

## **GVV Pillar 6: Voice**

*GVV Pillar 6: Voice* introduces the sixth principle of “Giving Voice to Values” (GVV). Mary Gentile suggests that we are more likely to say words that we have practiced, and more likely to “voice” our values with scripting and practice. 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. Inviting coaching and feedback helps. Knowing that we are more likely to say the words we have literally “pre-scripted” for ourselves and already heard ourselves express, encourages us to speak up and give voice to our values.

To learn more about values systems and how they vary from culture to culture, watch *Fundamental Moral Unit* and *All is Not Relative*. For complimentary approaches to GVV that also offer methods for voicing values and making ethical decisions, watch the four-part *Being Your Best Self* videos, which include *Part 1: Moral Awareness*, *Part 2: Moral Decision Making*, *Part 3: Moral Intent*, and *Part 4: Moral Action*. To learn about pervasive social and organizational biases that inhibit voicing values, watch *Moral Muteness* and *Moral Myopia*. To discover how voicing values can contribute to professional and personal success, watch *Moral Imagination*.

The case studies on this page illustrate different ways in which individuals or groups give voice to their values. “Pao & Gender Bias” examines the debate Ellen Pao generated in the venture capital and tech industries when she filed a lawsuit against her employer on grounds of gender discrimination. “Freedom of Speech on Campus” explores how, in the wake of racially motivated offenses at Yale and the University of Missouri, student protesters voiced their values and sparked debate over the roles of free speech, deliberation, and tolerance on campus. “Defending Freedom of Tweets?” takes a look at the backlash Pittsburgh Steelers running back Rashard Mendenhall received from fans after he tweeted a criticism of the celebration of the assassination of Osama Bin Laden. “Full Disclosure: Manipulating Donors” examines the difficult position a student intern was in and how she struggled to voice her values.

Terms related to this video and defined in our ethics glossary include: conformity bias, diffusion of responsibility, ethics, groupthink, integrity, morals, moral imagination, moral muteness, moral reasoning, values, and virtue ethics.

### **The GVV Approach**

The “Giving Voice to Values” (GVV) video series summarizes the key points of *Giving Voice to Values: How to Speak Your Mind When You Know What’s Right*, written by Mary Gentile with support from the Yale School of Management and the Aspen Institute. The GVV videos may be watched individually or sequentially. The series will be most useful if viewed in its entirety and with the introductory video.



GVV was created for business ethics programs, but its lessons are broad and apply to all professionals in every field including fine arts, liberal arts, communication studies, social and natural sciences, engineering, education, social work, and medicine. The GVV series can serve as a springboard for further discussion of ethics and values as they pertain to individuals' professional and personal lives.

GVV identifies the many ways that individuals can – and do – voice their values in the workplace. It teaches people how to build the “moral muscles” necessary to do so, and details the strategies people can use to find the motivation, skill, and confidence to “give voice to their values.”

The goal of GVV is to act consistently with our most deeply held convictions about right and wrong. Research and experience demonstrate that values conflicts will inevitably occur in our professional and personal lives. So, when what we believe and want to accomplish seems to be in opposition to the demands of others (peers, supervisors, organizations, etc.), the ability to successfully voice our values and navigate these differences is crucial. This is the starting point for the GVV curriculum.

GVV consists of seven principles, or pillars, that represent ways of thinking about values, our identity, and our own capabilities. The seven pillars of GVV are: *Values, Choice, Normalization, Purpose, Self-Knowledge & Alignment, Voice, and Reasons & Rationalizations*. Each video in the GVV series introduces and explains one of the GVV pillars.

Gentile also describes the factors that affect ethical behavior and offers techniques for resisting unethical actions. Ultimately, the curriculum helps people build and practice the skills they need to recognize, speak, and act on their values effectively when conflicts arise.

The GVV approach includes:

- How a leader raises values-based issues in an effective manner – what she/he needs to do to be heard and how to correct an existing course of action when necessary.
- An emphasis on self-assessment and a focus on individual strengths when looking for a way to align one's individual sense of purpose with that of an organization.
- Opportunities to construct and practice responses to frequently heard reasons and rationalizations for not acting on one's values.
- Positive examples of times when people have found ways to voice and thereby implement their values in the workplace.
- Practice in providing peer feedback and coaching.

### **Discussion questions: GVV 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 Resources**

Giving Voice to Values case studies, curriculum, and additional teaching pedagogy are available at no cost to educators at the [Giving Voice to Values Curriculum](#) website.

Further details about the “Voice” pillar may be found in Chapter Seven of *Giving Voice to Values*, “Finding My Voice.”

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

A summary of the seven pillars of GVV may be downloaded here: [An Action Framework for Giving Voice To Values—“The To-Do List.”](#)

For further discussion of the GVV approach, see Mary Gentile’s article published in *Organization Management Journal*, “[Values-Driven Leadership Development: Where We Have Been and Where We Could Go.](#)”

Gentile, Mary C. (2010). [Giving Voice to Values: How to Speak Your Mind When You Know What's Right](#). New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

### **Transcript of Narration**

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"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."

**For additional information, please contact:**

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This material is based upon the Giving Voice To Values curriculum ([www.GivingVoiceToValues.org](http://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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