

Ethics Litmus Tests

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Please don't charge others for the use of this pack.

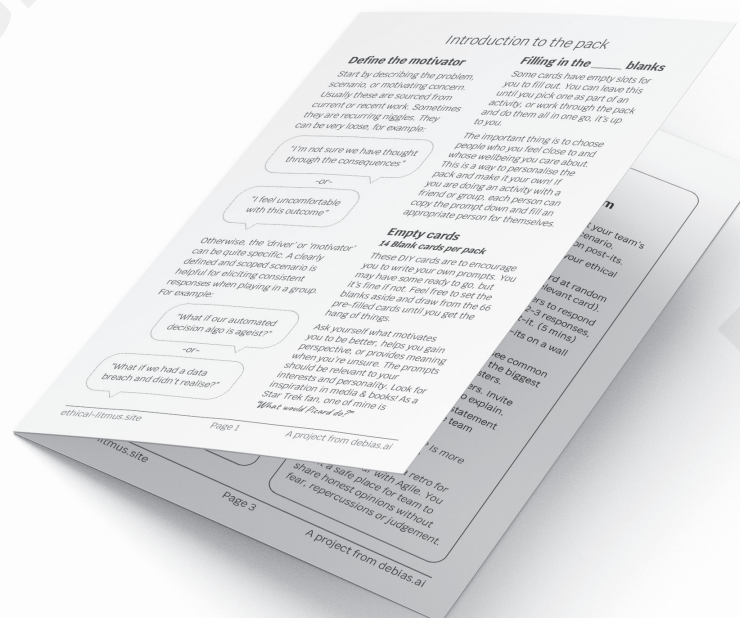
Please print on recycled paper if possible.

Enjoy!

Instructions

Folded pamphlet

1. Print following two pages as one double-sided page (A4 or Letter)
2. Fold down the middle
3. It should look like this:





The blind advocate
Group activity

Builds empathy and strengthens communication. Needs an even number, 6 minimum.

- Together define your ethical motivator.
- Draw a litmus card at random (or preselect a relevant card).
- Individually write responses on post-its or scrap paper. Aim for an opinion followed by 2-3 sentences of explanation.
- Redistribute responses randomly amongst the group.
- One by one read aloud the responses. Advocates - try to argue well for the position and extend the argument, even if it's not your natural side.
- Once complete, unveil the authors of each position.

Did people change or revise their view or after advocating for another viewpoint?

Bonus: Try to map the responses. See whether they form natural groups or a spectrum.

HANDY TIPS

- As well as random card draws, you always have the option to pick out a question to best match your scenario.*
- Drew a card that doesn't suit? Try again, NBD!*
- If you find a specific card especially useful, feel free to use it often!*
- Digital vs Analogue? Doesn't really matter - although many of us will need to run group activities remotely due to COVID-19. Keep in mind that you may be capturing responses about sensitive topics. Check your platform for security and ease of deletion after the activity.*



DYO - Define your own

Got another idea for how to use the card deck? Go for it!

Define the motivator

Start by describing the problem, scenario, or motivating concern. Usually these are sourced from current or recent work. Sometimes they are recurring niggles. They can be very loose, for example:

"I'm not sure we have thought through the consequences"

-or-

"I feel uncomfortable with this outcome"

Otherwise, the 'driver' or 'motivator' can be quite specific. A clearly defined and scoped scenario is helpful for eliciting consistent responses when playing in a group. For example:

"What if our automated decision algo is ageist?"

-or-

"What if we had a data breach and didn't realise?"

Filling in the _____ blanks

Some cards have empty slots for you to fill out. You can leave this until you pick one as part of an activity, or work through the pack and do them all in one go, it's up to you.

The important thing is to choose people who you feel close to and whose wellbeing you care about. This is a way to personalise the pack and make it your own! If you are doing an activity with a friend or group, each person can copy the prompt down and fill an appropriate person for themselves.

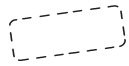
Empty cards

14 Blank cards per pack

These DIY cards are to encourage you to write your own prompts. You may have some ready to go, but it's fine if not. Feel free to set the blanks aside and draw from the 66 pre-filled cards until you get the hang of things.

Ask yourself what motivates you to be better, helps you gain perspective, or provides meaning when you're unsure. The prompts should be relevant to your interests and personality. Look for inspiration in media & books! As a Star Trek fan, one of mine is *"What would Picard do?"*

Card activities

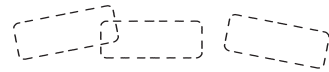


The classic litmus Activity for 1

Got a wiggly feeling, not sure what to do? Start here.

1. Write down your motivator.
2. Draw a litmus card at random.
3. Take a moment to hold the prompt in your mind. Try to examine it from different perspectives.
4. Write down your response(s).

What did you learn? Did you identify next steps? If unclear, try picking another card, or put it aside and try again later.



The problem definition Activity for 1

Not sure how to talk about the thing that's worrying you?

1. Lay out the entire pack so you can sort through the questions.
2. Select three questions that best describe the concern or feeling.
3. Using these questions as a framework, try to describe your ethical motivator.

Show the questions and your motivating scenario description to a colleague, as a starting point for discussion.



Two heads Activity for 2

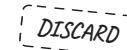
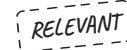
A twist on the classic litmus. Pair with a colleague.

1. Together define and write down your ethical motivator.

2. Draw a litmus card at random.
3. Write down your responses to the litmus card individually.
4. Share your responses with each other.

Compare and contrast your responses. Are you surprised? Explain your thinking.

