

GOLFING

I

Paul Ledbetter is employed at Bluestone Ltd. as a manufacturing engineer. He regularly meets with vendors who offer to supply Bluestone with needed services and parts. Paul discovers that one of the vendors, Duncan Mackey, like Paul, is an avid golfer. They begin comparing notes about their favorite golf courses. Paul says he's always wanted to play at the Cherry Orchard Country Club; but since it is a private club, he's never had the opportunity. Duncan says he's been a member there for several years and that he's sure he can arrange a guest visit for Paul. Should Paul accept the invitation? Discuss.

II

Paul accepts the invitation. He, Duncan, and two other members have a very competitive, but friendly, 18 hole match. Paul is teamed up with one of the other members, Harvey. Although Paul does not normally bet money in matches, Duncan and the others persuade him to play for \$3.00 a hole ("Just to keep things interesting"), along with the losers buying drinks for the winners. Paul and his partner win 5 holes to their opponents 2, thus winning \$9.00 each. While they are having drinks Duncan says, "I think it's only fair that Bob and I get a rematch. What do you say, Paul? You can be Harvey's guest on Guest Day next month." Should Paul accept the invitation? Discuss.

III

Paul accepts the invitation. The match is closer this time, but Paul and Harvey win \$3.00 each. Soon Duncan and Harvey nominate Paul for membership at Cherry Orchard. The membership committee approves, and Paul is invited to join the country club. Paul accepts, thus beginning a long golfing relationship with Duncan.

Gradually Paul overcomes his resistance to betting on the golf course, and the stakes eventually grow somewhat larger. Although Duncan occasionally bests Paul, the upper hand is clearly Paul's. In the subsequent years Paul does not keep close track of his overall winnings, but he realizes that, all told, he has won several hundred dollars from Duncan. Meanwhile, Duncan is still one of the vendors with whom Paul interacts. Does this pose any ethical problems? Discuss.

IV

Bluestone's vice-president of manufacturing calls a special meeting for engineers in her division who deal with vendors. She announces: "I've been told by the president that we have to make some cutbacks in the vending area. We're going to be in real trouble if we don't get more cost effective. So, I want each of you to do a review--your targeted cutback is 20% If your unit deals with 10 vendors now, cut it back to 8, and so on. Give me your recommendations--with a brief rationale by the first of next week."

Paul next discusses the problem with the 2 other engineers in his unit who deal with vendors. They have to recommend the elimination of 2 vendors. Should Paul bring up his golfing relationship with Duncan? Discuss.

V

Paul mentions his golfing relationship with Duncan. He raises the question of whether this compromises his

objectivity. The other engineers reassure him, pointing out that they, too, have formed friendships with some of the vendors and that each of them will just have to do the best they can at objectively assessing the situation. As the discussion continues, it becomes more and more worrisome to Paul that, if he were to be objective about it, he would have to recommend Duncan's elimination. Should he tell the others that this is what he is thinking, or should he let them take the initiative? [This way, either they would recommend two others for elimination--thus sparing Duncan--or perhaps both would recommend Duncan and it would not be necessary for Paul to recommend against his friend.] Discuss.

VI

Paul lets the other two engineers take the initiative. They both recommend that Duncan be eliminated. Paul says nothing in opposition to their recommendation. The group decides to think about it overnight and make its final recommendation the next day.

Paul and Duncan are scheduled for a golf match later that same afternoon. Since Paul and Duncan are good friends, Paul decides he should tell Duncan about the bad news he is likely to receive soon. Duncan is understandably upset. He points out that he has done his best for Bluestone all these years, and he has always been pleased with what he thought was a good working relationship--especially with Paul. Finally, he asks Paul what he said to the other engineers. What should Paul say? Discuss.

VII

Paul tells Duncan that he did not oppose the recommendations of the other two engineers. He reminds Duncan that he had to try to be objective about this: "We all talked about how hard it is to deal with this since friendships are involved. But we agreed that our basic obligation has to be to do what is best for Bluestone. Friendship should not be allowed to overturn good business. So, hard as it was, when I tried to be objective about it, I couldn't really disagree with their recommendations."

