

## Self-Defense

### ***Position One: Turn the Other Cheek***

On the way home from school you were attacked and beaten by Bob, who doesn't like you for some reason and is notorious for intimidating other students. After talking it over with your friends you decide that fighting back won't improve the situation and that it would be better to find some solution to the problem of Bob other than continuing the violence.

Defend your position.

### ***Position Two: Self-Defense***

On the way home from school you were attacked and beaten by Bob, who doesn't like you for some reason and is notorious for intimidating other students. To make sure this doesn't happen again, you gather several of your friends together and you decide to teach Bob a lesson. You hope that this will end Bob's bullying. A couple of days later you catch Bob alone and get revenge.

Defend your position.

## Sharon Overheard

This scenario was prepared by the Center for Ethics, Responsibilities, and Values, College of Saint Catherine, St. Paul, Minn.

### ***Position One: Let Him Know***

You are Sharon Thot, a manufacturing manager at a medical products company called Medical Technologies. At a meeting of a local engineering society you talk with a person you used to work with at another company. You have both moved to other companies but have maintained a casual friendship over the years. As you talk, two other people known to your friend come up and join the conversation. As the conversation develops, it turns out that one of the latter two, Daniel Johnson, works on a process similar to one to which you have just been assigned. Daniel has a few drinks and is naturally an expansive, open individual. During the conversation he begins to explain, in some detail, how he has successfully overcome a major obstacle to successful utilization of the process, and how it has resulted in a bonus for him.

You decide to inform him that you are a competitor working on the same process.

Defend your position.

### ***Position Two: Keep It a Secret***

You are Sharon Thot, a manufacturing manager at a medical products company called Medical Technologies. At a meeting of a local engineering society you talk with a person you used to work with at another company. You have both moved to other companies but have maintained a casual friendship over the years. As you talk, two other people known to your friend come up and join the conversation. As the conversation develops, it turns out that one of the latter two, Daniel Johnson, works on a process similar to one to which you have just been assigned. Daniel has a few drinks and is naturally an expansive, open individual. During the conversation he begins to explain, in some detail, how he has successfully overcome a major obstacle to successful utilization of the process, and how it has resulted in a bonus for him.

You decide not to tell him what you do and you encourage discussion about his work.

Defend your position.

## Tainted Money

### ***Position One: Keep the Money***

You are the fund-raiser for a nonprofit organization that remodels abandoned houses and sells them at low cost to low-income families. For the past year you have been conducting a six-million-dollar capital campaign to raise money to purchase more houses. With the campaign one million dollars short with only two months to go, you have been working hard to reach the goal.

For six months you have been trying to persuade Marlon Moneybags to contribute. Marlon is the retired owner of a manufacturing plant, and is one of the wealthiest persons in your town. You are finally rewarded with a donation of \$750,000 and are confident you can raise the other \$250,000 in the remaining two months. Mr. Moneybags gives you the check during a press conference to announce the donation.

Two weeks later the local newspaper reports that the police are charging Mr. Moneybags with harassment. Apparently during the last ten years he has been sending threatening and anonymous letters to Jewish and black residents of the town. Immediately you are contacted by the media and asked if you are going to keep the money. Several of your key volunteers say that they want you to return the money. At the next board meeting the members argue about what should be done. Finally, they decide to let you make the decision.

You decide to keep the money. Defend your position.

### ***Position Two: Return the Money***

You are the fund-raiser for a nonprofit organization that remodels abandoned houses and sells them at low cost to low-income families. For the past year you have been conducting a six-million-dollar capital campaign to raise money to purchase more houses. With the campaign one million dollars short with only two months to go, you have been working hard to reach the goal.

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You decide to return the money. Defend your decision.

# The Morality of Wealth

## ***Position One: The Pursuit of Wealth Is Good***

Ivan Boesky said, "A little greed is good for you." He was right. Capitalism is based on the assumption that individuals should act in their own best interest and that doing so results in the most wealth for everybody. Individuals' action to increase their own wealth has resulted in the prosperity that makes life worth living, from the variety of products in the grocery store to the creature comforts in private homes. It has provided decent incomes for more people than ever before in history.

Rewards for self-interest and the pursuit of wealth have led to medical advances that save lives, improvements in nutrition, and reductions in the dangers that used to make life more difficult. Without the rewards, these advances in civilization would not have occurred.

When people are materially well off, they have time to think about higher values. Poverty and scarcity lead only to desperation.

Defend your position.

## ***Position Two: The Pursuit of Wealth Is Wrong***

The endless pursuit of wealth leads to spiritual and moral poverty. It does not lead to consideration of higher values, since the accumulation of more money leads only to the desire to get more.

The accumulation of possessions leads to a kind of slavery, since more and more time has to be spent maintaining and taking care of them, instead of focusing on more important things.

The pursuit of material wealth produces tunnel vision, allowing the individual to ignore the needs of other people and the ecological disasters that the pursuit of wealth causes. It also leads to lower moral standards, since the pursuit of wealth becomes the highest standard and everyone else is judged by whether or not they contribute to this pursuit.

Consumerism also leads to shallow values, since people become judged by whether they possess the "right" things. Owning things becomes more important than being the right kind of person or helping others.

Defend your position.