

Trolley Problem Reflection Task

For each of the three scenarios below, consider the most ethical option. Identify the basis for your decision. In other words, what are you valuing? What facts are most important? If you change your decision (from A to B or from B to A), consider why you've done so. What values affected your decision?

SCENARIO 1) You see a runaway trolley moving toward five tied-up (or otherwise incapacitated) people lying on the tracks. You are standing next to a lever that controls a switch. If you pull the lever, the trolley will be redirected onto a side track and the five people on the main track will be saved. However, there is a single person lying on the side track. You have two options:

- A: Do nothing and allow the trolley to kill the five people on the main track.
- B: Pull the lever, diverting the trolley onto the side track where it will kill one person.

SCENARIO 2) As before, a trolley is hurtling down a track towards five people. You are on a bridge under which it will pass, and you can stop it by putting something very heavy in front of it. As it happens, there is a very large man next to you; your only way to stop the trolley is to push him over the bridge and onto the track, killing him to save five. Should you proceed?

- A: Do nothing and allow the trolley to kill the five people on the main track.
- B: Push the man, stopping the trolley from killing the other five people.

SCENARIO 3) This scenario is identical to #2 except that, here, you are certain that the large man with you on the bridge is guilty of having disabled the trolley brakes and is therefore guilty of putting the five people on the track in mortal danger.

- A: Do nothing and allow the trolley to kill the five people on the main track.
- B: Push the man, stopping the trolley from killing the other five people.