

Cases to Examine: Conscience and Guilt

Then P4075

COICES: wrongly formed conscience ↔ unwarranted guilt
 a lax conscience ↔ too little guilt
 legalistic conscience ↔ excessive guilt

Read the following cases. For each one, fill in the words that describe what kind of conscience and what kind of guilt the person has. Then write a sentence or two of advice that you would give to that person.

well formed ↔ warranted/healthy guilt

Case 1: Larry

Larry works for a company that has contracts with a major aeronautical manufacturer to produce jet plane parts. He runs prescribed stress tests on these parts before they are approved for shipment to the manufacturer. Whenever production is really backed up, Larry's supervisor tells him to sign off on a test without running it. The supervisor reminds Larry that the parts pass the tests about 99 percent of the time. Larry goes along with this because he wants to be on the good side of his supervisor and also lessen his workload. One day he realizes that the metal used to make one of the parts is not as strong as the manufacturer's specifications call for. It is a cheaper grade of metal. Larry figures that the specifications are probably for metal that's twice as strong as necessary anyway. So he ignores the discrepancy and says nothing to his boss.

Larry's conscience is a lax conscience.

He has too little guilt guilt.

Advice for Larry:

- 1) Study how specs relate to design criteria - look at failure statistics
- 2) Think of consequences of his tests

Case 2: Marietta

Marietta remembers that when she was seven years old, her stepfather made sexual advances to her on several occasions, and she let him touch her because she liked the attention and the feelings. After those incidents, she began to feel terribly guilty about it. She has lived with this secret for ten years because her stepfather had told her that if others knew what she had done, they would think she was scum.

Marietta's conscience is wrongly formed.

She has unwarranted guilt.

Advice for Marietta:

- 1) Counseling

Case 3: Angela

Angela and her friends on the yearbook staff are sitting at lunch in the cafeteria. The editor of the yearbook, Sherri, complains about the hard work, the late hours, the pressure. Angela, who had wanted to be editor herself but settled for being a photographer, says, "I don't know what takes so much time, Sherri. The yearbook is basically just a picture album with a few captions. How much work does that take once you have the pictures?" Everyone falls silent, Sherri looks the other way, and suddenly Angela feels awful. She is bothered for days at the memory of the hurt look on Sherri's face.

Angela's conscience is well formed.

She has warranted or Healthy guilt.

Advice for Angela:

1) apologize

Case 4: Jeffrey

Jeffrey has a midnight curfew. He goes out with some friends to a party, and the driver gets drunk. It is close to midnight, and Jeffrey is very worried about getting home in time. He can either get a ride with his drunk friend and get home in time, or he can call a cab and get home a half hour late. He is so nervous about making the curfew that he gets in the car with his drunk friend.

Jeffrey's conscience is legalistic.

He has Excessive guilt.

Advice for Jeffrey:

1) look at consequences more

The LISTEN Model

