

CHOOSING THE HARD RIGHT OVER THE EASY WRONG

BY

CYNTHIA B. HOWARD

STUDENT # 599

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## ETHICS PAPER

When I think of ethics in the military numerous people and incidents come to mind. One foremost job is Drill Sergeants from Aberdeen Proving Ground to Fort Leonard Wood Missouri. There has been great variance in ethical adherences and violations. When I look at the word ethics, I find that Webster's Collegiate dictionary defines it as "a set of moral principles values); the discipline dealing with what is good and bad and with moral duty and obligation; the principles of conduct governing a particular group or an individual. We as senior Noncommissioned Officers must do our very best to exemplify ethical conduct no matter what. The Army has taught us those values and when faced with and ethical decision, to use them when in doubt. In order for us to be effective and credible in our profession we must lead by example. First, we have to be able to recognize and identify the easy wrong over the hard right. As Senior Non-Commissioned officers we have a duty to teach, coach and mentor our subordinates. When ever we see or hear about a soldier making an unethical decision, we need to assist and guide them into choosing "the hard right over the easy wrong." I have witnessed, that sometimes living by a code of ethics is very difficult for some of our leaders and soldiers in the Army today. I'm going to ask you this one question? Can you do the right thing even when no one is around? Will anyone even know you made the right

decision? This is what Ethics is all about, doing what's right legally and morally. If you have to think twice about a decision then you have thought too long. Experience is a valuable tool but the lessons we learn must be utilize for development.

Let me share a true story with you that I've experienced while serving as a Senior Drill Sergeant. One morning I came into work and a female private and her battle buddy asked if they could speak with me in reference to one the "male drill sergeants," I said yes". I told the privates to come into my office and explain what the problem was. The soldier began to tell me that one of the drill sergeants had CQ last night and he asked her to come into the CQ office and take a seat. She stated that when she sat down on the three seat sofa, the drill sergeant came from behind his desk and sat very close beside her and began fondling with her body parts. I asked her what she did, and she "said that she just sat there in shock and disbelief". She also stated, "that she asked him to please stop". The Drill sergeant then excused her from the office, and he told her not to tell anyone about what happen and that he would make sure she graduated. The soldier said that she called her parents immediately following the incident and they told her to tell the Senior Drill Sergeant. Once I was finished talking to the soldier, I had to make that ethical decision by informing the chain of command. I also asked the drill sergeant about the

incident and told him that it was my duty and obligation to inform the chain of command, regardless of whether it's a lie or not. The chain of command placed the Drill Sergeant on suspension pending the outcome of the investigation. He saw me later on throughout the investigation and asked me", why did I tell on him? Sad to say, the outcome was founded and the Drill Sergeant was relieved of his duties and also the drill badge was taken away.

As NCOs we must always remember that we are held accountable for our actions by our soldiers and leaders. If we violate or fail to do the right thing, then we are sending the wrong message. Instead we are setting a new standard whether we meant to or not. We must focus on the key principle of Leadership "lead by example" without straying away from the standard or policy. No soldier's life, well being, morale and welfare can be compromise in training to standard. All Army leaders must continue to strive on educating subordinates on the ethical aspects of the Army. You must do this through conducting classes, informal discussions, one-on-one coaching and formal developmental counseling. The decisions we implement and how impartial these decisions are, will directly reflect on our leadership and how our soldiers react to similar situations. We must remember that no matter how easy it may be to make a quick decision just make sure it's the right ethical decision.