



Prifysgol Cymru

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Trawsnewid Addysg, Trawsnewid Bywydau
Transforming Education, Transforming Lives

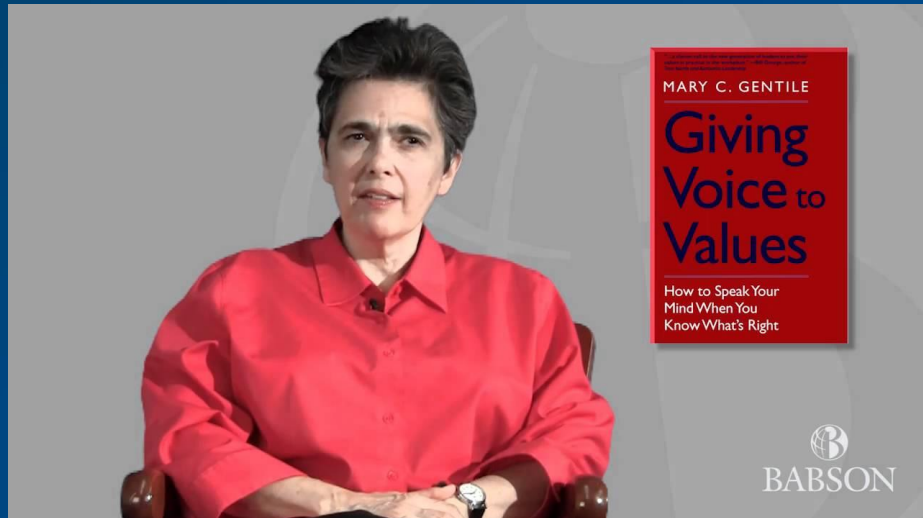
ECAY4004:
Agency, Empowerment and Anti-oppressive Practice
Giving Voice to Values
2024



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Session Outcomes:

An introduction to the Mary C Gentile 'Giving Voice to Values'





Giving Voice to Values (GVV)

- Gentile (2010) guides us to believe that ‘Giving Voice to your values’ is:
 - Speaking Your Mind When You Know what Is Right
 - Citing Barack Obama’s inaugural speech where Obama called for:
 - ‘An Era of Responsibility’
 - Asserting the view that there had been:
 - ‘Collective Failure to Make the Hard Choices’

Testing This View

- Consider then, ‘Landmark’ child-abuse cases
- **Question:** At what point for example should a child be removed from a parent?
- **Question:** Considering Serious Case Reviews (Climbie’, Baby ‘P’ and sadly more...)
 - Are social workers acting too quickly?
 - Are social workers focussing attention on the needs of the parent before those of child?

Ethics

- Gentile (2010) identifies what she calls:
 - 'Ethics Fatigue'
- Wherein 'Functional Process' rather than 'Rights Based' decision making has become the norm (Austerity, Higher Social Worker workloads)



Group Task

- **What are Ethics/Rights?**
- Discuss and feedback to group





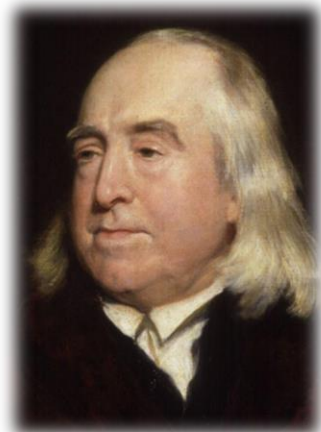
Immanuel Kant



Thomas Paine



Aristotle



Jeremy Bentham

Definitions

- Ethics / Virtue / Morality
- Deontology (what should I do?)
- Virtue Ethics (What sort of person should I be?)
- Consequentialism (What is the outcome?)
- Rights
- Are we moral relativists? Or moral absolutists?

Question: Why do we need to know these ?

- ‘Building Ethical Muscle’ in order:
 - ‘to act upon your most deeply held values’
- Question: As an Advocate for change, who’s values should we work with?
 1. Your Organisation?
 2. Your Client?
 3. Your Own?

Giving Voice to Values: Where do we start?

- Do we focus on:
 - The Person?
 - The Problem?
 - The Procedure?
- In exploring the answer to this should we first ask ourselves:
 - What habits of being do we have?
 - What level of 'Values' do we hold within these habits of being?
 - Do we take our 'whole selves' to work?





Practice

- Are we practised in ‘Voicing’ our own Values?
- Are we consistent in who we really are?
- Are we consistent in what we hold true to?

And importantly..

How do we react when **our** ‘Values’ are challenged by:

1. Our Clients?
2. Our Organisation?
3. Ourselves?

Obama's Call

- Asking us to be...



Ready, willing, and able to 'make the hard call choices'

Choice to Act

- So when people see misbehaviours i.e. When lapses in ethical behaviour are recognised..
- Why do people fail to act or speak out?
 - Is it because...
- they believe that it is not possible to do so?





