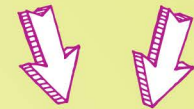




MIDDLE SCHOOL  
HIGH SCHOOL  
COLLEGE & BEYOND

# Business ETHICS & ETIQUETTE for STUDENTS



You **MUST**  
Know These!



CAROLE MARSH

The real world of business is one of constant decisions, missteps, upsets, lost opportunities and more...unless you are well-versed in how to conduct yourself. This may be the most helpful book a young adult can read.

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# What the Heck *Are* Ethics?

**You could describe *ethics* a lot of ways:**

The dictionary says an *ethic* is a pretty-much-agreed-on idea about how a group of people should behave.

**Ethics** reflect how we think people should act. We think some things they do are good and ok, and some are bad and not at all right.

**A code of ethics** is a system of values that each and every member of a particular group abides by. For example, a doctor knows that no matter whether or not she is “at work,” it’s her duty to help anyone at any time if a medical situation arises. In olden days, knights lived by a code that promoted good deeds and frowned upon wrongdoings. Today, sometimes we worry we’ll get sued if we try to help a car wreck victim, and hurt them instead. You could call this an “ethical dilemma.”

**Your ethics** may keep you from telling your parents a lie because you think you should always be honest and tell the truth—*even if it might get you in trouble.*



# Business Ethics

**Once you get a job, you may discover** that other people may not have the same ethics as you do. Yes, you may both agree that stealing is wrong. Absolutely. Positively. But, you may discover that they don't think there is anything wrong with taking home the company's paper clips, rubber bands, note pads, pens, and pencils.

*"That's stealing!"* you say. *"That stuff belongs to the business. They bought it and paid for it. It is not anyone's to take."*

*"Aw, they've got more rubber bands than they know what to do with!"* the other person argues. *"Besides, I do some work at home, so I need this stuff. I'm not **really** stealing."*

What do you think? This is not like stealing a car (or is it?!). No one will get caught or go to jail. But is it wrong? And if it is, what's the difference between stealing a car and rubber bands (no smart-alec answer here, please!)? If you owned the business, how do you think you would feel if someone ripped-off items you had paid for? Is there a time that it really would be ok to take such items home? How many? For how long? Even the ethics of paper clip filching can seem confounding. Or is it?

You begin to see the problem! Sometimes it seems like ethics is **BLACK** and **WHITE**. We don't steal cars. But sometimes it seems like ethics can be one big gray area. Is it ok to steal milk and bread from your rich neighbor for a hungry baby if you don't have any money? To lend a borrower money when you know they can't possibly repay it? To lie in an ad because you got paid to do so? And a million other things...

You can see how ethics can be different for different people. Or different at different times. Or different under different circumstances.

But isn't right *right* and wrong *wrong*?  
*What do you think?*



# Ethics Flavors

**We have ethics that relate to every aspect of our behavior.** There are business ethics, political ethics, medical ethics, and most anything else you can name.

Ethics can go by many names: values, morals, etiquette, good conduct, deportment, professionalism, or fair play.

“But where are the *rules*?” you might ask. “I don’t see them written down anywhere.”

You’re right. We write down the rules of basketball. And we write out our laws. We write out the Boy Scout motto. And we write the Ten Commandments. We write down many things of this type, but there is no big book called *ETHICS*.

So, how are we supposed to know how to behave when it comes to these big gray areas? That’s a good question. The truth probably is that most of the time we really *do* know how to act. We really *can* tell right from wrong. Things really *are* black and white, but sometimes we want something so bad that we begin to see a cloud of gray and we make choices that are *not* ethical—and then we try to make them sound like they *are* ethical.



