

## What are the 10 myths of ethics?

1. **It's ethical if it's legal and permissible.** Loopholes, tax enforcement, and/or personal moral judgment do not outweigh what's right or lawful.
2. **It's ethical if it's part of the job.** Separating personal ethics from work ethics can cause decent people to justify actions at work that they would never do at home. Everyone's first job is to be a good person.
3. **It's ethical if it's for a good cause.** People can be vulnerable to rationalizations when advancing a noble aim. This can lead to deception, concealment, conflicts of interest, favoritism, or other departmental violations.
4. **It's ethical if no one's hurt.** Ethical values are not factors to be *considered* in decision-making; they are ground rules.
5. **It's ethical if everyone does it.** Treating questionable behaviors as ethical norms under the guise of "safety in numbers" is a false rationale.
6. **It's ethical if I don't gain personally.** Improper conduct done for others or for institutional purposes is wrong. Personal gain is not the only test of impropriety.
7. **It's ethical if I've got it coming.** Being overworked or underpaid doesn't justify accepting favors, discounts, or gratuities. Nor is abusing sick time, insurance claims, or personal use of office equipment fair compensation for one's services or underappreciated efforts.
8. **It's ethical if I'm objective.** By definition, if you've lost your objectivity, you don't know you've lost it. Gratitude, friendship, or anticipation of future favors can subtly affect one's judgment.
9. **It's ethical if I fight fire with fire.** Promise-breaking, lying, or other misconduct is unacceptable even if others routinely engage in them.
10. **It's ethical if I do it for you.** Committing white lies or withholding information in professional relationships (such as performance reviews) disregards the fact that most people would rather know unpleasant information than soothing falsehoods.

---

-Michael Josephson