As Paul painfully explains his position, Duncan's face reddens. Finally Duncan furiously explodes, "I don't believe this! What kind of friend are you, anyway? Didn't I get you into Cherry Orchard? And how good a golfer do you think you are, anyway? How do you think you've won all that money from me over the years? You don't really think you're **that** much better at golf than I am do you?"

Discuss the ethical issues that you now think this case raises. Would you now like to reconsider any of your earlier answers?

COMMENTARIES

Joseph Ellin

I

May Paul accept Duncan's invitation to play golf at Duncan's club? Duncan is a vendor from whom Paul makes purchases. So there is a potential for corruption in an friendship relationship. All things considered, however, I don't see why not. Duncan is a potential good contact for Paul. There are all sorts of opportunities at the golf club. And Paul has a right to his private life and his golf games. However Paul should be aware of the potential conflict of interest. There's no reason to worry about anything yet, but he ought to be alert to dangers.

II

Play for money? Why not? No reason to suspect a plot! Is he getting drawn into something? Maybe, but he's a grown-up and can take care of himself, one hopes, which means he isn't yet at the point where he wonders if he's being compromised in some way by betting with his suppliers. Presumably playing for money is illegal. But this does not seem to prevent everybody from doing it, and why should Paul set himself up as holier than thou, unless he has real scruples about gambling? If he does, then of course he shouldn't accept. What he has to be wary about is getting too deeply into debt, either financially or through friendship, with Duncan. At this point, he might protect himself by making it his business to remind Duncan from time to time that their relationship is purely golfing, which won't affect Paul's business decisions.

III

Things seem to be going along very nicely. Paul's golf game is flourishing and so is his sporting life. Several hundred dollars won over "years" is not really a lot of money. Paul has no reason to fear he's putting himself in a compromising situation with regard to the money. However his evidently close friendship with Duncan might compromise his judgment with regard to contract awards, so he'd better look carefully at his business dealing with Duncan. Perhaps he might have another person in his office look over some of his contract decisions, just to make sure he's not letting something slip by because of his friendship. And perhaps he ought to inform his superiors of his golfing relationship, so that there's no appearance of deception. And perhaps Bluestone Ltd. routinely reviews its contract procedures, in which case Paul can safely assume that such reviews would identify any problems. In any case, if Paul is prudent he's made it clear to Duncan that their relationship is purely golf and nothing in the way of business can come of it.

So Paul might be clear in his own mind that there is nothing amiss in his relationship with Duncan, but if there are competing vendors, they might raise the question of conflict of interest. Mere friendship without financial connection is however at best a flimsy ground for making conflict of interest accusations stick. Perhaps Paul should be sure that his superiors at Bluestone are aware of his golfing relationship, so they can assign Duncan's business to another contract officer, if they wish. If the superiors approve the golfing relationship, and Paul is happy with it in his own mind, there's no reason to suspect a problem before one arises.

IV

It is now necessary to cut back on vendors and the engineers must decide which ones will be dropped. At this point there is a potential problem since Paul might be expected to be biased in Duncan's favor. The other engineers should be told about Paul's golfing relationship with Duncan, if they haven't already. Were Paul not to reveal the relationship and then participate in the cut-back decision, he's be in the position of either having to vote against Duncan, or face the possibility that his favorable vote might some day be questioned.

V

Ideally Paul should not participate in the cut-back decision. However if the other two engineers are comfortable with it, accepting his word that he will appraise the situation without favoritism, it does not seem wrong for him to continue. On the contrary, the principle that no one should make decisions regarding friends might render all decisions impossible, since the other engineers might also have friends among the vendors. Making adverse decisions against those you are friends with is something that might have to happen, not only in business but any institution. If not a vendor, then a fellow employee, subordinate, or job candidate. The alternative to learning to

live with this would be never to make friends with anyone within your business community.