## **Why would we do this?**

**Laziness** — *“It was easier to take home the company’s paper clips than to buy my own.”*

**Greed** — *“It’s not fair the company has all those rubber bands & I don’t even have one!”*

**To get even** — *“The boss docked me an hour’s pay for being late, but I’ll show him, I’ll steal five dollars worth of office supplies.”*

**Confusion** — *“I guess it’s ok to take home the stuff I need to work. I won’t ask anyone if it’s ok. I’ll just do it.”*

**Power** — *“It’s my job & my desk & I can take this home if I want to.”*

**Complacency** — *“Everyone else takes stuff home, so I might as well.”*

As you can see, there are as many reasons as you can think of, even if they are unethical reasons. Toby Keith, country music superstar, borrowed a little anonymous quotation that speaks volumes about ethics:

**“Ain’t no right way  
To do the wrong thing.”**

We all justify little wrongdoings by claiming good intentions or rationalizing situations to fit our needs—“I didn’t steal—I was borrowing.”—but that doesn’t make it right.

# Exercises in Ethics

**Here are some examples** of the kinds of ethical situations people encounter. See what action you would take or decision you would make. Discuss why you chose that way. What would someone else possibly choose? What would their decision mean?

By the way, many of these examples were taken from newspaper headlines, so these are real choices people have had to make. Some people act ethically. Some don't and often end up fired, in jail, or in big trouble. Some people don't seem to get in trouble at all, but they sure cause other people a lot of it!

**1. You are a farmer.** To grow your crops, you must use a lot of chemical fertilizers to keep bugs from destroying the crops before they are harvested. The rain washes these chemicals off your land and into nearby creeks and rivers. The chemicals in the runoff kill the fish. The people who fish for a living complain that you are running them out of business. There are ways to grow crops with less fertilizer, but it is harder and may mean your crop is smaller. *What do you do?*



**2. You are the chief production engineer for a large automobile manufacturer.** You have started final production of the newest model. A safety inspector brings a slight problem to your attention—the braking mechanism on a few out of every 10,000 vehicles has defective parts. It is impossible to identify which of the new cars have “issues.” Do you put the new model on the market? Or do you stop the whole production until the issue is fixed? One way could cost lives, but the other would possibly cost you your job. *How would you handle it?*

**3. The space shuttle is all prepared to take off.** The weather is a little colder than everyone had planned on. In fact, there is ice on part of the ship that is not really supposed to get too cold. You are just a worker on the launch. Do you let someone know that you think the launch should be postponed or do you just do your job—after all, that’s someone else’s decision to make.

You decide to report the ice to your boss and recommend that the launch be postponed.

Next, your boss talks with others about postponing the mission. This is not something the big boss is going to like to hear. Everyone agrees that it is getting warmer every minute. Even the worker who reported the possible problem said that. Everyone decides just to go on, especially since it is almost launch time. But you really believe that the big boss should be notified. *What do you do?*

You talk the others into telling the big boss. He is very upset. Everything else is in perfect order. Why is everyone worried about a little ice?! Surely all this has been checked out before. The decision is made for the launch to go on—since everyone and everything is ready. The likelihood of the cold weather really being a problem is a million to one.

*Was this a good decision? Why or why not?*

Now, go back in time...Many months before, another worker worries about the effect of cold weather on this part of the shuttle. He thinks it could really cause a problem sometime in the future. Now seems to be the best time to take care of it. This is what he tells his boss. But his boss disagrees. Money is tight. Time is short. He doesn’t need any new problems; he’s got enough problems as it is. So things go on as they are. But it bothers the worker enough that he goes over his boss’s head and tells someone else. The worker ends up getting fired for this. Or is it for this? Most people do not think it is ethical to go over your boss’s head. But are there any exceptions? Is he fired because he did this? Or is he let go because too many people are afraid that the worker will keep bothering everyone about this problem which will just take a lot of time and cost everyone a lot of money?

*What do you think? When you relate this earlier ethical incident to the later one, who was really at fault?*

Discuss small ethical decisions versus big ones. When are small decisions not small at all? What if the shuttle had taken off without any mishap—would that have meant the worker was wrong? Would it have meant that the earlier worker was wrong?





