

Discussion Questions: “A Good Soldier”

1. How does the military context create ethical dilemmas for soldiers?
2. Mr. Berkowitz stated that he was “doing my job.” At what point does doing one’s job become less important than making an ethical decision? Provide examples.
3. Provide example of other jobs where ethical decision-making is important.
4. Discuss a time when you were faced with an ethical decision.
5. Think about the career you are working towards. What ethical decisions might you face in that field/position?
6. In the video, Mr. Berkowitz told the general “I can’t do it, I’m not a good soldier.” He left military and didn’t contribute to the Vietnam War.
 - a. Does this make him a “good” or “bad” soldier? Why or why not?
 - b. What would you have done in his situation?
7. In 2015, Oskar Groening, dubbed the “Accountant of Auschwitz” for his job sorting and counting the money taken from those killed or used as slave labor in the camp, was sentenced to 4-year sentence at the age of 94. At his trial he reportedly said, “There was a self-denial in me that today I find impossible to explain. Perhaps it was also the convenience of obedience with which we were brought up, which allowed no contradiction. This indoctrinated obedience prevented registering the daily atrocities such and rebelling against them.” In his statement, Groening said even though he had known what was going on at Auschwitz, the personal stories of the co-plaintiffs during the trial had brought home the enormity of the atrocities. “I can only ask my God for forgiveness,” he said. Do you feel Groening is being accountable for this actions? Why or why not?

