

To what extent should we be lenient with our friend/loved ones?

Core things that someone writing on this topic should know when writing for this audience

- What did the class agree on?
 - It is generally permissible to be more lenient with our friends/loved ones, but the degree to which we are lenient was what there was disagreement on
 - Because we have more information about our friends' goodness than we do strangers' goodness, it is reasonable to see our friends as better
 - Friendship history/closeness of friendship has a role in how lenient we are with our friends
 - Have they been lenient with you in the past?
 - Is it a good friendship?
 - Degree of leniency dependent on the type of action taken and its effects
- Important conditionals that were rejected? Why did the class reject them?
 - If A thinks B is a bad person, then A is obligated to not be B's friend.
 - rejected/controversial due to the following considerations:
 - Can B change?
 - Does changing B harm B? (or A?)
 - Does B give MRC to change? → what does B think about B's behavior
 - Are changes outside of A's control?
- Key Disagreements or Controversies? Why did people disagree?
 - Others may be against leniency because for any friend we have, we know we could just as easily have been not-friends with that person, and then would not be lenient. So, it makes no sense to be lenient with our friends.
 - Is leniency an obligation of friendship (we can't be friends with somebody without being lenient)
 - Or: does being friends with somebody require *not* being friends with them (tough love)
 - We care about them and want them to be the best version of themselves
 - Is it flawed to give goods (friendship) when they are undeserved-Isserow

Week by Week Breakdown

- Things covered in class that are relevant to this topic:
- What would authors say about this topic?
 - Srinivasan
 - "Real" knowledge → do we know our friends on a more "real" basis than we know a stranger/acquaintance? May understand completely the reason they have for doing a bad thing

- May be wrong to be too lenient because you miss out on anger, and not becoming angry means that you don't fully understand the wrongness of the situation, or you don't really care about your friend
 - If you cared about your friend, you wouldn't let them get away with something wrong
- Sinnott-Armstrong & Vance
 - Something to think about: If everyone is lenient to all their friends, will no one will ever change?
- Isserow-when should you give up your friends
 - We should be nice to our friends because they are our friends; there is something flawed about being nice to friends because they deserve it
 - We have more information on what our friends deserve because we know them
 - Moral complacency to be friends with a bad person
 - Implicit vs explicit moral values and actions
 - Factor in your friends attitudes towards their own actions
 - Permissible for a person to be friends with someone who holds implicit biases or wrong attitudes but doesn't outwardly express or practice these views to an extreme
- Thomson
 - Valuing a person who you know on the track more than a stranger?
 - Does it matter?
 - Should you treat the 5 people the same no matter what or act different
 - What if it is your child?
- Smith
 - If through being friends we acquire a greater degree of leniency towards said person, then one may be required to act upon this leniency if a friend does something morally wrong
- Cassidy
 - Special obligation towards friends to give them more leniency than you do with other people
 - Should kids be lenient toward bad parents? → Cassidy doesn't think so because she doesn't think competent or incompetent parents to have kids in the first place
- Hardwig, Miller
 - Have to die now in order to make things easier in the future
 - If you're friend is going to keep doing bad things because you are lenient with them, do you have a duty to stop being lenient for the future

When is it wrong to be part of a group that together causes harm?

Core things that someone writing on this topic should know when writing for this audience

- Collective Action (MCAP): ethical collective action problem generally on a large scale, one person is insignificant, but if you do your part you make the world worse off.
- Wrongness: not permissible
- Prima facie obligation/duty
- Absolute obligation/duty
- Override duties
- The indirect harm principle
- The general action principle
 - C-ex: It's permissible to choose to not have a child even if no one have a child
- The contractualist principle
- Vance's principle

Class agreed on:

- General class consensus on it being permissible to purchase clothes made in a sweat shop because it "gives jobs" to people who need them most.
- General class consensus on it being obligatory to still vote even though the candidate you would have voted for is almost definitely going to lose.
- Class generally agreed it is not wrong to contribute to light pollution by turning on a light in the house because it's convenient

