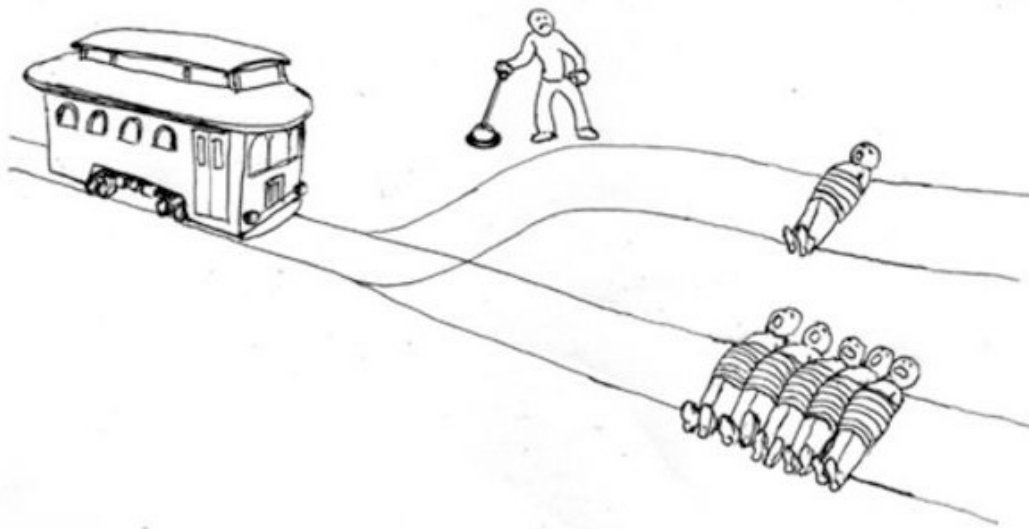


Area of Knowledge: Ethics

Knowledge question: How do we know what is right and wrong?

1. Do Now: The “Trolley Problem.”

Consider the following situation. You come upon a bizarre scene. A trolley is hurtling down the track with no brakes. There are five people tied to the tracks who will die if you do nothing. You find the lever that causes the track to shift. If you pull this lever, the train will switch tracks and only kill one person. What is the right thing to do? Why? Do not try to solve this problem by freeing one of the people or fixing the brakes on the trolley. You have only two choices: Kill five people or kill one.



Follow up questions:

- What if the five people on the tracks are “bad” people who are mean, return library books late without paying the fines, eat grapes in the supermarket without paying for them, and don’t call their mothers often? Does the character of those dying matter in your decision making?
- Rather than pulling a lever to kill one person to save five, what if instead of standing next to a lever you were standing next to another bystander and you knew that if you push this bystander onto the tracks, the train would hit the person, killing him and the train would safely derail saving the other five? Would it be “right” to kill that one person? Is this the same as pulling the lever from the first example? What is the difference?

2. *The Queen vs. Dudley and Stephens (1884)*

Were the sailors’ actions morally wrong?