

# Obstacles to Ethical Decision-Making

## **IF IT'S NECESSARY, IT'S ETHICAL**

Often leads to an ends-justifies the means approach that leads to acceptance of non-ethical choices.

## *The False Necessity Trap*

We fall into this trap because we tend to overestimate the cost of doing the right thing and underestimate the cost of failing to do so.

## **IF IT'S LEGAL AND PERMISSIBLE, IT'S PROPER**

Just because it's legal doesn't mean it's ethical. Ethical people often choose to do less than the maximum allowed, and more than the minimally acceptable.

## **IT'S JUST PART OF THE JOB**

Ethics apply to the person, not the position. We can't use our positions to justify things we do that we would not do in other circumstances.

## *It's All for a Good Cause*

Can lead to acting dishonestly and unfairly, or the violations of established rules and procedures.

## **I'M JUST FIGHTING FIRE WITH FIRE**

The assumption that misconduct can be justified because it is routinely engaged in by those with whom you are dealing. When you fight fire with fire, you end up with the ashes of your own integrity.

## **Everyone's Doing It**

Rationalizing that cultural norms are the same as ethical norms and using that as an excuse for behavior.