2005) Code of Ethics states in standard A. 4. b. Personal Values the therapist is to refrain from imposing his or her values. Counselors must be cautious of transference and countertransference issues so as not to impact the therapeutic relationship and perpetuate unhealthy patterns in the client’s life. The idea of transference/countertransference bring home the importance of remaining in a neutral position on all points with clients (Capuzzi & Gross, 2011). Non-judgmental, non-biased, supportive listening is what I am there to provide. Reflection

Meaningful about Assignment I consider myself a very lucky and blessed person. I was raised in an extended family of tremendously gifted, educated, hardworking and moral people. The lessons that were instilled in me as a child were hard to understand when I was a child, became part of who I was as a young person, and a blessing and a gift as an adult. I have a deep understanding of why things are the way they are, who I am as a person, what is right and wrong for me as a person, the ability to respect others choices and a deep rooted gratitude for all that is given to me in this wonderful world.

This understanding was not just something that I woke up with, it was developed over time through the lessons shown to me by the beautiful and caring people in my world. The role my family played in developing the understanding I have of principals, moral, ethics, values, right and wrong, and cultural sensitivities is irreplaceable. The work that went into teaching my sister and myself these lessons was something that happened every day. The development of a solid person ethically and morally was a goal of my parents, and I am a better human being for their commitment.