The Ethics Unwrapped “Giving Voice To Values” Video Series

The Giving Voice To Values (GVV) video series summarizes the introductory points of Giving Voice to Values: How To Speak Your Mind When You Know What’s Right, developed by Mary C. Gentile with support from the Aspen Institute and the Yale School of Management.

The GVV videos can be watched individually or collectively, although they will be most useful if used together and viewed with the introductory video. This series can serve as a springboard for further classroom discussion of ethics and values as they pertain to students’ personal and professional lives.

Although GVV was created for business ethics programs, the lessons in GVV are broad and applicable to a variety of fields including education, fine arts, liberal arts, communication studies, engineering and the sciences, and professional schools. GVV case studies, curriculum and teaching pedagogy are available at http://www.babson.edu/academics/teaching-research/gvv/Pages/home.aspx

The G.V.V. Approach

Giving Voice to Values (GVV) is an innovative approach to values-driven leadership development. GVV identifies the many ways that individuals can – and do – voice their values in the workplace and provides opportunities to build the “moral muscles” necessary to do so.

Most people want to bring their whole selves to work. Yet, experience and research demonstrate that values conflicts will occur during the course of a person’s life and career – those times when what we believe and want to accomplish seem to be in opposition to the demands of others, including peers, supervisors, organizations, etc. The GVV curriculum helps people build and practice the skills individuals need to recognize, speak and act on their values when these conflicts arise.

GVV identifies and builds upon SEVEN PILLARS or principles that represent ways of thinking about values and our own capabilities and identities in order to enhance our ability to voice and enact our values effectively. The SEVEN PILLARS are: Values, Choice, Normalization, Purpose, Self-Knowledge & Alignment, Voice, and Reasons & Rationalizations. Each video in this series introduces a GVV PILLAR.
The GVV approach includes:

* A focus on how a leader or manager raises values-based issues in an effective manner—what he/she needs to do to be heard and how to correct an existing course of action when necessary;

* Positive examples of times when people have found ways to voice and thereby implement their values in the workplace;

* An emphasis upon self-assessment and a focus on individual strengths when looking for a way to align one’s individual sense of purpose with that of the organization;

* Opportunities to construct and practice responses to frequently heard reasons and rationalizations for not acting on one’s values;

* Practice in providing peer feedback and coaching.

**Video: Introduction to G.V.V.**

In this video, Mary Gentile explains how GVV differs from other approaches to teaching business ethics; rather than scrutinizing what is the right or wrong thing to do, GVV begins from the assumption that most of us want to behave ethically and have an idea of how we should act.

She then discusses strategies for finding the motivation, skill and confidence to “give voice to our values,” i.e., to act consistently with our most deeply held convictions about right and wrong.

In describing factors that affect ethical behavior and techniques for resisting unethical actions through the video series, Gentile asks students to think about how they might voice and act on their values effectively.
Discussion questions: Introduction to G.V.V.

1. Citing research, Gentile suggests that “moral muscle memory,” or experience in expressing one’s values, can help with speaking up when these values are challenged. Do you agree with Gentile? Can you think of any situations in which such rehearsal or pre-scripting and practice has made it easier, or could make it easier for you to act upon your values effectively?

2. How would you respond to the following statements:

   The hardest values conflicts are in the grey areas; the so-called clear-cut issues are easy.

   
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<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Not Sure</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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   When it comes to values conflicts, the most important thing to learn is how to analyze a difficult situation and figure out what is right.

   
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Not Sure</th>
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After students respond to these two questions, discussion can explore the GVV starting assumptions: that is, for example, that most ethics discussions focus on the analysis of challenging situations so as to discern what the right thing to do may be, as if ethics were entirely a matter of intellectual understanding. However, although there are many so-called “grey areas,” there are also many more clear-cut issues where most of us (not all) would likely agree that a particular action is over-the-line. Nevertheless, just because there is significant agreement about what the right thing to do may be in such situations, it is still not necessarily that easy to get it done. It is this action question – how do I get the right thing done? — which GVV is designed to raise and help us address.

3. Describe an ethical dilemma or values conflict that you have faced in your work or personal life. How did you handle it? If you had the chance for a “do-over,” what would you want to do differently?

4. What do you think are the key strengths of the GVV approach? Do you see any potential pitfalls? How might they be addressed?

5. How does the GVV approach to values-driven leadership development differ from traditional approaches to ethics?

6. How might the GVV approach be useful in other contexts, besides career or work life? Examples?
Additional G.V.V. Resources

http://www.givingvoicetovaluesthebook.com/

For a discussion of the “GVV Starting Assumptions,” see Chapter One of Giving Voice to Values, “Giving Voice to Our Values: The Thought Experiment.”

For a summary of the Giving Voice To Values Seven Pillars download An Action Framework for Giving Voice To Values—“The To-Do List.”  
http://www.babson.edu/Academics/teaching-research/gvv/Pages/curriculum.aspx

http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/15416518.2012.708854

Transcript of Narration
Written and Narrated by Mary C. Gentile

Giving Voice To Values (or GVV) is a new and innovative way of thinking about, teaching about and acting on our values in our careers -- and in our wider lives. Rather than focusing on trying to figure out what the right thing to do is in any particular situation – an important question, to be sure – Giving Voice To Values asks a different question.

It asks, “Once I know what I think is right, how do I get it done? What should I say? To whom? What information do I need to gather in order to be persuasive? And what are the typical objections or the “pushback” I can anticipate – and THEN what will I say to respond to those arguments?

The idea behind Giving Voice To Values is that if we simply encounter a values conflict and someone asks us “what would YOU do? We usually respond in one of two ways. We may say "Oh I would do the ‘right thing.’ However we know from research that people often don’t act as they say they would, when it comes to ethical challenges in their real lives. It’s just not that easy.
On the other hand, we may assume a sort of “devil’s advocate” position – the more skeptical or even cynical position – arguing that the decision at hand may indeed raise an ethical challenge but it’s just not possible to do anything other than to go along with the pressures. Or we may even argue that the situation isn’t really “wrong” at all!

So instead, with GVV, we FIRST ask: “WHAT IF you wanted to do the “right thing” in a particular situation and you believed you knew what it was? HOW would you get it done, effectively?” We call this the “Giving Voice To Values Thought Experiment”, and it provides the chance to literally “pre-script” ourselves and to create the most effective action plan we can conceive of, and then to actually REHEARSE that script and plan.

This approach is based on the idea – supported by research – that practice or rehearsal allows us to create a kind of default behavior – a sort of Moral Muscle Memory – that makes it easier and more likely that we can act ethically and in alignment with our values when needed. There are seven pillars or principles of GVV that support this process. Let’s take a look at them.

For additional information, please contact:

Mary C. Gentile, Ph.D.
Creator & Director, Giving Voice to Values
Babson College
Mgentile3@babson.edu
www.GivingVoiceToValuesTheBook.com

This material is based upon the Giving Voice To Values curriculum (www.GivingVoiceToValues.org). The Aspen Institute was founding partner, along with the Yale School of Management, and incubator for Giving Voice To Values (GVV). Now based and supported at Babson College.

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