Class disagreed on:

- If the total of your action wouldn't change anything, is it still wrong/permissible/obligatory to do X?
- Is it permissible to cut down a tree if everyone cut down a tree?
- Is it permissible to go for a joy ride? (Armstrong example)

Week to week:

1. Srinivasan (irrelevant maybe)
 - a. You have the obligation to avoid contributing to the moral collective action
2. Sinnott – Armstrong & Vance – MCAP, prima facie duty, absolute duty
 - a. Armstrong: it's not obligatory to do X if it contributes harm
 - b. Vance: it's obligatory to do X if it contributes harm
3. Isserow: It's wrong to do X if it contributes harm if contradicts one's principles.
4. Thomson: in cases where there is a large sacrifice to oneself, value self over collective action (assuming action affects strangers, not you)
5. Smith: it's obligatory to be a part of something against the collective action that causes harm (i.e. reduce suffering)
6. Liao (irrelevant)
7. Cassidy (irrelevant)
8. Hardwig, Miller: if you're one of many sick people, you have a duty to contribute to the collective action of dying with the other sick people to save the others.
9. Woein, Harris (irrelevant)

To what extent should people feel grief; is it wrong to recover easily from grief?

About this Topic

- Class agreed that to truly know some things, one must feel the relevant emotion.
Not always wrong to feel a harmful emotion
- Class generally agreed that the GAP is false
- Class agreed that some sacrifice is part of friendship
- Class agreed that reducing suffering is generally good
- Class was split on whether inducing emotion is obligatory
- Class was split on whether inducing emotion is permissible
- Class agreed that you should value people who are close to you

Week by Week Breakdown:

- Woein Harris
 - Would say that it is unfair to measure someone's grief because they did not consent to the tragedy (maybe a stretch)
 - In terms of inducing grief, do MRC and autonomy matter here?
 - If you are heavily grieving are you truly autonomous? Are you reliant/not yourself?
 - Wrongness of recovery may damage autonomy
- Hardwig, Miller
 - Do you have a duty to not grieve if it causes suffering to those around you
 - Duty to die aims to reduce suffering of people around you
 - Do you have a duty not to grieve if it's causing suffering to those around you?
- Thomson
 - Would say that it is normal to feel grief for a family member or someone close to you. He might argue that it's wrong to recover too easily from grief.
 - You should naturally value people who are close to you
 - Should feel grief because sometimes these relationships require sacrifices
 - Class agreed on this
 - He might say it's not "morally attractive"
 - You shouldn't feel grief for people you don't know
- Liao
 - He might say inducing grief is a good idea?
 - However you induce love for your children because of their interests and it's not clear whose interests are served by inducing grief

- Is it obligatory to induce grief? Whose interests does this serve?
 - Loved ones might not want you to feel too much grief
- Smith
 - If A can reduce suffering by not feeling grief then it is wrong for A to feel grief
 - Is it too demanding to require someone to not feel/to feel grief? What degree of grief is permissible?
 - Class agreed upon:
 - If someone knows how to reduce suffering and they don't, that is wrong
- Srinivasan
 - There are a lot of parallels between grief and anger
 - Is grief equivalent to anger or different, and why?
 - Maybe you need to feel grief to understand the loss of something/someone important to you
 - Class agreed that:
 - Emotions are important for understanding
 - Not always bad to feel bad emotions
- Sinnott-Armstrong & Vance
 - Large scale tragedy
 - Do you have an obligation to grieve even though your grief might not matter?
 - If no one cared nothing would change
 - General Action principle - it would be wrong for everyone to do something but not for an individual to do it
 - Class said that is true
 - Would it be worse for everyone to feel grief? Then do we have a PFM obligation not to feel it (for too long)?
 - Are you obligated to feel grief about a widespread tragedy?
- Isserow
 - Special obligation to grieve for your friends?
 - Maybe you should not have to induce grief for your friends or if you have to you're not really friends
 - Feeling and friendship are closely linked (in terms of friendship, can't be friends with someone you don't feel friendly toward)
 - So is your grief/lack thereof reflective of your relationship
 - Class agreed that:
 - Some sacrifice is part of friendship

