

things: it minimizes the damage across the entire system that includes you as well as Taylor and Kelly and it generates a set of conditions under which Kelly and Taylor might be able to deal with their relationship issues in a way that could lead to greater happiness for them both. You believe it would be better (that is, less harmful, more conducive to happiness) if Kelly chooses to end the affair, confesses it, and then commits to working with Taylor either to repair or to end their relationship. Taylor's receiving information about the affair from you first would probably make things much worse for both of them, and it would undoubtedly cause trouble in your own interactions with them as individuals. Kelly is unlikely to do this without the pressure of possible exposure by you. Your choice tends to lead to the best result.

Kelly still disagrees, though (of course!). After all, your ultimatum certainly makes Kelly unhappy, for which reason it damages your relationship. It also, Kelly claims, will lead to much more misery than just keeping the affair secret. Taylor cannot be hurt, after all, by cheating about which Taylor does not know. If Kelly ended the affair without revealing anything and committed to the process of trying to repair the problems in their relationship that provided the incentive for infidelity, that would be ever so much better for them both in terms of minimizing misery and promoting happiness. It would also be better for you and for Kelly and Taylor's children.

In response to this objection, you change tactics and approach your dilemma from the rule-utilitarian point of view. Using that approach requires you to consider whether, as a rule, it is better to conceal infidelity or to reveal it. It occurs to you that a world in which people who discover deceptions of this kind do not reveal them is a world in which deception in general is much more likely to happen. A world in which deception is much more likely to happen seems to you to be a much more dangerous and harmful world in which people are more likely to be honest instead of deceptive – such a world might well see crimes go unpunished, as well as seeing an increase in crimes that depend on fraud and deception. It would be a world, on the whole, that is much less conducive to human happiness and well being than a world in which there are fewer incentives to deceive.

Your decision stands.