

## Impersonation at an Exam

Through this article I would like to reach out to all members of the student community who have ever faced the situation of **making an unethical choice**. I am a fourth-year Engineering student and I committed the **biggest mistake of my life** when I decided to **impersonate someone at an examination**. I haven't yet recovered from the shock and mental anguish that I went through over a span of a couple months following being caught and going through the university's judicial process.

I had been pursued by an individual who had, over the past year or so, befriended me and offered minor helpful acts during this time. I had come to know that he had been struggling in several of his courses. After indebting me with his minor favours, he gradually began to put pressure on me to help him out in his studies in little ways. Most of the time he wanted me to tutor him on a subject before a particular exam. Gradually, he started demanding more when he saw that I had fulfilled his previous requests. Until one day when he suggested the idea of me going in to write an examination for this one course he found particularly difficult. I was shocked to hear the idea and couldn't imagine doing such a thing. His persuasion continued over the next few weeks as the date of the exam got closer. Each time he mentioned how he had helped me in the past and that now this was my turn to help him out. I should have known that his favours came nowhere close to what I was being asked to do. **My poor judgment finally led me to agree to his request without even thinking of the consequences.**

Needless to say, on the day of the examination I was caught in the act. I was confronted by the supervising staff and the professor about what I was trying to do and I was left speechless. While I managed to make an excuse justifying my act and leave the examination premises, what began haunted me for a long, long time. I was soon contacted by the Academic Integrity Office to arrange a meeting since a misconduct complaint had been filed against me. I ignored the request for a while, during which I faced severe mental stress. **I spent entire sleepless nights cursing at myself for what I had done.**

When I finally decided to come face to face with the reality, I had already lost valuable time. Instead of taking responsibility for my actions right from the beginning I had left an impression on the minds of those pursuing this matter that I was in fact guilty and trying to deny responsibility. Soon, Judicial Panel hearings were scheduled to hear my case. I was totally unprepared. The university was seeking to suspend me for a few years. This would have killed my career. Eventually I decided that **taking responsibility for my actions was the right thing to do**. I tried to seek a lesser punishment for the offence. The punishment that was finally offered to me has still left a big blot on my career.

I have learned the **importance of fair judgment** in life following this incident. I should have judged the character of the person I had allowed to get close to me. The actions we take are eventually our own responsibility. Once we commit a mistake, it is a bigger mistake to deny responsibility. My advice to anyone who finds him/herself in a similar predicament is to **use ethical judgment** in time which can save you from such a day. We are all going to lead adult lives from this point on and we have to learn that each of us is responsible for our acts. If you do commit a similar mistake of dishonesty, please come forward to admit it. The university does not seek to ruin our careers once we make mistakes. It simply wants to educate us as to the **importance of moral judgment**. An example must also be set for future students who should refrain from using any unfair tactics in academics. **I have learned my lesson.**

**Get educated.** There is useful material with the university's Academic Integrity Office that helps educate us about unethical practices. Please come forward to help the educational community maintain the same high standards of learning that we first came for.

- Fourth-year Engineering Student  
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