- Cassidy
 - Do you have a special obligation to feel grief?
 - To whom do you have this obligation/how much?
 - Your children?
 - Special obligations to grieve in general
 - If you are obligated to feel grief and do not foresee yourself feeling grief in a certain relationship maybe don't get in it.
 - Likely if you do not grieve for your an incompetent parent
 - Grief probably stems from love

When is it wrong to be friends with a person?

Things class agreed with about the topic:

- When you've made the attempt to change them, and they made it obvious that they don't want to change, then you can leave the relationship
- It is permissible to be more lenient with your friends, in a similar way that one would be lenient with himself, than with strangers.
- It is permissible to see your friend as better than they actually are, but it is NOT permissible to see a stranger as better than they actually are.
- The depth of the friendship is not a crucial issue but benefits to A should be considered
- If A is enabling B to be a bad person, then it is wrong for A to be friends with B.
- A is obligated to address B's badness.
- If being friends with B causes consistent and serious harm to A's well-being, then it is wrong for A to be friends with B.

Things class disagreed with about the topic:

Whether the status/length of friendship is significant, whether certain conditions make it permissible/obligatory for A to be (stop being) friends with B, whether the purpose of the friendship is significant, and how highly one should value their own well-being.

Things class debated/thought was controversial about the topic:

- When someone is a bad person but their being bad has no negative repercussions for anyone, is it necessarily wrong to be friends with them?
- When your relationship with a bad person benefits you and the bad person doesn't severely reduce the well being of others, is it necessarily wrong to be friends with them?
- What if you don't know they're a bad person until after you've become friends with them and they don't necessarily do anything bad to you?
- If you are friends with a bad person, it's only seemingly permissible if you intend to change their badness with no harm to well being
 - However, changing B subverts B's autonomy which is held at high important by Harris and Hardwig
 - Morally relevant consent to change? Does B think B's own behavior warrants changing and would that change be given MRC by B?
 - Repercussions on A for changing B?
- Agreed in class that meaning of friendship is willingness to sacrifice for others
- Need significant and objectively bad reasons to end a friendship
- When should A stop sacrificing their own wellbeing to be friends with B?
- How lenient should you be with your friends?
 - You're as lenient with your friends as you would be with yourself.

- Costs to A should be considered such as whether A should leave the relationship (as Isserow would suggest) or stay with the friend because losing a friend is too much of a harm and it is wrong to prioritize one's self interest over a standing friendship.
- Entering friendship requires consent?

Srinivasan -

Feel apt emotion to have knowledge of what's going on — important when deciding not to be friendship with someone because you have an emotional reaction to notice their badness in order to see that the friendship should be severed.

- eternal anger and having a previously good friend that did one really wrong thing to you then you might have eternal anger and then not be friends anymore
- If a is truly aware of B's badness then A should be angry

Isserow -

- How much badness can you accept in a person before you become intolerant? Moral complacency - how complacent are you with moral bad things?

Sinnott-Armstrong & Vance -

- In situations with peer pressure, in which your group of friends is doing bad things, when is it okay to leave the friend group? (Also ties into moral complacency)

Thomson -

- SACRIFICE! How much are you willing to sacrifice for you friendship with them and your moral compass
- How much you value what your getting out of the friendship versus how much the person is harming others

Cassidy -

- Special obligation to stay friends with someone if they do bad things?

Liao -

We are supposed to help our friends improve as people (tough love) because we care about them

- leniency can be a form of artificial love or friendship because leniency is a way of ignoring the true person you are friends with (also harkens back to the annulment of friendship when you're deceived into being friends with someone who was not straightforward with you about who they are as a person).