# Civil Service

**No matter what your peers in school or work do**, it's crucial to err on the side of being civil. No one welcomes a bully, or those who make petty comments, or are rude, abrasive or screaming, backbiting, or have any other "I'm the center of the universe" attitude at work.

Everyone is busy and stressed, on deadline, had a flat tire, or an argument with their mother...but there is no excuse for not being civil. Add "please" to anything you ask for; say "thanks" when someone assists you, no matter how minor the duty. Apologize when it's needed.

You might think being rude and crude makes you seem cool, but instead you come across as uncouth and ill-mannered. Respect people, whether they are higher on the job ladder than you are, or lower. Be professional with everyone.



What happens when you act badly? It reflects poorly on you and your company or department. It drains productivity because everyone has to stop and talk about the "situation." It affects company loyalty, and customers really don't appreciate seeing the people they are doing business with acting badly.

Of course you won't agree with everyone, nor they with you. Naturally, you will get irritated from time to time, or aggravated, or even angry. But you're not a kid anymore, not in the eyes of the workplace.

## **Here are a few things to practice:**

- Use good manners all the time; set the tone no matter how others behave.
- Be polite.
- Show respect.
- Don't respond to uncivil co-workers with incivility, that just escalates things.
- Self-monitor your behavior; don't wait to get called-out about it—how embarrassing!
- Watch for triggers that push your buttons; work extra hard not to respond negatively, since you know those things will happen from time to time. Defuse your own bomb!
- Learn to handle conflict. Conflict is natural in the work world; if you are not sure how to do this, ask your supervisor for tips on how to express yourself or react in an acceptable manner.
- Watch for emails or text messages that can too easily come across as snide.
- Dress appropriately, be on time, and smile—co-workers are more apt to work well with you if you look like you mean good business.
- Remember that good etiquette is not a sign of weakness, it's a sign of good upbringing, even if you brought yourself up!
- Accept responsibility for your actions and the consequences; learn from your mistakes or missteps.
- Ask for feedback on your behavior...you'll get it!

# Your Boss Is Your Customer...

**Did you ever think of it that way?** *Your boss is your client. How you treat your client/customer (perhaps especially your boss!) can affect your future tremendously. As a long-time freelance writer, I always felt that my customer was my boss, so it works either way. I tried to treat my clients as if I worked for them—because I did while I was on their project.*



**Have you ever experienced bad service when you were a customer?** Yeah, I know...sometimes five times a day! Often people forget who is the customer and who is the boss, so to speak. This very day, I was in a home improvement store and was told, “No, the manager of the electrical department can’t come out and help you...he’s in a management meeting with his boss.”

**Management Rule No. 1:** The customer is the boss! If this man’s boss was a good manager, he would certainly rush the electrical manager out of the meeting to help the customer, the real boss! Confused?

**It’s not confusing at all; knowing who is who is essential.**

Sometimes, it doesn’t seem very clear. If you go to see your principal, you might feel like she’s the boss, but she works for you! If you go to a banker for a loan, he or she is not the customer—you are—you will be paying them money back, plus interest. Think about all this and keep it straight in your head.

**If your boss is your customer:**

- Be just as courteous and respectful and helpful as you would to a “real” customer.
- Be of great assistance and put his needs, schedule, and deadlines ahead of your own.
- Anticipate her needs and requirements.
- And always say, “Thank you” when you receive your paycheck.

**A boss who is treated like your customer:**

- Is loyal; you have looked out for them and they will look out for you.
- Reciprocates; she will be so appreciative of your attitude that she will bend over backwards to try to help you as well.
- Will develop admiration for you, both as an employee and a person.
- And when the time comes to consider who should replace them as they move up the company ladder, will certainly consider you...and should you choose to work elsewhere, be the first to highly recommend you.

You could say this is a Big Deal. It’s how long-term professional and powerful relationships are born. If your boss (or former boss) starts his or her own business, guess who’ll be called first? It’s more than goodwill and good etiquette, it’s a good investment.