Paul reluctantly concludes that Duncan should be the vendor who is dropped. He doesn't want to propose this himself, however. He thinks he will keep his view to himself, so that either Duncan will be spared or it will be the others who will decide to cut him. This contemplated strategy is clever but not entirely fair to the others, since they too may have friends whom they might be loathe to vote against. Furthermore by not speaking his mind he is biasing the discussion in favor of Duncan, since potentially persuasive adverse comments could be made about the other vendors. Paul by considering this strategy is covering himself and avoiding the problem rather than facing it.

At the same time, if Paul thinks he owes Duncan something, he's perfectly free to try to make the best case he can for Duncan in the committee. It's only fair that every vendor have someone on the committee who makes his case; perhaps Paul could convince the committee to set up such a procedure, or informally ask the other members to make the strongest case for each of the vendors in turn. Once this is done, however, Paul owes it to the other members and the other vendors that he state his mind frankly.

VI

The other two engineers recommend against Duncan. It's not clear why Paul doesn't oppose the other two engineers, unless he thinks the case against Duncan is so clear that counter-arguments would be not only useless but antagonistic. Since he feels he has a duty to protect Duncan, at least to a certain extent, he might at the least assure himself that every point in Duncan's favor has been made and considered by the committee. His failure to say anything therefore is puzzling.

Paul decides to give Duncan the bad news himself, and Duncan wants to know what Paul said in the committee. Since Duncan has asked Paul what he said, Paul might consider confessing that he didn't say anything. But first he should reflect whether the deliberations with the other two engineers are supposed to be confidential, and whether he might compromise their positions if he tells Duncan that it was they and not him who voted against him. If so, then he has to decline D's request. If there's no question of confidentiality, then he has to tell Duncan that the best he could do for him was not vote, since if he had voted he'd have voted against. This may be difficult to say to Duncan, but presumably Paul is confident that the decision was correct.

However his position with regard to Duncan is cloudy, since he knows he really did not do his best to put Duncan's case in the best possible light. He's probably going to want to evade any precise discussion with Duncan of what was said at the meeting. Vague reference to confidentiality is not out of order at this point.

VII

Paul tells the truth to Duncan, whose reaction is not pleasant. Given that Paul apparently thinks he ought to have done more on Duncan's behalf, his admission that he said nothing is courageous. Duncan's outburst is childish and contemptible, and Paul should ignore it, though further friendship between them is going to be difficult unless Duncan apologizes. Duncan's admission that he has been craftily letting Paul beat him will probably poison any future relationship however, since Duncan reveals himself as untrustworthy and manipulative.

Neil R. Luebke

The main ethical question in this case is whether Paul should compromise his best professional judgment out of

friendship for Duncan. The unpleasant situation in which Paul finds himself at the end of the case is the result of a series of decisions along the way which, when viewed in isolation, may seem harmless enough. Virtually no one who reads this case will think that Paul ought to rescue Duncan from the cut list, yet many readers will hold out hope for a solution that will preserve the friendship, put Paul's mind at ease, and calm Duncan's feelings of outrage. Unfortunately, given the scenario, there probably is no such utopian solution. Paul is in a type of conflict of interest situation, one which he could have avoided but did not. Indeed, he contributed in significant ways to its developing.

We can imagine alternative scenarios in which friendship might serve to compromise the carrying out of professional obligations. For instance, suppose Paul and Duncan are neighbors, that their wives meet frequently and their children play together. Suppose further that Duncan Mackey often loaned Paul Ledbetter tools and helped him with some of the tasks around the house, and that Duncan's wife often took Paul's children to school meetings or to the swimming pool because Paul's wife works part time. Suppose Duncan watches Paul's pets while Paul is on vacation, and suppose, what is even a more extreme case, that while Paul was on a vacation, a fire started in Paul's garage that Duncan quickly put out, saving much of Paul's property. Given events similar to the "Golfing" scenario, you could imagine the scenario ending with the friendship in total ruins, with the wives refusing to speak to each other, with the children forbidden to play with each other, with a high fence going up between their properties, and with guard dogs stationed on both sides.

