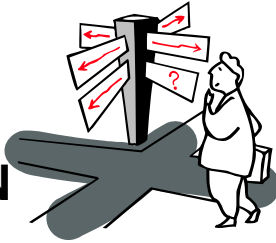


ETHICAL DECISION MAKING



The need for ethical media

● Credibility and Profit

- people won't buy a paper or watch a news program they don't trust
- > drop in circulation, ratings hurts advertising
- > without advertising, newspaper/TV program disappears

The need for ethical media

● Accuracy

- reporting information in a context that people to understand it fully

● Objectivity

- without bias
- journalists want objectivity
- public relations & advertising want to enhance the client/product

The need for ethical news media

● Fairness & Balance

- providing equal coverage to all points of view

● Accurate Representation and Absence of Fakery

- lying to readers & viewers
- > leaving a false impression

Ethics:

A rational decision-making process based on certain philosophical principles

Morals:

Rules based on religion or other societal norms

Laws:

Rules created by government

Types of ethical dilemmas in the media:

● Gatekeeping role

determining what to give readers or viewers

● Privacy

● Protecting people

● Protecting government secrets

● Offensive materials

● Deceiving audience, sources or the media (PR)

Ethical principles:

● **The Golden Mean**

- Take a position that is in the middle of the two extremes

Ethical principles:

● **The Categorical Imperative**

- absolute ethics
- no exceptions to the rules
 - > what is right for one is right for all
 - > what is right in one situation is right for all similar situations

Ethical principles:

● **The Principle of Utility (utilitarianism)**

See the most useful action

- seek the greatest good for the greatest number of people
 - > weigh the amount of harm against the amount of good



Ethical principles:

● **Pluralistic Theory of Value**

We must choose between competing ethical duties

Types of duties:

- fidelity (keeping promises)
- reparation (taking responsibility for wrongful acts)
 - > based on my previous acts
- gratitude
 - > based on the acts of others

Types of duties:

- justice (to ensure equitable distribution of pleasure happiness)
- beneficence (giving charity to people in need)
- self-improvement (improve our own condition)
- not injuring others (do no harm)
- veracity (tell the truth)
- nurture (help others achieve self-worth)

Ethical principles:● **Communitarianism**

- your obligations to your community
 - > deals with society-wide issues
 - > community's needs are more important than individual's needs
 - > focuses on outcomes and social justice
 - > supports democratic ideals

Philosophies

Golden Mean: Look for the middle ground

Categorical Imperative: No exceptions to the rules

Principle of Utility: Seek the greatest good for the greatest number

Pluralistic Theory of Value: Choose among competing duties

Communitarianism: First obligation is to the community

Ethical principles:● **The Veil of Ignorance**

- treat everyone equally and justice will prevail
 - > we cover our eyes so we don't see differences in power wealth, education, responsibility etc.

Ethical principles:● **Judeo-Christian Ethics**

- “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you”
 - > treat people with respect
 - > try to minimize harm

Ethical principles:● **Antinomianism**

- there are no guiding principles

Ethical principles:

● Situational Ethics

- decide each case on its own merits
 - > use your guiding principles to make decision

Ethical Reasoning Processes:

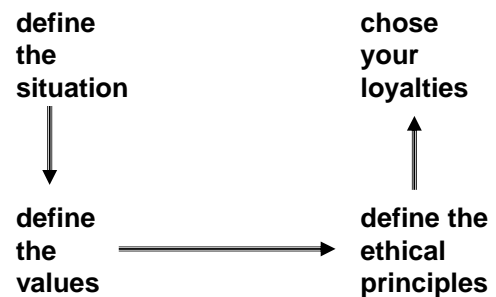
Ethical Reasoning Processes:

● Sissela Bok

- Three questions for ethical decision making:
 1. How do I feel about the action?
 2. Is there any other way to achieve the same goal that will not raise ethical issues?
 3. How will my actions affect others?

Ethical Reasoning Processes:

Ralph Potter: Potter's Box



Ethical Reasoning Processes:

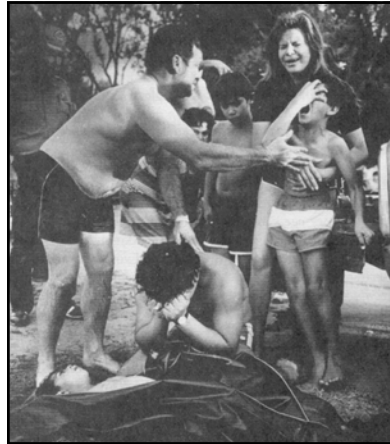
● Roy Peter Clark

- Five questions for ethical decision making:
 1. Is the story, photo or graphic complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge?
 2. Am I missing an important point of view?
 3. How would I feel if this story or photo were about me?
 4. What good would publication do?
 5. What does my reader or viewer need to know?

Ethical Reasoning Processes:

● H. Eugene Goodwin

- Seven questions for ethical decision making:
 1. What do we usually do in cases like this?
 2. Who will be hurt and who will be helped?
 3. Are there better alternatives?
 4. Can I look myself in the mirror again?
 5. Can I justify this to other people, the public?
 6. What principles or values can I apply?
 7. Does this decision fit the kind of journalism I believe in and how people should treat one another?



<http://commfaculty.fullerton.edu/tclanin/Comm310/Comm310.htm>