

If you envision a ladder of increasing ethics, this must surely be the very top

YouTube Video: [YouTube.com/watch?v=7uUAUDGI5-U](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7uUAUDGI5-U)

Sadly, this truly was the pinnacle of ethics for John Snow; it could be said that his only direction from here would be downhill, and indeed, John Snow's character took quite a slide after this speech.

I don't believe that a slide, a decline in ethics, is inevitable though. The key is never achieving a level of comfort in a way that you no longer question yourself. Climbing the ladder doesn't mean it gets easier. In fact, the opposite is likely true; while climbing the ethical ladder, you can look back and see how far you've come, maybe even recognize mileposts along the way. That provides incentive to keep climbing. Once at the top, and we're making an assumption there is actually a top, a place where the highest ethical standards are a given and others see this... that's where it gets tougher, because there could be a temptation to cash in. Awareness of that temptation hopefully provides the incentive to continue asking the hard questions, continue to challenge yourself from within.

But none of it happens without a foundation of transparency and trust. You have to trust others, even when they have not yet proven themselves trustworthy. If we fail to trust others, we are not giving them the chance to grow. They may aspire to the lowest expectations we have for them. They may even betray our trust, and that will hurt. But you can't let it change your direction. You can reach down and help them climb the ladder themselves, but you can't become comfortable with a lower place on that ladder, a place where ethics are situational and not absolute.

Not sure what got me started on all of this. I think it had something to do with my brother Tom's birthday, but can't really track it all backwards. Probably has something to do with my Father and his frequent lessons that we're not defined by what others do, we're defined by what we do. Turning the other cheek was kind of his mantra.