But let us return to the original scenario in "Golfing." First, consider Duncan Mackey. Like any other vendor to Bluestone Ltd., Duncan would understandably be happy to develop and maintain close relationships with the people in Bluestone Ltd. We know very little about Duncan's motives, but we do have some clues. We do know that betting on golf matches was not Paul's idea but clearly seems to be favored by Duncan. There is nothing in the scenario that suggests that Duncan is upset by his overall losses to Paul or that he regrets this relationship. (I have a friend who, when we were younger, bought me a Coke from a machine and refused to take my money in reimbursement. He said to me, "No, I want you to be in debt to me for life!" I later succeeded in paying him back; however, I will always be in his debt for this story.) Duncan seems to be aware that by losing he is putting Paul in his debt. In fact, Duncan's explosive words at the end suggest that he has made efforts, through getting him into Cherry Orchard Country Club and through losing money in golf, to create obligations on the part of Paul. We all know stories about playing golf with the boss and making sure we do not win. Given the details of our story then, it seems as if Duncan was cultivating Paul for selfish business purposes.

Should we therefore regard Paul Ledbetter as a poor victim who had little control over his fate? Hardly! First of all, Paul should have made an effort to establish a reputation among all the vendors for being a fair, impartial judge who was conscientious about his professional responsibilities and was in no way open to corruption. Duncan still might have volunteered to arrange a guest visit for Paul to the country club, but Paul should have made it clear that he is opposed to accepting much in the way of gifts from vendors. He does not want anyone inside or outside the company to have the opinion that he is open to the highest bidder. While it would have been very difficult for Paul, since he was an invited guest, to refuse to participate in the money pool for the golf matches, he could have avoided a reappearance. He might have replied to Duncan's remark that it is only fair that Bob and he get a rematch by saying, in a half-joking way, "Duncan, it might be even fairer for you and Bob if you'd line up a real duffer to play with Harvey next time. I appreciate the hospitality all of you have shown, but I really don't think I should impose upon you again." Further on down the line, if Paul is interested in joining Cherry Orchard Country Club and needs a member to support his application, it probably would not be wise for him to request support from Duncan. He has met Harvey and Bob, and there are possibly other persons in the country club who could support his nomination. As time goes on, he could have avoided playing golf for money against

Duncan. He could have played with other members of the club as well.

Another part of the scenario deals with the meeting between Paul and the other two engineers to decide on the 20 percent cutback in vendors. Here a number of procedures might be followed. For instance, the engineers might decide to each rate all of the vendors, and those with the lowest combined rating would be eliminated. Or the engineers might decide to allow a person to abstain from rating a close friend. While this latter approach has some merit, it should not be used as a device for Paul to shift the "blame" to his co-workers when explaining the situation to Duncan. In fact, there is no reason why any confidences between the engineers concerning the selection should be broken. All Duncan is entitled to know is that the decision was made in a responsible manner by a group of engineers on the basis of a company policy. Duncan is not entitled to know the individual vote of each of the engineers, and to reveal it would be a disservice to Paul's colleagues.

Paul should remind himself that this is not the first time that company decisions have adversely affected friends. There may be cases in the past in which some friends have been laid off. There may be situations in which a friend has been passed over for a promotion. If Paul examines himself to determine why he feels such pangs of conscience concerning the rejection of Duncan, he may come to see that Duncan has been cultivating his feelings of obligation. If their friendship were purer, we might expect that Duncan, rather than retaliating with a display of outrage and claiming betrayal, would understand the unfortunate situation of choice the company placed Paul in, express his confidence that Paul had done the best he could in that situation, and reaffirmed his respect for him personally. Unfortunately it sometimes takes a case like this for one to find out who one's real friends are.

