Potter Box
presented by Cliff Christians
1. Define the Situation
2. Identify the Values
3. Identify the Principles
4. Choose Your Loyalties

Make the decision (or start over)
The Potter Box, expanded by Jay Black

MAKE THE DECISION (or start over)

1. DEFINE THE SITUATION
Define the ethical situation or dilemma.
Look at it in detail, and from points of view other than your own. As the case develops, recognize that additional insights may cause you to adjust your selections in other quadrants of the Potter Box. You may have to return to this quadrant and go through the cycle again.

2. IDENTIFY THE VALUES
Identify the values—beliefs that define what you stand for. Values are helpful in rationalizing or defending your behavior. They are standards of choice through which persons and groups seek consistency in our values. Some values are instrumental, or desirable modes of conduct. Others are terminal, or end results.

3. IDENTIFY THE PRINCIPLES
Don’t moralize or give inconsistent, dogmatic, ad hoc advice. Use moral philosophy instead, giving general, consistent advice drawn from the wisdom of the ages. The ethical principles, as laid down by philosophers, should illuminate the issues.

4. CHOOSE YOUR LOYALTIES
To whom are you ultimately loyal, and to whom at intermediate steps are you loyal? Who gets hurt? Who benefits? You may have competing loyalties to yourself, your family and friends, your boss, your company or firm, your professional colleagues, your audience, your news sources, and to society at large.

MAKE THE DECISION (or start over)