

## Social Issues in Management and Business Ethics: Exercises and Activities

*Exercise/Activity Title:*

### **Balanced Experiential Inquiry**

*Exercise/Activity Explanation (150 words or less):*

Balanced Experiential Inquiry (BEI) offers an experiential-based method of conducting ethics education with the aim of strengthening participants' moral courage. The technique is designed to create space for collaborative positive organizational ethics in the workplace by engaging employees in leveraging their insights from ethical challenges they have previously encountered. Facilitated group dialogue helps employees strengthen specific moral competencies, preparing them to face future ethical issues. This process has been successfully adapted to focus on ethical dilemmas at the intersection of achieving performance and doing so ethically (doing well, right, and/or good i.e., going beyond compliance).

Assignment is on the following page.

*Optional – Contact Information:*

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## Balanced Experiential Inquiry

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The purpose of this activity is to focus on an inward drive and commitment toward ethical discovery and moral curiosity. It helps managers effectively respond to their ethical challenges and contribute to an organizational environment that supports ethical performance. Balanced Experiential Inquiry is a process that asks managers to reflect on their salient ethical dilemmas and then engage in both individual and collective meaning making, positively influenced participants' curiosity toward moral decision making.

BEI is a combination of two core change management techniques: diagnostic (deficit-based) and appreciative inquiry (strength-based). As a hybrid process it targets both the positive and negative aspects of moral agency. Traditional gap analysis examines weakness, which unify people around a common problem, motivating its resolution. But a singular focus on the negative often blocks the requisite risk-taking efforts necessary to achieve a moral goal.

**Step 1: Identify an ethical scenario** – Recall an ethical challenge...

Think back to a time when you faced an ethical challenge while at work....an example might be a situation where there is a conflict between doing what you think you should do and what the organization, boss, or peer norms suggest. This might involve a conflict between your own values and the organization's goals. The situation may have

made it difficult for you to act, to know what to do, or to determine how to resolve the issue. As you think back about your experiences that you have encountered while on the job, this is a time when you may have been unsure how to act or did not know what to do. The situation was likely undesirable, based upon the risks you perceived. The experience presented a moral issue and, at the time, none of the options seemed particularly favorable.

Please consider the following, as it relates to your experiences in this situation:

- What was the ethical issue and what did you do?
- What were you thinking and feeling at the time?

### **Step 2: Examining strengths and barriers with a partner**

- What supported (or curtailed) your ability to respond with moral action?
- What about the organization or management supported (or curtailed) your ability to address this situation effectively?

### **Step 3: Report-outs and group discussion**

- How will you overcome these challenges?
- How will you sustain your own ethical strength, as a model to others?

For more info, see: Sekerka, Leslie E. 2016. *Ethics is a daily deal: Choosing to build moral strength as a practice*. Basel, Switzerland: Springer International Publishing AG