Lea P. Stewart

Organizational communication theory tells us that successful organizational employees participate in both the formal communication network within the organization (the chain of command) and informal communication networks outside the organization (such as formal clubs, sports activities or community groups). Although some extra-organizational networks are open to everyone, many business deals have been concluded in private clubs or on the golf course. As more and more women have entered the work force, private clubs and other male-dominated activities have been criticized for excluding women. There have been instances, for example, in which women business executives have been asked to eat lunch in the kitchen while their male colleagues were permitted to eat in the dining room of a private club. The government has responded to these problems by passing laws that make informal networks that restrict their membership based on gender, race, ethnicity, or religion illegal in most instances.

This case presents an instance in which participation in an informal communication network (the Cherry Orchard Country Club) was not technically illegal, but caused problems for an organizational employee nevertheless. Paul Ledbetter accepts Duncan Mackey's invitation to the Cherry Orchard Country Club to play golf and subsequently become a member. Their relationship develops into what Paul believes is a friendship. Paul also wins a considerable sum of money betting on golf games with Duncan and others at the club. This situation is complicated by the fact that Duncan is a vendor who supplies services or parts to Paul's employer, Bluestone Ltd. Paul's relationship with Duncan goes smoothly until Paul informs him that Bluestone will probably drop him as a vendor. Duncan gets upset and indicates that he has been cheating at golf so that Paul will win, feel good about their relationship, and do more business with Duncan's company.

Paul clearly has made some poor choices in this case. His initial choice to play golf with Duncan is problematic from an ethical standpoint. He knows Duncan's company wants to do business with his company, yet he accepts Duncan's offer to play at Cherry Orchard as if there were "no strings attached." He seems surprised when he

discovers that Duncan has been letting him win at golf. (This assumes, of course, that Duncan has been cheating and does not just say this in anger when he learns that he is being dropped as a vendor for Paul's company).

Paul's decision to tell Duncan that he will probably be dropped as a vendor is also a poor choice. At this point in time, this information is confidential company information, and it may not even be true. His group of three engineers has been discussing eliminating Duncan's company as a vendor, but an official decision has not been made. In fact, their recommendation has not even been presented to higher management. There are many factors that could intervene and reverse this decision. Leaking rumors to vendors is not a good business practice. Paul has a clear ethical responsibility to his employer to keep company information confidential.

Although Paul clearly is not above criticism in this instance, the primary difficulty in this case is caused by Bluestone's vice-president of manufacturing. Paul made some poor decisions, but he did not receive appropriate guidance from specific company policies. It is the responsibility of the vice-president for manufacturing to set organizational policies that govern the relationships between the manufacturing engineers and the vendors. There should be clear organizational policies concerning the behavior of the manufacturing engineers with respect to the vendors. The organization should have a policy regarding voluntary outside activities, such as golfing, with vendors. If the organizational policy permits such activities, the vice-president can then make her decisions with the knowledge that her subordinates are engaging in these activities with vendors. In addition, she should have set specific guidelines on the nature of information that could be shared with vendors and the timing of the information transmission. It should have been clear to Paul that he was not to speak with any vendor until the cuts had been officially decided upon by management. The vice-president of manufacturing should have had a policy for distributing the news about the cuts. She asked for recommendations from the units, but she should have stated how the information would be used and how the decisions would be disseminated once she received the information.

In this case, Paul's naivete about the business world made a bad situation even worse. He believed that he could take something from a vendor without being expected to return the favor in some way. He forgot that Duncan was not just a friend but was also a business associate. Paul confused his responsibility to share information with a friend with the fact that Duncan was also a vendor who might expect a return on his investment. The lesson to be learned from this case is that the information that is appropriate to share with social friends is not necessarily the same information that would be appropriate to share with business associates. Organizations need clear policies to make sure their employees are able to handle the ethical challenges of dealing with people outside the organization who are trying to influence their decisions.

John B. Dilworth

This case raises a number of interesting and controversial issues about potential conflicts of interest on the one hand, and the relationship between different social roles (e.g., friend versus business associate) on the other. I shall briefly suggest a general theoretical framework for dealing with these kinds of problems, and show how it applies to the present case.

