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Ethical Problem
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During my high school years, I had to make many decisions. Some of these decisions came easily to me, like what clothes to wear to school. Some of them took more thought, like what classes I should take during the upcoming semester. And some of them were questions that kept me up all night to decide between right and wrong and forcing me to determine what would be in my best interest. At this time, I was thinking as a Consequentialist. Personal ethical egoism thinks that I always ought to act in my self-interest.

One of the hardest decisions I ever had to make involved whether or not I would drink alcohol. This question kept me pondering off and on for the better part of three school years and the second semester of my first college year.

If I just considered the legal side of things, then this should have been an easy decision for me because of the fact that I was under age and it is obviously illegal for persons who have not yet turned twenty-one to consume alcoholic beverages. This would be the fifth stage of moral functioning, Legality. If you think at this stage, you will follow the rules and laws all the time.

The law, however, did not prevent many of my friends from drinking nor did it do much in the way of stopping them after they had started. The law was too easy to avoid so getting caught by the cops was rarely a matter of great concern. Besides, even when one of my friends would get caught, they were usually released to their parents with nothing more than a stern warning from the officer who gave them the ride home.

Now, being at home brings up another reason not to drink. We all want to try to obey our parents, right! Well actually, I did, want to try that is. This stage of moral functioning is called Conformity. Here you try to be good boys and girls. I wasn't going to be able to please them all the time, but I did want to try. My home life was a lot easier if Dad and Mom weren't on my case all the time.

I had already spent most of my freshmen year of high school at home because of disobeying my parents. This meant that in order for me to have any sort of social life, I had to watch my step so that I wasn't grounded during the next big social engagement. That meant that if I was going to drink with my friends, I could never get caught, because getting caught could leave me seeing my friends only during classes.

Another factor wrestling with my mind was the fact that I had tried a beer or two before to see what would happen, and all I had found was that I really don't like the taste. I couldn't see how drinking something that tasted so awful could make people feel so good.

I was also out for sports, so getting caught drinking alcohol could have lead to suspension from a few meets or even being kicked off the team. If I was on school grounds, I could also get suspended from school which could affect my grades and also my chances of getting the big scholarship to college I wanted.

So, finally after considering all of these possibilities, it occurred to me that there was truly only one decision for me to make at this point in my life--not to drink yet. Use of Legality and Conformity, helped me decide not to drink yet. I would say that I'm more of a relativist than an absolutist because my actions would depend on the situation. I didn't decide that it would be unethical for me if I drank later in life, but during high school it had many more downs than ups. I would still have Individual Freedom to make a different choice latter in my life.

