**Sick with Guilt**

The Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) was officially diagnosed on December 31st, 2019. It’s typically spread through respiratory droplets from people to people. As of now, the information points to an incubation period of 2 weeks (14 days), which means that it can take up to 14 days to show symptoms of the disease. People are generally considered “safe” after two weeks of contact with no symptoms. The best way to prevent the spread of the novel coronavirus disease is by washing your hands frequently. As of now, there are 83,000 confirmed cases, and the number grows daily.

Elizabeth is a 26-year-old Chinese immigrant who has recently visited China. She went over Christmas vacation and returned on January 1st--the day after the Coronavirus outbreak. Though she’s been careful to limit her contact with others, it’s been just over three weeks since she came back and she doesn’t feel that there are any issues. She decides to resume her daily life as normal, working at as a part-timer in a convenience store at night and applying to jobs and going to interviews during the day.

She’s been struggling for some time to find a stable job. Additionally, her family in China has always had many financial difficulties, and so she always makes sure to send some money back home every month, despite her own issues. Her parents haven’t shared their exact financial situation with her, but she’s pretty sure that her contributions help them out greatly.

A well-respected company that she’s been through two previous interviews for contacts her and informs her that she is one of their final choices for a stable position with decent pay that would both be incredibly beneficial for her, but is also in alignment with what she’s interested in. She recognizes this as a once in a lifetime situation which would help her get many future career opportunities. They want to do one final interview with her and ask her if she’s been to China within the past two weeks. She tells them no but is uncertain over whether or not she should give more information. She eventually decides not to tell them about her trip. They have her go through with the interview, and she ultimately gets the job.

Feeling guilty, she decides that besides giving some of her first paycheck to her parents, she’ll also donate part of the money to trusted organizations in order to combat the coronavirus.

**Study Questions:**

1. Was it wrong for Elizabeth to have kept her travel history a secret from the company she was interviewing for when it’s been over two weeks since she had gone to China?
2. If the company was only asking Asians if they had traveled to China within a certain time frame, does Elizabeth have an obligation to tell the truth?
3. Say she still doesn’t feel sick, but someone from her company falls ill to the coronavirus. Does she have a moral obligation to get tested and inform her company?
4. Did she have an obligation to donate her wages to charity organizations?

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**Reuniting with VR**

Virtual reality is a very powerful tool that now with modern technology can even resurrect the dead. Jang Ji-sung, a grieving mother whose 7-year-old daughter Nayeon died four years ago in 2016 due to leukemia, was able to meet her daughter one last time on a Korean television show. The show called “Meeting You” provided Ji-sung with touch-sensitive gloves and audio which enabled her to touch, play with and hold conversations with her daughter. This technology provided Ji-sung an opportunity to say goodbye to her daughter, and her daughter even consoled her, telling her that she was no longer in pain. This interaction seemed to have a positive effect on Ji-sung as she said at the end of the reunion that she was “really happy in the moment”.

The Munhwa Broadcasting Company - the company that broadcasts the tv show - worked on Nayeon’s avatar for eight months, making sure that her face, body, and voice were as accurate as possible. They stated that their goal was to help “console the family” and present a “new way to keep loved ones in memory”. While this may have been their intent, the situation does raise some serious ethical questions.

Dr. Blay Whitby, a philosopher and technology ethicist at the University of Sussex said, “we don’t know the psychological effects of being reunited with someone this way” and “that a lot of psychiatrists would regard this as potentially unhealthy.” Not only that, but this reunion was broadcast and posted on youtube. In just under a week, it received over 13 million views on the platform. While many have sympathized and offered support for the concept, this case does raise further ethical questions such as whether or not the company is exploiting the grief and pain of the mother. Or whether or not the deceased should be resurrected with VR at all due to the manipulation of what they say and do and also for the simple question of whether or not they would have wanted to be resurrected.

**Study questions:**

1. Is it ethical to resurrect the dead, whether they wanted to be brought back to life via VR or not? Does the answer change if the family consents to this? Does the answer change if it has a positive impact on the family?
2. Is it ethical to control what the deceased say or how they act even if it has a positive impact?
3. Is it ethical to broadcast something so sensitive and emotional, especially when the family is grieving?
4. Does the positive intent of the producers outweigh the fact that this technology could be used to exploit people’s pain for profit or that it could be used for emotional manipulation?
5. If the psychological effects of reuniting with deceased family members this way are unknown, should people be allowed to do this? If so, should it be a one-time thing like this was or should it be more than that? If the family gets emotionally attached to the VR avatar, should they be able to keep this technology?

Sources:

<https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2020/02/15/business/tech/mother-reunited-dead-daughter-south-korean-vr-show/#.XldJfxPYpQI>

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**Honor Code Manipulation**

Elijah is the student body president at a public high school in America. He’s a good student and generally friendly to others, but he doesn’t get along with one of his classmates, James. He knows for a fact that James cheats on a lot of homework assignments in BC Calculus, either by plagiarizing online sources or by convincing other students to let him copy their work. However, he’s also pretty sure that James doesn’t cheat on any of the tests, which comprise 90% of the grade, and that James does well in the class.

Through his friends, he hears that James has recently gotten caught cheating in his AP chemistry class. As a result, the entire chemistry class is heavily punished, making the already difficult class almost impossible to do well in. Elijah isn’t in AP chemistry himself, but many of his friends complain about how it’s was unfair. While Elijah agrees that the punishments were a bit severe -- no more homework grades, banning calculators on tests, and no curves for tests -- he’s also aware that at least half of the students in that class were copying homework. Copying homework has been considered commonplace for many years now.

His school holds an assembly to discuss academic dishonesty and the principal authorizes that any student who knows of any instances of cheating needs to report it to either a teacher or a counselor. As the student body president, Elijah feels that he needs to set a good example for the other students and report the instances that he knows about. He is considering going forth about James copying homework from other students in Calculus. However, he knows that if he didn’t have a personal issue with James, he most likely would not think to report him. After all, he’s sure he knows of other people who cheat, but he only notices James because he doesn’t like him. He’s also worried about the consequences to innocent students if he chooses to report the situation. It’s likely that not only the math teachers but all of the teachers at the school will feel a lack of trust for the students and make their classes more difficult.

Ultimately, he decides not to say anything, but he feels incredibly guilty. He convinces himself that this is in the best interest for most of the students who don’t cheat and that the only person who is harmed when James cheats is himself.

**Study Questions:**

1. Was Elijah right in not notifying the authorities about James cheating?
2. Does Elijah have any obligation to protect his friends who aren’t being academically dishonest?
3. Say that Elijah’s peers were copying homework from each other due to the teacher being unreasonable and giving them 3+ hours of homework a night. Would this change the situation?
4. Are there any situations in which academic dishonesty could be considered morally acceptable?
5. As the student body president, does Elijah have a higher obligation to following school rules or to protecting the students? How does this obligation compare with that of a normal student’s?
6. If James was cheating on the tests, would that be a different situation?

**Sources:**

1. <https://www.edutopia.org/article/why-students-cheat-and-what-do-about-it>
2. <https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2013/12/i-cheated-all-throughout-high-school/282566/>