To begin with, is there any initial problem in an employee of one company (Paul Ledbetter of Bluestone, Ltd., in the case) accepting hospitality or other benefits from an employee of another company (Duncan Mackey), when the companies involved have a business relationship (Duncan's company sells items to Bluestone)?

Answer: if each is a private business, and not subject to direct government regulations because neither accepts any government contracts, then whether there is a problem entirely depends on the specific regulations that each

company chooses to implement for itself. Broadly speaking, companies may choose any legal cozy or distant relations with their suppliers and customers as they please, with corporate self-interest being their main guide.

Certainly there may be great social and political interest in how businesses actually carry out such private, internal regulations of their interactions. And this may lead to general governmental regulations applying to all businesses, or tax laws governing business lunches, gifts, etc. But my main point is that there is no general moral problem of 'conflicts of interest' in business (of course, this is not to deny that there may be other moral problems concerning such activities). Instead, any real problems that arise are the result of specific conflicts between specific regulations (whether private or governmental) applying to businesses or employees.

From this point of view, the potential problem in Paul Ledbetter accepting hospitality (guest country-club membership, etc.) from Duncan Mackey is first of all, whether either company has a regulation forbidding such situations. If not, the potential problems shift directly to the self-interests of each company. For example, Bluestone Ltd. might be concerned that employee Paul could become biased in favor of Duncan's company, and hence fail to be objective when Bluestone needs his best judgement in pruning the vendor list. On the other hand, Duncan's company may be more concerned with whether his entertaining expenses really will help to cement their relationship with Bluestone.

Next we need to discuss the 'two hat' problem (as it might be called), that one individual may have more than one role or 'wear two hats' in a situation (e.g., friend and business associate). This issue is closely related to the 'potential conflicts of interest' issues discussed above. There are those (unlike me) who think there exist moral problems of conflict of interest even when there are no applicable regulations. Presumably they would appeal to some kind of moral conflict of attitudes or personal roles in business and other situations (which roles or attitudes can exist independently of written regulations), in defending their view. My position on the other hand would be that there are no moral problems which result specifically from one person adopting or possessing more than one point of view or attitude toward a situation.

Actually, I shall defend a view which is even stronger, namely that there are no fundamental conflicts of any kind (moral or non-moral) between attitudes or social roles, whether or not the roles apply to a single person. (I ignore cases of completely incompatible roles, because they could not generate problems of conflict since they never occur together.) This may seem an extreme and therefore hard-to-defend thesis, but it actually rests on the following partly normative thesis about social roles. It is that our concepts of individual social roles tend to be, and ought to be, defined (with suitable adjustments as necessary) so that they are as compatible with each other as possible, i.e., so that they cause as little 'friction' as possible between people who adopt the roles (including, as a special case, the 'two-hat' case of a single person adopting two roles).

The reasons as to why roles generally are, and should be, designed for maximum compatibility with each other are broadly consequentialist, such as that life would be much harder and more unpleasant if conflicts or frictions between roles were to occur. For example, if the roles of being a husband or a wife were incompatible with the role of being a paid employee, clearly either marriage or the industrial revolution would have to go. Even any significant friction between these roles would have widespread bad consequences.

Such potential bad consequences are one reason why feminists have been so concerned to separate and distinguish the roles of wife and wage-earner, so that a woman's commitment to one role has no implications about any commitment to the other role. Making roles more compatible serves the cause of increasing human freedom.

An example more relevant to the present case is that it is in the best interest of all of us that the roles of friend and business associate should be kept as compatible with each other as possible. Only thus (to give just one reason for this) can one maximize one's freedom both to choose one's friends, and to choose one's business associates. Such maximization of freedom also includes the case when a single person is both a friend and a business associate of another person (e.g., Duncan Mackey is both a friend and business associate of Paul Ledbetter).