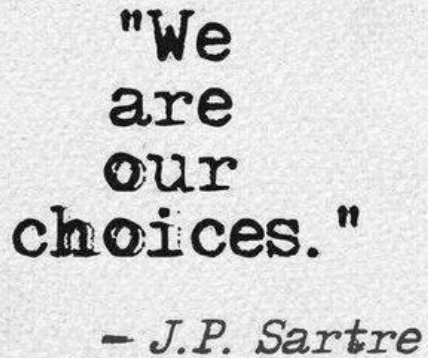
Jean-Paul Sartre

La Mauvaise Foi & The 'Disablers'

- 'Disablers' are reasons we give for not acting on moral values, i.e "I had no choice!", the denial of freedom
- Mauvaise Foi can take several forms:
 - Banality or inaction (failure by omission)
 - Identifying with the past, refusing to progress or advance
 - Living according to the image others have made of us, and fulfilling their expectations
- All of which are methods of avoiding personal choice and responsibility!

Practice

- So, if we practice what we believe i.e.
- Demonstrate our beliefs through our actions then...
- Using the idiom: 'Practice makes perfect' (which may not be entirely accurate)
- And according to Gentile (2010), 'Practice makes our Voice & Action more likely', Hopefully arriving at a place where we



"We
are
our
choices."
- J.P. Sartre

Values



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GIVING VOICE TO VALUES

"What is GVV?" with Mary Gentile

The Challenge

- The challenge is not so much to consider purely what is the RIGHT answer but:
 - To address the Ethical Challenges and to...
 - Focus on how to act on ones' values in a given situation
- That is to practice handling the
 - Discomforts
 - Threats
 - Isolation
 - Embarrassments

Values - Task

- Knowing what values we do and don't share is useful, Why?
- Return to your groups and identify:
 1. What differences or disagreements might challenge these values sets?
 2. Would they prevent you working together towards shared goals?
- Consider these two points with regards to culture, contexts, belief systems, religions, law, policies and 'Value Conflicts'

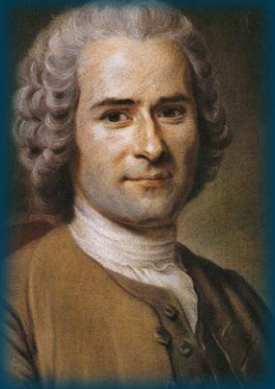
Common Ground

Shared values / consensus can be a short list!

- Freedom
- Justice
- Honesty
- Fairness, and so on..



It's important to consider what we mean by these terms, and how different people have different ideas about fairness, justice, etc.



Jean-Jacques Rousseau



Maximilien Robespierre

Common Ground & The General Will

- Rousseau proposes that the ‘general will’ consists of the collective wishes of everyone, directed towards common interests.

But common ground/consensus is no refuge for immorality either!

‘Terror is nothing more than justice, prompt, severe and inflexible’ - Robespierre

‘Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil; neither shalt thou speak in a cause to decline after many to wrest judgment.’ – Exodus 23:2



Value Conflict in the Workplace

- Do we have the ability to chose our response?
- Are we free to act with 'Agency'?
- In other words are we (all)
 - 'Capable of speaking and acting on our values?
 - Have we always done so?
- Assuming the answer 'No!' then we begin to understand that
 - Good versus Evil
 - Right versus Wrong
 - Action versus Inaction
- Becomes a matter of Choice!



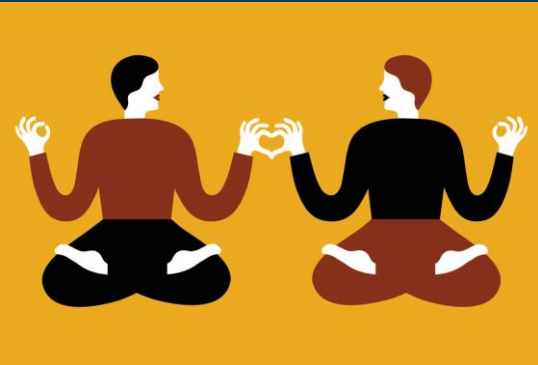


Conflicts

- Are:
 - Expected
 - Anticipated
 - Identifiable
 - Planned for
 - Welcomed
 - An opportunity!
- Why?
- We are able to demonstrate our integrity, consistency, equity and moral positioning.
- This is important to others, Why?

Moral Positioning

- To know
 - To be known
 - To be relied upon
-
- Moral positioning 'Frames' who we are and what we stand for!



Framing

- Our Values – i.e. Our Moral Position
- Our Words – i.e. Our Operational Position
- Allows us to speak
 - Less emotionally (about client issues)
 - More effectively (in support of client wishes)
- Normalising the process will diffuse the issues/topic
 - For ourselves
 - Our client
 - Our Audience
 - That is: Framing our Position



Alignment

- Alignment of our values, beliefs, morals with Actions increases
- ‘Moral and Ethical Muscle’
- Therefore...
- Knowing your own-self integrates acting on our Values with who we truly are!

(Keirse, 2011)

Alignment

Alignment of

- Self-image
- Ethical stance



Allows us to operate within a comfortable and competent way

In Voicing Your Values and importantly those of our Clients we find our Default Position

Class Task

- For the rest of this session, we will be discussing our own values.
- Individually - Frame your Values
- In pairs compare your 'Value Sets'

References List

- Gentile, M (2010) *Giving Voice to Values* Oxford: Penguin