You are MY customer, and I appreciate you very much!

# Grammar Groans

**I've met brilliant people who had terrible grammar** and people smarter than me who had worse spelling. It is particularly important to use correct grammar when meeting a new employer or business contact. Speaking grammatically can make a great first impression by showing that you are educated and care about speaking correctly.

Yeah, I break grammar rules sometimes...but the difference is, I know grammar, and choose when, and when not, to break the rules! You can't always speak in purely grammatical sentences—humans don't do that—but the better your grammar, the more educated you look to an employer.

## **Here are some grammar items to clean up before you head into that first job interview:**

- “Ain’t” is a word, but it ain’t got any place in work etiquette.
- Don’t not watch your double negatives.
- “I’ve got” is one I’m guilty of saying. For example, “I’ve got a problem,” instead of “I have a problem.” Try to eliminate “got” as much as possible, unless you actually “got” something... “I got a raise!”
- Avoid starting sentences with “There’s” and “Here’s” because it can lead to subject-verb agreement problems later on. For instance, I might naturally start a sentence “There’s many people who don’t have good grammar.” Grammatically, it should be “There ARE many people...”
- “Like, you know, the best, like, friend ever.” Don’t sell yourself short by using “like” like this.
- Even if you ramble, try to avoid run-on sentences that never end. Consolidate your thoughts into straightforward, direct speech.
- A common usage error is “your” and “you’re.” When I get into an email typing frenzy, my “your” becomes “you’re,”—even a seasoned grammar veteran like myself has slip-ups. Another common usage error is “there,” “their,” and “they’re.” Be careful!



# Interview Etiquette

There are whole books written to prepare you for an interview. This isn't one of them. We understand that interviewing well takes practice and experience. The best way to get into the professional groove is to take a crack at it, hit it with all you have, and learn from your mistakes. That being said, there are some major etiquette blunders you can avoid whether it's your first or last interview.

- **Dress appropriately.** Remember, your dress should immediately make your interviewer think, "Wow, we need her/him on our team!" For an interview, business casual is usually acceptable, unless you are interviewing for a high professional position such as doctor or lawyer, for which formal dress attire is suggested.
- **Be on time.** "On time" means a few minutes early, not fashionably late. In fact, there's no such thing as "fashionably" late in the business world. If you're late, it's rude, not a matter of style.
- **Demeanor:** Your *professional* demeanor says everything about you as an employee. Walk in levelheaded, ready to do, say, and act your best. Remember to be courteous and polite.
- **Introduce yourself and sit down when asked.**
- **Making small talk** about the weather or current events can be helpful to break the tension, but stay far, far, far away from controversial topics.
- **Don't put documents on the interviewer's desk.** Try to be respectful of another person's turf. If you have portfolio material to present, ask if you can use the desk space before setting anything down.
- **Closing:** Your interviewer will typically recap the things you've discussed and then stand to say farewell. Shake hands if offered.
- **The very next day, send a thank you note.** Trust me, this one pays off!



# Technological Blunders

**New technology has created** more office etiquette problems in the past decade than I can count. We'll make one really simple etiquette rule to live by.

## **TURN IT OFF.**

*I see a young professional I hired enter our company meeting with one earphone dangling from his head. The professional then proceeds to text throughout the meeting while I and other colleagues are presenting data. After returning to work, I find him perusing Facebook and uploading photos from his phone to Instagram.*

What do you think happens to this young professional? Correct—Fired! No questions asked. Truth be told, that's a true story. I've also fired a person because her texting habit was destroying her productivity.

Here's the bottom line: technology such as mobile phones, tablets, and social media sites are distractions from work. My personal dislike of technology addiction is an etiquette issue—playing on your phone or listening to music during a meeting is just plain rude! You wouldn't pull out a John Grisham novel and start reading during a board meeting, would you? So why do some people think it's OK to break the common law of courtesy by reading and sending text messages? It's *not*.