The above examples and discussion suggest the following criteria for roles or attitudes to be compatible. First, roles should in general be logically independent of each other (ignoring trivial 'inclusion' cases such as being a parent versus being a father). In other words, there shouldn't be any logical implications concerning other roles which follow simply from a person having a given role.

Second, the characteristics of roles should in some sense be 'logically segregated', so that significant or characteristic activities involved in describing or defining one role are not also involved in describing or defining any other role. ('Logical segregation' is related to but different from logical independence.) This criterion is concerned with what makes a role substantially distinct from others, and with its internal coherence.

A practical illustration of why we (as a culture) do, and ought to, 'logically segregate' roles is based on the very basic need to be able to easily recognize roles and distinguish them from one another. For example, if someone calls on the phone, one needs to be able to easily tell if it is a business or a personal call (even if one does not know the caller, in the case when a personal call is from some friend of someone else in your family). If the roles of businessperson and friend had too many overlapping characteristics, or if they lacked any internal coherence, the making of such judgements about role would be much harder and much more time-consuming.

A third criterion for roles to be compatible (or 'mutually frictionless') is that each should be complete and self-sufficient. Completeness here means that the role covers every thing, and only those things, which ideally that role should cover, and self-sufficiency means that there is enough structure in the role to handle any aspect of the total coverage of the role.

For example, in primitive societies with barter economies the role of businessperson is incomplete (in that whole areas of monetary policy are not addressed by the role), and also the role will not be self-sufficient because there are questions about barter which can be raised (such as about equivalent monetary values) which cannot be answered within (that primitive form of) the role.

The justification for the third criterion is indirect, but compelling nevertheless. If a role is incomplete and not self-sufficient, then we may assume that there are social needs which should be addressed by that role but (currently) are not. Hence those needs, if addressed at all, must be addressed through some other role (or roles). But then that other role is likely to have internal conflicts because it lacks internal coherence. Also, the original and second roles will not be adequately 'logically segregated' because there will be unwanted dependencies between them. Hence the two roles in question will not be fully compatible. Overall then, this shows that the third criterion is a necessary condition for role compatibility.

The third criterion is also important in understanding the structure and integrity of moral reasoning involving different roles. Intuitively, roles can be kept psychologically compatible with each other, and one's thinking will not be morally compromised, as long as thought and reasoning about each role can be kept separate from thought about other roles. In other words, rational practical thinking requires that deliberations be conducted in 'watertight compartments', with each role being considered separately without any intermixing of arguments relevant to one in deliberation about another. This will only be possible if each role can indeed be 'complete in

itself, i.e., complete and self-sufficient in the current sense.

To summarize this section: we have strong consequentialist reasons for enforcing (as far as possible) a conceptual structure on roles, attitudes or interests such that they are interpreted as being (or made to be) compatible with each other in the above senses, and which structure is evaluative in the sense that reference is made to roles, etc., as they should be, not simply to facts about roles as they are.

To round out the defence of my position, it is important that I be able to explain (or explain away) cases of real or apparent conflicts of social roles and interests. This will now be done in a few instances, using a variety of examples, including one based on the current case.

First, an extreme example of conflict involving complete incompatibilities of role: the traditional role of a monarch (a queen or a king). This was conceived by all as fundamentally ruling out or completely conflicting with some other roles such as that of being a friend. In this extreme case, perhaps being a king completely excluded the possibility of one's also being a friend to someone. But then there could not be a moral problem of whether a king's friendship with someone was compromised by his being a king, because there could not be any such friendship at all. I do not deny that there are such complete incompatibilities between roles, but clearly they are of no moral interest.

A more moderate case of conflict of interest is between being a parent and being a friend to one's children. Many will attest that sometimes as a matter of fact, the specific way in which they act as a parent does conflict with their being good friends with their children. That is, playing the parental role for them in fact does seem sometimes to diminish or even undermine such friendship.

However, what should we conclude from this? It is inappropriate and premature to draw the general conclusion that therefore the role of parent is incompatible with that of friend to one's children, and that anyone adopting both roles must be morally compromised by the situation. Instead, parents in such situations are much more likely to say that they have failed as parents (or failed as friends), and that it is their failures, rather than the roles of parenting and friendship themselves, which explain why things went wrong.

