



## The Parable of the Sadhu (Harvard Business Review Video Series, (31 minutes))

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### **The Parable of the Sadhu (Harvard Business Review Video Series, (31 minutes))** By Harvard Business Review

When does a group have responsibility for the well-being of an individual? And what are the differences between the ethics of the individual and the ethics of the corporation? Those are the questions Bowen McCoy wanted readers to explore in this HBR Classic, first published in September-October 1983. In 1982, McCoy spent several months hiking through Nepal. Midway through the difficult trek, he encountered an Indian holy man, or sadhu. Wearing little clothing and shivering in the bitter cold, he was barely alive. McCoy and the other travelers immediately wrapped him in warm clothing and gave him food and drink. A few members of the group broke off to help move the sadhu down toward a village two days' journey away, but they soon left him in order to continue their way up the slope. What happened to the sadhu? In his retrospective commentary, McCoy notes that he never learned the answer to that question. On the Himalayan slope, a collection of individuals was unprepared for a sudden dilemma. McCoy asks, how do organizations respond appropriately to ethical crises?

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