

The Desire for Moral Impotence

Giles Howdle

1 – Have you ever hoped for moral impotence yourself? Can you think of a time when you wished you *didn't* have control over, and therefore responsibility for, someone or something?

2 – Do you believe that it is morally acceptable to risk a few people's lives for knowledge with the potential to save many lives in the future?

3 – Has there ever been a time when you decided not to act because you believed that your actions wouldn't make a difference? For instance, for not recycling, protesting injustice, or giving to charity? Do you think that you were right for not acting, or were you simply trying to avoid responsibility as the author suggests?

4 – Do you agree that "ought implies can" – that we must have the ability to carry out a given act in order to be obligated to do so? Are there situations where you ought to do something that you are unable to do? What if your previous actions made it impossible for you to do that thing now? For instance, what if you purposefully moved to another state, thus making it impossible for you to care for an elderly relative in your hometown?