Even if such failures are widespread in society, the search for an understanding of 'good parenting/friendship', which could avoid such conflicts, will continue. If necessary we will even adjust the definitions of the roles (for example, by diminishing emphasis on parental authority as essential to good parenting) in order to achieve role compatibility. This supports my claim that our role-concepts are partly evaluative, and that the achievement or preservation of role compatibility is a significant factor in this evaluative element.

The third example is from the general situation in the current case. Duncan Mackey and Paul Ledbetter have become good friends through their years of playing golf together. Question: Isn't Paul's business judgement of Duncan's company bound to be influenced by his personal friendship with Duncan, hence causing a genuine conflict of interest?

Answer: Paul's judgement may be influenced perhaps, but that doesn't mean that his judgement is determined or irrevocably altered by his friendship. As long as Paul can take steps to control or minimize the influence when necessary, there is no actual conflict of interests or roles. If Paul does take the right steps, there's no problem. If Paul doesn't take steps to control the influence, he is morally guilty of bad judgement, or giving in to temptation, etc. In other words, any moral problem is a problem about Paul's choices rather than about any conflict of roles. Hence there isn't any significant way in which Paul is morally compromised by the situation itself (i.e., by his

playing several roles).

This example can be generalized. Cases where it is claimed that persons are involved in conflicts of interest (when these are not based on contractual considerations) are really just cases of moral temptation, when one is tempted to do something that one knows one should not do. 'Two-hat' cases naturally give rise to temptations, since often factors belonging to one could (physically rather than morally) be used to apply additional leverage to another. However, if one does give in to such temptations, it simply is a case of immoral action in convenient circumstances. It doesn't show that there was a real conflict of interests, or that there was anything inherently morally compromising about the combination of roles.

In order to be fair to the other side, let us consider a more extreme example in which Paul's business judgement is so influenced by his friendship with Duncan that psychologically he cannot be objective, no matter how hard he tries. (Note again that it is not the interests or roles which conflict, but rather that Paul is unable to think about the situation without mixing them up or confusing them.) First, if Duncan realizes he cannot be objective, he can take suitable action such as to inform his fellow committee members at Bluestone of this, and let them make the decision about Duncan's company.

Second, even if Paul does not specifically realize he cannot be objective in this case, it is part of his general duty as an engineer or manager to learn about the kinds of situations in which his decisions might be judged by others to be biased, and so to withdraw himself from making a decision in such cases. In other words, there are always things which Duncan could do to prevent any moral harm occurring because of his confusion and general inability to 'handle' such situations. Hence he is not morally compromised by his roles in such cases. If Paul does allow himself to be swayed by undue influence from a friend, the blame is his alone.

It remains to relate my general view that 'roles don't really conflict' to my initial view that social rules or regulations prohibiting some specific conflicts can be legitimate. For example, it would be reasonable to prohibit a businessperson from submitting a bid on behalf of company B to a company C, while at the same time he himself is the individual at C who judges all bids submitted (this is a factually possible situation if he holds both jobs).

The reason for having a regulation against such a 'conflict' is because of the very strong temptations to bias in such a case, through a mixing or conflation of the person's role as advocate for B with his role as impartial judge for C. That is, as before it is the strong temptations to moral backsliding or failure which are our legitimate concerns here, not any conflicts between the roles themselves.

Such cases are closely analogous to other potential moral temptations or failings which regulations address, such as those preventing a manager from depositing corporate funds in his personal bank account with the intention of repaying it shortly. In such a case it is very clear that the rule seeks to remove the temptations, and no-one would say that the rule is really seeking to prevent a 'conflict of interest' between his roles as private depositor and as corporate depositor in his own bank account. In other words, talk about 'conflicts of interest' is at best a metaphor, and often a very unhelpful metaphor, for talking about moral temptations.