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.

**G.V.V. Video: Pillar 6 – Voice**

When we try to voice our values, it helps to practice in front of respected peers, using the style of expression with which we are most skillful and which is most appropriate to the situation, and inviting coaching and feedback. We are more likely to say those words that we have literally “pre-scripted” for ourselves and already heard ourselves express.

**Discussion Questions: G.V.V. Pillar 6 - Voice**

1. In the video, a male student who had worked in the oil and gas industry described a values conflict that he experienced in his job. Consider the “GVV Thought Experiment: that is, “What If” he wanted to enact his values? What might he have said or done? Do you think that he would have been more able and confident to voice his concerns effectively if he had rehearsed ahead of time?
2. Think about a time when you or someone you observed was particularly effective in voicing/enacting a values position. What made the approach effective? Was it their actual words? The way they said them? Their preparation and factual arguments? Their calm? Their use of humor? Etc.

3. Identify some of the different ways to be effective at voicing values (e.g., questioning, debating, acting as teacher, acting as learner, providing additional information, coaching). Which ones have you used effectively before and which ones are you more comfortable applying? Does it depend on the situation?

Additional G.V.V. Resources


For a discussion of the “Voice” pillar, see Chapter Two of Giving Voice To Values, “Values: What They Are and What They Are Not.”

For a discussion of the “GVV Starting Assumptions,” see Chapter Seven of Giving Voice to Values, “Finding My Voice.”

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

Transcript of Narration
Written and Narrated by Mary C. Gentile

It is always easier to say things we have said before. Think about a speech you may have given or a class presentation you did. If you practiced it in advance, in front of a mirror or with friends or family as your audience, you were able to identify the phrases that needed to be re-written; the passages where you wanted to go slowly for emphasis; the places where you were less sure of yourself and needed to spend a little more time. And if your practice audience provided you with encouragement as well as constructive feedback, that was all the more helpful.

Similarly, if we literally rehearse our responses to values-conflicts, we are not only more likely to express ourselves effectively; we are more likely to speak up AT ALL. We have heard ourselves uttering the words. We have found a way of expressing ourselves that feels natural to us. We have considered the best context for the conversation: when, where, with or without others in the room and so on.

It’s also important to remember what we’ve learned from others who expressed their views confidently and effectively when it came to ethics. And it’s important to remind ourselves that we don’t know how our audiences will respond: don’t assume that they are uninterested! We can think about what contexts will make our audience most comfortable and most likely to listen with an open mind. And frame our perspective in a way that will appeal to the values and perspectives that we SHARE with our audience. And so on.

Most importantly, PRACTICE! You are more likely to say those words that you have pre-scripted for yourself and already heard yourself express.

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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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