

## Ethics: Our Code of Conduct

Dear reader this section was developed to explain in pray fully simple, basic words and with a universal understanding of why one COE does not fit all, why there are varied COE's, and the important question as to why different approaches are taken in administration. And why we have adopted the prototype suggested by Cem/Cema for our award program.

Approaches: Please see the second section on the Gnostic and the Knights administration. Both require background reading and there is no substitute for gathering accurate and factual information. As we read the varied backgrounds, explore the historical significance, seek meaning for certain words, we begin to form the basis for our own beliefs, rather than blindly following or taking an oath without meaning.

Which ever approach is taken, an individual revisits a COE on a daily basis to instill the personal meaning and tempers understanding by application of honesty, respect, responsibility, fairness and compassion. This is not a one time trip. It is a continuous journey the whole of our lives on this earth.

One Does Not Fit All: Doctors, lawyers, web developers, forums and all others have a very different set of objectives and as a result, have very different COE's, but again and again...all contain honesty, respect, responsibility, fairness and compassion. To me at least the highest COE among we mere mortals on earth is that of a mother, who also holds her warm arms around all, with she who is called "moral courage."

Conclusion: Ethics is an application which includes sound logic based upon more than casual inspection and must be a matter taken seriously today as in yester year. The survival our humankind depends upon order, not chaos, love not hate, compassion not ridicule and a quest to be stronger than a locomotive, run faster than a speeding bullet and being able to leap tall buildings with a single bound.

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## Code of Ethics Background

Ethics is best understood by taking the individual's time for instruction, understanding and application.

Professional Associations are among those who adopt a "code of ethics" for their memberships. Each administers compliance with the code according to the specific needs and wants of the organization. But all include the core elements of honesty, respect, responsibility, fairness and compassion. Many also include the provision of "moral courage" which has an ancient origin.

The ancient origin of ethics has not been altered in any significant form from its beginning and continues today because the philosophy, is a study; not mere words in which one does not seek understanding, truth and knowledge.

## Origins of Ethics

Influenced by Daoism, Zhou Dunyi (1017-1073) commented on the Yi Jing (Book of Changes) and explained the cosmic diagram of the great ultimate in a new way according to Confucian philosophy that emphasizes ethics. Superior people cultivate moral qualities and enjoy good fortune, while the inferior violate them and suffer. Following The Center of Harmony (Zhong Yong), Zhou Dunyi believed the foundation of a sage comes from cheng, which means sincerity, honesty, integrity, and authenticity. From this integrity he derived the five traditional Confucian virtues of humanity, justice, propriety, wisdom, and faithfulness. Humanity is loving; justice is doing what is right; propriety is putting things in order; wisdom is penetrating; and faithfulness is abiding by one's commitments. Zhou Dunyi explained that in human nature are strength and weakness, good and evil, and the mean (center).

Confucius also concluded that music was central to this ordered universe in that the harmony was essential for its preservation and expansion. Reading became central to the application, but carried a divine responsibility, for having read one now has the duty to expand knowledge by administering to the needs and wants of those who could not read. Understanding and a one-ness became crucial to accomplishment of the end.

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## Administration of Ethics

An avenue of administration involves that of self or a Gnostic belief" where the individual seeks to rise to the level of angels so that each may" come that mystical level which brings the individual into direct" contact with the Divine. This administration includes three" attributes: incorruptibility, aspiration and surrender."

Without reciting the entire Code of Chivalry, which is a second administration of a code of ethics, we will mention a few. To call one's self a Knight and be afforded all of the rights and privileges an oath was sworn to uphold and included the following:

- always champion right against wrong and good against evil.
- be polite and attentive.
- always keep your word
- show courage in the face of the enemy
- never be cruel in battle and show mercy and compassion to the enemy.

Knights as a group administered their code of ethics. Those in violation were immediately stripped of knighthood. There was no tribunal summoned nor a vote of the membership. Three knights in good standing held the authority.

Historical footnote to the Knights administration: Augustinus the philosopher eluded to "three knights in good standing and their authority" but included the concept of "redemption" which allowed reinstatement. However after three "falls from grace" was given a permanent ban upon being a knight. Hence an origin of "three strikes and you are out."

- Core moral values include honesty, respect, responsibility, fairness and compassion and have come to be a kind of litmus test for ethical behavior. Added to that list is a word "courage" which is now commonly accepted but absent from formal presentations but abundant in classroom discussions and formal gatherings of those involved specifically in the area of ethics.

Courage comes in several forms: moral versus physical courage, where moral is not about facing physical challenges that harm the body, but facing mental challenges that could harm one's reputation, emotional well-being, self-esteem or other. The first step in regaining high moral ground is to recognize moral courage which is like the string which ties a strand of pearls together and includes honesty, respect, responsibility, fairness, and compassion. A second step is recognizing what "moral courage" is not: which is the exact opposite or in other words the easy wrong, rather than the hard right. Step three would be to engage in acts of moral courage, because with every experience lived, we can engage in the next without as much fear. The danger lies in refusing to face the fear, by not daring to come to grips with it.

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## Conclusion

Codes of conduct, pledges of morality and other ethical charters have been with us from the beginning of time, yet there are humans who adopt lives by these codes knowing full well that others may not. That my good friends is the genesis of the Cem/Cema code of conduct which applies to our AP community. Least we loose ourselves and our morality, please do not use the excuse that "others are not following" to do anything other ourselves than to lift each person up who honestly and compassionately tries to "live the code." And who may be found wanting, will witness the "moral courage" of a friend to bring each back into fellowship.

P.S. To err is human; to forgive is divine!

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