

## Kohlberg's Moral Development Scenario

# The Heinz Dilemma

In Europe a woman was near death from a special kind of cancer. There was one drug that doctors thought might save her. It was a form of radium that a druggist in the same town had recently discovered. The drug was expensive to make, but the druggist was charging ten times what the drug cost to make. He paid \$200 for the radium and charged \$2,000 for a small dose of the drug. The sick woman's husband, Heinz, went to everyone he knew to borrow the money, but he could only get together about \$1,000, which is half of what it cost. He told the druggist that his wife was dying, and asked him to sell it cheaper or let him pay later. But the druggist said, "No, I discovered the drug and I'm going to make money on it." So Heinz got desperate and began to think about breaking into the man's store to steal the drug for his wife. Should Heinz steal the drug?

- **From a theoretical point of view, it is not important what the participant thinks that Heinz should do. Kohlberg's theory holds that the justification the participant offers is what is significant, the form of their response.** Below are some of many examples of possible arguments that belong to the six stages:

Level of Moral Reasoning	Stage	Possible Response
<b>Preconventional</b>	<i>Punishment / Obedience</i>	<p>Heinz should not steal the medicine because he will consequently be put in prison which means you are really terrible.</p> <p>Heinz should steal the medicine because it is only worth \$200 and not how much the druggist wanted for it; Heinz had even offered to pay for it and was not stealing anything else besides.</p>
	<i>Reward / Self-Interest</i>	<p>Heinz should steal the medicine because he will be much happier if he saves his wife, even if he will have to serve a prison sentence.</p> <p>Heinz should not steal the medicine because prison is an awful place, and he would probably languish over a jail cell more than his wife's death.</p>
<b>Conventional</b>	<i>Conformity / Social Approval</i>	<p>Heinz should steal the medicine because his wife expects it; he wants to be a good husband.</p> <p>Heinz should not steal the drug because stealing is bad and he is not a criminal; he tried to do everything he could without breaking the law, you cannot blame him.</p>
	<i>Law and Order</i>	<p>Heinz should not steal the medicine because the law prohibits stealing making it illegal.</p> <p>Heinz should steal the drug for his wife but also take the prescribed punishment for the crime as well as paying the druggist what he is owed. Criminals cannot just run around without regard to the law; actions have consequences.</p>
<b>Postconventional</b>	<i>Human Rights / Social Contract</i>	<p>Heinz should steal the medicine because everyone has a right to choose life, regardless of the law.</p> <p>Heinz should not steal the medicine because the scientist has a right to fair compensation. Even if his wife is sick it does not make his actions right.</p>
	<i>Universal Human Ethics</i>	<p>Heinz should steal the medicine, because saving a human life is a more fundamental value than the property rights of another person.</p> <p>Heinz should not steal the medicine, because others may need the medicine just as badly, and their lives are equally significant.</p>