## **Social Media: Getting a Bad Rap**

Calling all users of Facebook, Myspace, Twitter, Youtube, and any other social media-sharing site! I want to tell you this now, so it doesn't give you a rude awakening when your boss calls you in to discuss the pictures you posted from that rave at Jimmy's house last weekend—EMPLOYERS WILL LOOK AT YOUR ONLINE PROFILES.

Your online social profiles, even if set to "private," are accessible by employers. Facebook, for one, sells the rights to your profile, making it legal and possible for employers to see what kind of image you're putting out into the cyber-social atmosphere.

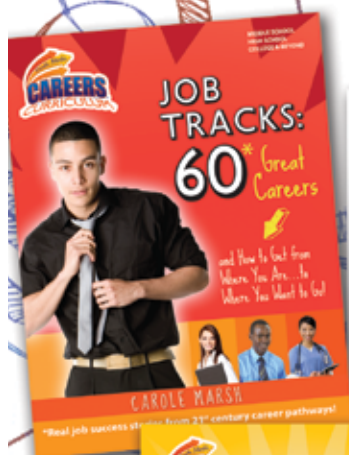




FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL, HIGH SCHOOL, COLLEGE AND BEYOND!

*"If you are ready for 'readiness'...for choosing a career pathway... deciding what to do after high school...or for a first job, or raise and promotion - THIS SERIES IS FOR YOU!"*

— James Barnard



**Job Tracks: 60\* Great Careers and How to Get from Where You Are... to Where You Want To Go!**

This book is filled with unique and effective approaches for helping students find their career pathway! Featuring 60 careers from today's job market, this book allows young people to hear first-hand from a person with the job: how they got it, what they do, what education and skills were required, and "what I would have done differently!" Readers get the feel of what particular careers might actually be like—essential knowledge for that all-important decision!

*"Entertaining and charming to read!"*



**Essential Skills for the Real World of Work: Things EVERY Student Must Know!**

There's no other book that does a better job of sharing essential skills for the real business world and explaining why they are essential! This book dishes out the subtleties, nuances, and in-between-the-lines considerations of job interviewers who are not only interested in candidates with essential skills, but are actually desperate for them! It includes a fun and effective scoring system to encourage students to rack up job-readiness skills long before they are required.

*"Highly encouraging and enlightening!"*



**Would You Hire This Person? A Look at Getting Hired (or Not!)...from the Point of View of Your (Possible!) Future Employer**

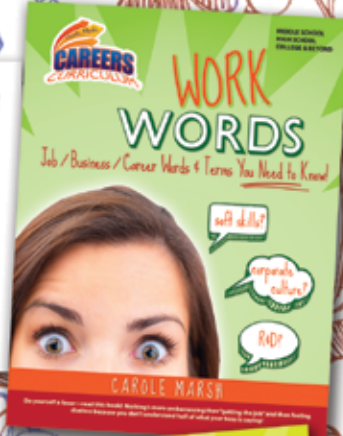
Read verbatim interviews that are both entertaining and enlightening! In this book, students hear both sides of the interview, including the employer and job candidate's unspoken thoughts. The reader can decide for himself or herself if they would hire the job candidate before learning the actual outcome.

*"Such realistic scenarios – I got nervous reading them! I wanted the person to get the job, but, gee...I can see why some would not!"*

**Work Words: Job/Business/Career Words & Terms You Need to Know!**

Get ready for lots of insider information and a few inside jokes! Written by a real employer, this book defines essential job, business, and career words and terms with insight, humor, and pizzazz! The contents of the book are organized into entertaining and effective groupings.

*"Why be embarrassed when you can be empowered by knowing 'job speak' BEFORE you even get the job?"*



**Business Ethics & Etiquette for Students: You MUST Know These!**

This highly entertaining and immensely practical book is an eye-opening must-read for students and new hires! It provides them with the confidence to avoid embarrassment, misstep, lost opportunity, and more.

