

Personal Code of Conduct  
ADS 760  
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Admittedly, I am either in situations where a code of ethics is being enforced upon me (i.e. as a member of an organization) or I am enforcing it upon somebody else (i.e. as an educator). Very rarely do I take the time to consider my own personal code of ethics within the context of my life and career. Coming to conclusions and making decisions about certain situations is second nature because I do it so often, especially as an educator. I had not taken the time to analyze the driving influences behind the processes that are seemingly automatic. For this assignment, I was able to reflect upon my day-to-day behaviour within the ethical contexts presented in chapter three of Johnson's (2021) text. The purpose of this paper is to reflect upon the key components within chapter three to provide myself and the reader a glimpse into my own ethical cognitive framework. I will elaborate upon these reflections by discussing my vocation, values, and character development.

Johnson (2021, p.73) defines vocation as an individual's commitment to a specific course of action (not necessarily a career). From a young age, I believe I have always known that my vocation would be in education. I cannot describe how I knew this because it was simply a feeling. I had a natural affinity for the school environment. I enjoyed going to school and teachers were always curious individuals to me. When I was at home, I would discuss what I was learning in school. I would devote a significant amount of energy to projects, homework, and reading. School was always on my mind. Interestingly, I had the opportunity to complete my teaching degree well before I completed it at Niagara University in 2020, but I backed out because I feel I needed more life experiences as well as gain some chronological distance between myself and potential students. Instead, I went straight to work in student affairs and eventually into the private sector working for an asset management company; neither of which were long term options because I was not adequately satisfied in the work I was doing. The textbook suggests

that there is a series of questions that can be asked to help narrow down someone's vocation (Johnson, 2021, p.79). These questions include: what have I done and done well? What kind of skills did I make use of? What kind of knowledge did I acquire? What kind of objects did I work with? In what capacity was I relating to others? Was I working in a position with a lot of freedom and responsibility, or was I working in a highly structured situation where my activity was thoroughly and carefully structured? As I experienced undesirable work environments, I believe I naturally contemplated these questions to help me make better career-related decisions. I knew that I was not in the correct vocation, so I had to make plans to redirect myself and take the plunge into education. Currently, I believe I am in the correct vocation because I feel comfortable in the classroom and school environments working with students. I am satisfied in my work and I enjoy building self-esteem and academic capabilities in my students. I have not grown tired of it yet, but I believe I will move on to other careers in the education sector. I am sure that I will use variations of these questions if/when I begin to question my place within the traditional K-12 school system.

In terms of values, I reviewed the list in the textbook, and I believe a few of them are important to my personal code of ethics. For me, financial prosperity, independence, and responsibility (Johnson, 2021, p.79-80) are the values that stood out. Johnson (2021, p.79) defines values as desirable goals that aid in making important decisions. I believe the values that stood out to me are the same values that my parents find important. My parents are blue collar and have built their livelihood from working in entry level positions their entire lives. My stepdad has worked in factories his whole life and my mom worked predominantly in a call centre as a debt collector. Money was tight for the majority of my upbringing and my parents were not afraid to talk about it openly. While my parents did not discourage post-secondary

education, no educational fund existed for me. We understood that saving was important and if we could not afford something we simply went without until we saved up. As an adult, I now understand that money is a finite resource and I follow a budget each month. I reconcile my spending to see where my money goes each month. I live comfortably, save up my money, and pay off my credit card to reduce interest payments. It is important to me to be disciplined with my finances rather than have buyer's remorse because I believe I am better equipped to navigate options in life and handle financial emergencies. At the moment, the cost of living is astronomical and I am able to minimize stress and feel secure which is important to my wellbeing.

Like my vocation, being independent has always been a deep component of my personality. Quite simply, I do my own thing, at my own pace, and when I want. I follow the rules of life and I do what is asked of me, but I fully believe that I am largely in control of my reality based on the decisions I make. If I am in a situation that is not desirable, I do not hesitate to create an exit plan. If something is not working, I do not stay in an uncomfortable situation simply to make someone else happy, and I do not rely on others to make it right. Some people, work environments, or situations in general can be particularly cruel, so I am not afraid to sever ties if/when I need to. Some may believe that this may be impulsive and an "easy way out" rather than problem solving but I am a fairly good judge of picking the battles I believe are worth enduring. Admittedly, it is harder to be independent because I am in a committed relationship with my partner, but I am lucky because he is also independent. We consult each other on the big and important issues but we do not micromanage each other. We respect the fact that the other person is a human being and can be autonomous, trusting that we would make plans with the other person in mind.

If someone called my references on my resume, I am confident that all would confirm that I am a responsible person. I believe that I am a responsible person in the sense that I understand people are depending on me for a variety of reasons. In my work life, students are depending on me to show up, deliver quality lessons, give feedback, and provide a welcoming learning environment. In my personal life, my partner relies on me for comradery, intimacy, and to love and support him for who he is. My friends rely on me for advice, humor, logic, and a listening ear. From an intrapersonal perspective, I rely on myself to make smart decisions so that I can maintain optimal mental and physical health. To me, I think that the concept of responsibility translates into honouring relationships with those that are of immediate importance in my life, including the one I have with myself. Even though I have already indicated that I am a naturally independent person, many relationships are important to me because I put a significant amount of attention into those that trust me to provide them with something. Doing right by these relationships is important to me because I am a responsible person.

I suppose my own character development is the summation of several things already mentioned in this paper. I think that the ethics needed to be a teacher combined with my own personal values create a solid foundation of how I think and conduct myself. Johnson (2021, p. 80) defines character development as the deeply rooted dispositions, habits, and skills that guide a person to act in an ethical or sensitive manner. I also believe that my virtues are heavily influenced by a significant number of role models. There is simply no question that my parents have played a significant role in establishing my value system. Recently, however, I believe that my current principal is an individual whom I have grown to admire for having values like mine but also showcasing traits that I could benefit from further developing. She has been open with me about the struggles her family has faced and she herself was a high school dropout at one

time. She admitted to me that nobody thought she would make something of herself. But she persevered, got her education, and raised three sons while working in the local northern schools. This is now her eighteenth year as an educator and fourth year as principal. Her sense of duty to the school and local community is evident through the care that she takes in the interactions she has with staff, students, and parents. She does implement and follow through on several strict school rules. Some say these are tyrannical, but I believe she is trying to re-establish order, balance, and healing in a fractured community of residential school survivors that continue to cope with intergenerational trauma; a task that is seemingly insurmountable to many. My principal shows a deep sense of humility and concern for the students we work with. She also remains fiercely loyal to the community despite being constantly criticized by local community members; many disagree with her decisions and believe they could do the job better. She is a proud Indigenous woman and seeks to ensure that all members of the community feel like they belong. Johnson (2021, p.80) states that moral character develops over time and in my time working with my principal I hope to continue developing these characteristics through her example. Big or small, I always learn something when I am with her.

The purpose of this paper is to reflect upon the important concepts in chapter three of Johnson's (2021) text to provide myself and the reader with a clearer idea of my own ethical disposition. I was able to do this by first discussing my vocational journey which used probing questions from the text to critically examine the path of my calling. I also consider the values that are the most important to me which are financial prosperity, independence, and responsibility. Lastly, I believe that a significant component to my own character development is through role models and the most recent being my current principal. While this assignment was

challenging, it was certainly reflective and I have an improved view of the foundational influences that allow me to make ethical decisions in sensitive situations.

## References

Johnson, C.E. (2021). *Organizational ethics: a practical approach*. Sage Publishing.