

Free-Write

What do ethics mean to you? Have you ever been in an ethical dilemma? How do you make ethical decisions?



What are Ethics?

Ethics – moral principles that govern a person's behavior or the conducting of an activity.

But...

How do ethics relate to journalists?

SPJ Code of Ethics

Look at the copy of the Society of Professional Journalists Code of Ethics.

Annotate - add notes to (a text or diagram) giving explanation or comment.

Respond to each section of the code. What does it mean to you? What standards are journalists held to? Do you have any questions or concerns about the code?

Journalists Should...

- tell the truth
- not harm
- restore public trust
- rationally support an ethical choice
- conduct the ethical dialogue in advance of the event.



Boks Model of Ethical Decision Making

For ethical decision-making it's helpful to use Bok's Model that provides a framework which is based on two premises – that we must have empathy for the people involved in ethical decisions and that maintaining social trust is a fundamental goal.



Three Steps to Ethical Decision Making

In ethical decision making Bok's method follows three steps:

1. Consult your own conscience about the rightness of an action. **How do you feel about the action?**
2. Seek expert advice for alternatives to the act creating the ethical problem: **Is there another way to achieve the same goal that will not raise ethical issues?**
3. If possible, conduct a public discussion with the parties involved in the dispute. The goal of this conversation is to discover **How will my action affect others?** and attempt to hold a public ethical dialogue with all parties involved.

Example of an Ethical Dilemma

A pregnant woman leading a group of people out of a cave on a coast is stuck in the mouth of that cave. In a short time high tide will be upon them, and unless she is unstuck, they will all be drowned except the woman, whose head is out of the cave. Fortunately, (or unfortunately,) someone has with him a stick of dynamite. There seems no way to get the pregnant woman loose without using the dynamite which will inevitably kill her; but if they do not use it everyone will drown. What should they do?

Do You...

Use the Dynamite

WITH THE KNOWLEDGE
that using the dynamite will
kill the pregnant woman but
save the others, you believe
that the group should use the
dynamite

Save the Unborn Child

WITH THE KNOWLEDGE
that not using the dynamite
and allowing the pregnant
lady and her unborn child to
live while the rest of the group
dies you believe that the
group should not use the
dynamine

Ethical Decision Scenarios

Use the Bok's Method to analyze a journalistic ethical dilemma.

Discuss with your groups and finish the worksheet for your ethical dilemma.