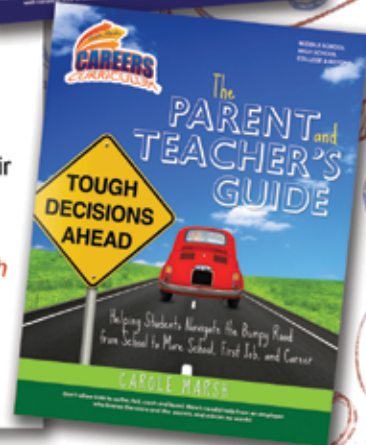
*"Fascinating and quite a lot of material covered. Anyone can benefit from this double-whammy of info book!"*



**The Parent and Teacher's Guide: Helping Students Navigate the Bumpy Road from School to More School, First Job, and Career**

Filled with candid help from someone who has traveled the bumpy road of "non-readiness" from school to job to career, this book boasts timely and honest information that will help kids get ready for the real world of work. The wealth of ideas available to parents and teachers in this book will help them to navigate their student's journey ahead!

*"Marsh has a keen sense of devotion to every type of student truly seeking a path to success. This book is worth the price for the compassion and humor, explanation of 'Rigor vs. Rigor Mortis,' and 'Why Study These Subjects' section. She's clearly 'been there, done that,' and achieved great success despite many obstacles!"*



PLEASE CONTINUE TO VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR MORE K-12 PRODUCTS IN PRINT & ONLINE FORMATS, INCLUDING:

- INDIVIDUAL CAREER MANUAL
- SCHOOL INFORMATION SHEETS
- COMPANY PROFILE SHEETS
- MAP OF OPPORTUNITIES
- ESSENTIAL SKILLS PASSPORT BOOK
- ... AND MUCH MORE!!

FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL, HIGH SCHOOL, COLLEGE AND BEYOND!

# ARE YOU READY FOR WHAT COMES NEXT?

The truth is that virtually no high school student, college grad, or newly-hired employee is ready for their future. Who says?



Employers, who are often appalled at the lack of basic essential skills of hopeful job candidates



Secondary educational schools of all types, that are dismayed that so many students have to start their futures with remedial classes



Educators, who in spite of their efforts, know their students are neither ready for the real world of work, nor the rigor of additional education or training



Parents, who have a fearful assumption that their children have little readiness to pick a successful future career path

## It doesn't have to be this way!

While my Careers Curriculum can't cure everything, it can offer you a candid glimpse into:

***Job Tracks: 60\* Great Careers—and How to Get from Where You Are...to Where You Want to Go!***

\*Real job success stories from 21<sup>st</sup> century career pathways!

***Would You Hire This Person?: A Look at Getting Hired (or Not!)...from the Point of View of Your (Possible!) Future Employer***

Examples of job interviews that show what employers really expect and think!

***Essential Skills for the Real World of Work: Things Every Student Must Know!***

The absolutely essential skills you need to even have a chance to get a job and keep one...no kidding!

***The Parent and Teacher's Guide to Helping Students Navigate the Bumpy Road from School to More School, First Job, and Career***

How parents, teachers, and others can help students avoid floundering in all these areas, making false assumptions, assuming unnecessary debt, and failing to successfully launch into their future.

***WORK WORDS: Job/Business/Career Words and Terms You Need to Know!***

The actual real-world work words and terms you need to know before you get a job!

***Business Ethics and Etiquette for Students—You MUST Know These!***

The everyday ethics and etiquette of the real work world you need to know about.



"These books reverse the trend of scaring kids into believing that jobs aren't available, or that a four-year college degree is a must, or that there is nothing new and exciting under the work world sun. But here are jobs that sound like fun, lead to highly desirable careers, are truly obtainable, and while hard (as jobs can be), are just plain cool! Surely we want students to be excited about their futures and the difference they can make, while making a very good life for themselves."—James Barnard

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