

bad person: has (1) serious moral vices, and (2) explicit morally reprehensible attitudes with which they identify that (3) shape their normative outlook on the world and their practical projects

Question: Is it ever morally wrong to be friends with a bad person? If so, when and why?

The desert view: It is wrong to be friends with bad people because it is giving them something which they do not deserve.

Isserow's reply:

- a. 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.
- b. We should be morally lenient with our friends (to some extent, we should make exceptions of them, and judge them less harshly when they make mistakes).

The abetting view: It is wrong to be friends with bad people, because the friendship makes you partly responsible for their bad behavior.

Isserow's reply:

- c. We aren't responsible for the things our friends do just by being friends with them.

The risk view: It is wrong to be friends with bad people because there is a risk that the friendship will motivate you to do immoral things.

Isserow's reply:

- d. All friendships run this risk to some extent.

Isserow's view:

1. To what extent does (a) fit well with Thomson's view of valuing one's own life? Explain your answer.
2. Consider the following response to (b): when a person is lenient with their friends, they aren't seeing their friend as they really are. When we do that, our friendship is – to some extent – artificial, and is thus less authentic and less valuable than a more real friendship. Is this plausible? Why or why not?
3. Outside of the context of friendship, are there actions that are morally wrong because they demonstrate moral complacency, or a lack of concern with morality? To what extent does this support Isserow's view?