Woein & Harris -

- Need MRC from B in order to change them in morally permissible way
- Agreed that bad people won't consent to changing without incentive

Smith -

-If A can reduce suffering and A already has and will continue to be comfortable and chooses not to, this is morally wrong. (GENERAL OBLIGATION)

When are we obligated to make sacrifices to help others?

When, and to what extent, are people obligated to give to charity?

Anything that the class that the class generally agreed on about the topic?

- Generally agreed that if the charity is ineffectual, not morally obligated to give to it.
- Generally agreed that if the sacrifice significantly harmed A's wellbeing, then A is not morally obligated to make the sacrifice.
- Generally agreed that A can sacrifice if A has the knowledge and resources to know that the sacrifice will be effective.
- Generally agreed that B has given MRC for A's sacrifice/giving
- Generally agreed that no one is obligated to sacrifice their own life for another (yet there are situations in which this would be acceptable).
- Smith (helping/charity, demandingness)
 - Smith: If A earns more than \$100,000 per person in A's household, then A is morally obligated to give everything above \$100,000 away to the suffering who need it.
 - Class view: skeptical of assigning specific dollar amount because is circumstance dependent
 - Ex: living in a city that is more expensive
 - Ex: child with an expensive medical condition
 - If A can reduce suffering and chooses not to and A already has enough \$ to continue to be comfortable (this will not significantly reduce A's wellbeing), this is morally wrong to not give excess \$.
 - Problem class suggested: underlying principle suggests that your comfort is more important than other people's lives
- Thomson (valuing life, sacrifice)
 - Thomson:
 - More inclined to make substantial sacrifice if you have a personal connection for whom the sacrifice is being made.
 - You should value your life more than a complete stranger, but you should still value the stranger's life (don't discount them simply because you don't know each other).
 - Class view:
 - Seeing a life as very valuable requires reason:
 - Friends
 - Children
 - Family
 - Related to the duty to die
 - If close to death, life is less valuable
 - If burden one loved ones, life is less valuable
 - Related to Woien/Harris
 - End of life decisions: closer they are to death and the burden they are on others affects value of life
 - If does not have the opportunity to have a good life, life is less valuable

- Sinnott-Armstrong & Vance (collective action problem)
 - Vance: If X contributes to a collective action problem, and A can foresee with near certainty that X will be harmful resulting from a collective action, then there is a prima facie obligation not to do X.
 - Sinnott-Armstrong: If X contributes to a collective action problem but abstaining from X harms A's wellbeing, then A is not morally obligated to abstain from X.
 - Class view:
 - Generally agreed with concept that if abstaining from X harms A's wellbeing and abstaining from X does not yield any positive outcome, A is not morally obligated to abstain from X even though this contributes to a collective action problem.
 - In practice (see below), not as consistent with this belief
 - Stipulation: not contributing to collective action problem will not substantially harm wellbeing, but will slightly harm wellbeing.
 - Purchasing clothes made in sweatshops:
 - Purchasing clothes made in sweatshops is permissible because they "give jobs" to people who need them most.
 - When you like the clothes more or can afford better clothes that are made in sweatshops, it is permissible to purchase clothes made in sweatshops.
 - Class was indecisive on this idea
 - Wrong to not vote in big, predictable election:
 - Note: voting is inconvenient but not detrimental
 - It is wrong to not vote even when the candidate that you would have voted for is almost definitely going to lose.
 - It is wrong to not vote when the candidate that you would have voted for is almost definitely going to win.
- Cassidy (parenting):
 - Cassidy: parents have a special obligations to make sacrifices for their children.
 - Class view:
 - Generally agreed with Cassidy
- Isserow (friendship):
 - Isserow:
 - There are standards for whom you can make significant sacrifices.
 - There is a certain point at which a friend is so bad that the friendship must be sacrificed even though would negatively impact your wellbeing.