Card activities



The rank and file Activity for 1

This activity adds some structure to the issue at hand.

1. Write down your motivator.
 2. Sort the whole card deck into two piles: **Relevant / Discard**.
- Relevant cards will feel pertinent to your ethical motivator. Rely on your gut and work briskly.*
3. Set aside the **Discard** pile.
 4. Spread out the **Relevant** pile to scan all the cards.
 5. Rank them in a column from most to least important.

If you have an intimidatingly large pile, feel free to scale it back to 10 or 15, and add the rest to the discard pile.

Got your final ranking? What does it tell you? Do any themes emerge?

Review the top three questions and think about how you might mitigate the risk of harm. Do you need to gather more information, or do some research? Do any next steps present themselves?



The brainstorm Group activity

5-8 people. Map out your team's ethics for a given scenario. Capture responses on post-its.

1. Together define your ethical motivator.
2. Draw a litmus card at random (or preselect a relevant card).
3. Ask team members to respond to the card with 2-3 responses, one idea per post-it. (5 mins)
4. Capture the post-its on a wall or whiteboard.
5. Cluster them to see common themes. Look for the biggest and smallest clusters.
6. Explore the outliers. Invite team members to explain.
7. Write a position statement summarising the team sentiment.

Is there consensus? Is more discussion needed?

Similar to running a retro for those familiar with Agile. You want a safe place for team to share honest opinions without fear, repercussions or judgement.

Litmus Cards

1. Print following four pages single-sided (A4 or Letter)
2. Cut-out the cards into individual pieces
3. Your pack of 80 cards should look like this:



| | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| <p>What if it happened to my _____? <i>Close older relative</i></p> | <p>Jump forwards 50 years. Did this age well?</p> | <p>What if this was put online?</p> | <p>It's my last day at work. Happy to sign-off on this?</p> |
| <p>Is this a turning point or a footnote?</p> | <p>How would I feel if this was the last thing I did in this job?</p> | <p>How can I get inside someone else's point of view?</p> | <p>Can I focus more on outcomes and less on causes?</p> |
| <p>Do I have a strong opinion that could be controversial?</p> | <p>Is this a zero-sum game?</p> | <p>What's the worst that could happen?</p> | <p>Would I spend _____ of my money for veto power? <i>Cost of grocery shop</i></p> |
| <p>Conjure your 8 year old self. Do they agree with you?</p> | <p>Is this something I'd want to be known for in future?</p> | <p>Make a strong argument for the opposition</p> | <p>Is this important or urgent?</p> |
| <p>Why am I having a strong emotional response to this?</p> | <p>Would I feel uncomfortable if _____ saw this? <i>Someone I admire</i></p> | <p>Does this represent me well?</p> | <p>Do I have enough context to make a decision?</p> |



| | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| <p>Without further discussion, will this play on my mind?</p> | <p>What if <u> </u> <i>Colleague I respect</i> strongly opposed my position?</p> | <p>Would I want <u> </u> <i>Close younger relative</i> to hear about this?</p> | <p>Can I be more vulnerable?</p> |
| <p>Would my idea of what's fair clash with someone else's?</p> | <p>Are we bike shedding or avoiding a bigger issue?</p> | <p>Is this the person <u> </u> thinks I am? <i>My dog, cat, etc</i></p> | <p>Is this principles-based or ad hoc?</p> |
| <p>What have we forgotten or ignored?</p> | <p>How can we refine our intentions?</p> | <p>Does this make me feel more or less like myself?</p> | <p>How can we assess the value of competing futures?</p> |
| <p>Is this easy to misinterpret or miscommunicate?</p> | <p>What are my motives?</p> | <p>Are the incentives helping or harming?</p> | <p>How can I help <u> </u> <i>Colleague/manager</i> understand my concerns?</p> |
| <p>Can I feel about it more and rationalise about it less?</p> | <p>What's the least bad option?</p> | <p>Does this feel like the future I want to work towards?</p> | <p>Turn off your cynical inner voice. Now what?</p> |



| | | | |
|---|--|---|---|
| <p>What’s the most charitable interpretation?</p> | <p>Is this an accepted moral standard or a spec in proposal?</p> | <p>Would my <u> </u> <i>Close older relative</i> think this is fair?</p> | <p>Can I use story-telling to move from ambiguity to clarity?</p> |
| <p>What are the limits of my imagination?</p> | <p>What if this happened IRL instead of on a computer?</p> | <p>Why am I feeling uncomfortable about this?</p> | <p>Can we do it? vs. Should we do it?</p> |
| <p>Have we assessed the cost of failure?</p> | <p>Can I feel someone’s pain and take action to help?</p> | <p>What’s one small change that would improve this scenario?</p> | <p>What does my gut say?</p> |
| <p>Am I relying on someone else’s ignorance?</p> | <p>Imagine your best self. What would they do?</p> | <p>If I had a dream about this, would it be a nightmare?</p> | <p>Would this make a good episode of Black Mirror?</p> |
| <p>What if it happened to me?</p> | <p>Have I personally met the people affected by this?</p> | <p>Do I want to tell <u> </u> <i>Someone I love</i> all about this?</p> | <p>Are we keeping our promises?</p> |

| | | | |
|---|---|--|--|
| <p>Do I benefit disproportionately from this?</p> | <p>Who has the most and least power in this scenario?</p> | | |
| <p>Would it be ok if this decision set a precedent?</p> | | | |
| <p>Am I reinforcing or challenging the status quo?</p> | | | |
| <p>What do we owe to each other?</p> | | | |
| <p>Consider short-term vs. long-term consequences</p> | | | |

