

Ethics: the moral rules of conduct recognized in respect to a particular class of human actions or a particular group, i.e.: metal detecting.

MDHTALK Ethics

- **I will make every effort to return found property to its rightful owner.**

A reward is generally the result of performing a good deed like locating or finding an item and then returning that item to the original owner.

A detectorist should never take a challenge to find a lost item based on the reward. Metal detecting ethics suggest that returning items to the original owner is the correct way to go and this should be the overriding reason to locate and return items; not rewards.

The question that usually comes up is: if a monetary reward is offered should I accept or reject the reward? Remember a reward can be in the form of a Personal Good Feeling, a Thank You, a Hand Shake, a Hug, a Kiss on the Cheek or Monetary. Therefore, to answer this question one must review the variables below before making a decision to accept or reject a monetary reward. Accepting a non-monetary should be a no brainer.

So what are some of the variables associated with accepting or rejecting a monetary reward?

The Lost Item

- 1) What is the degree of sentimental value (high, medium, low) to the original owner?
- 2) What is the estimated value of the lost/found item?

The Finder & Owner

- 3) What is the estimated financial position of the original owner?
- 4) What is the financial position of the detectorist?
- 5) Will the original owner be offended if the reward is rejected?
- 6) Will the detectorist have moral reasons for rejecting the reward?
- 7) In prior conversation between the detectorist and the original owner the owner offered a reward but upon meeting and returning the lost item there was no follow-up conversation on the reward offer. Should the detectorist ask for a reward?

The Reward

- 8) Is the reward offered by the original owner too large? or too small?
- 9) Should the reward be just a thank you and a smile, etc?
- 10) Did the detectorist spend time and other resources to locate the original owner?
- 11) Should the reward cover just the detectorist's expenses?

Metal Detecting rewards or rewards for service are a bi-product of doing a good deed. It means that something was found and returned to its original owner. Outlined below are a few potential reward situations:

Some Situations

- ✓ Did the detectorist answer a lost and found ad and then went with the original owner to locate the lost item?
- ✓ If the search did not yield the lost item should the searcher accept a reward offer for services rendered?

- ✓ A detectroist locates a lost item while metal detecting and later with research or by placing an ad locates the original owner.
- ✓ A detectorist is metal detecting at a beach or park and a person comes running up stating he just lost a ring; and asks will you help us find it.
- ✓ A detectroist was solicited to locate a specific item such as a cache.

Scenario one: A metal detectorist answers either an ad or gets a direct request and makes a decision to help in locating a lost item plus the owner states there will be a reward. This effort may take several hours and require the detectorist to travel some distance to look for the lost item.

First Situation: The item lost is not found by the detectorist and three hours of time and forty miles of travel are involved. The owner of the lost item wants to provide a reward for services. What should the detectorist do? Should the detectorist take the reward, or ask only for the travel expense, or simply state no charge? The answer may be based on the financial position of involved parties and the sincerity of the reward offer.

I would suggest that if the person offering the service reward would not be offended the detectorist should reject any reward for services. Since no item was found, the full reward should never be accepted and if a reward is accepted it should be for just the travel expense.

Second Situation: The item lost is found by the detectorist and three hours of time and forty miles of travel are involved. The owner is very happy and requests that the detectorist take a monetary reward for his services. The amount is very substantial making the detectorist feel uncomfortable. In this case the detectroist did a good deed that aligns itself well with metal detecting ethics. The suggestion is to gracefully decline the reward. However, the original owner insisted that you take the reward. In this case negotiate that the reward be reduced to a reasonable amount and except the reward. If the detectorist is in good financial position make it clear you would prefer no reward and that you would be turning the reward over to your metal detecting club, or you will donate the money to a charitable organization that helps feed the less fortunate.

In this situation the detectorist does several good deeds, the original owner gets his lost item back and feels good about paying for the services. This is a win, win.

Scenario two: A detectorist was metal detecting at a beach and a person comes running up stating he just lost a ring and will you help us find it? The detectorist should stop, listen to the individual's story, get a very good description of the ring and then decides to look go for it.

The detectorist defines the grid to be searched for the ring and sets off to locate the missing item. Shortly, the detectroist gets a good signal and reaches down with his sand scoop and up comes the scoop with a ring matching the description. The detectorist shows it to the panicked owners and from that point forward there are only smiles and laughter. The detectorist hands the ring to the owner, the owners gives the detectorist a big thank you and offers the detectorist a monetary reward.

What should the detectorist do? In this case the suggestion is to decline any monetary reward, finding a lost ring and returning it back to the owner immediately after its been lost provides the detectroist with a great feeling of self-satisfaction and the owner is obviously extremely happy. Here again it is a win, win.

There is an exception; if the owner continues to plead with the detectorist to take the monetary reward then take the monetary reward and make a decision on your own as to what you want to do with the reward.

Summary: There are unlimited scenarios that could be defined and analyzed with different or similar results so lets' move on. So how do you make the decision as to whether to accept or reject a reward? The suggestion for a detectroist in a monetary reward situation is to self-evaluate the most important variables.

Such as:

- the financial position of the parties involved (detectroist & owner)
- the sentimental value of the item to the owner
- will the owner offering the reward be greatly offended if the reward is rejected
- the moral values of the detectorist.
- the ethics of the metal detecting hobby

The final decision for accepting or rejecting a reward must be made by the detectorist. The position that should receive the most consideration is not to except a monetary reward of any kind. This position puts the detectorist in a very positive light and the hobby gets a lot of free press from the person who gets their lost item back. The likely hood is that the owner will tell others of his good fortune and kindness of the person who helped him.

Generally, not accepting a monetary reward is probably the best outcome; however, do to the many variables and situations this may not always be possible.

The Final Reward:

When ever anyone is involved in locating a lost item and that item is found the detectorist should suggest to the owner that they get the lost and found story into the press. In this case the press is defined as the local TV station or newspaper, however, both parties must agree or it will not come off correctly. Getting this kind of event into the public press puts an extremely positive metal detecting hobby story into the publics mind.