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Ethical Leadership: Giving Voice to Values

Presentation by

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Communities in Control Conference
Melbourne, Tuesday, May 29, 2018

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About the presentation:

Most of us want to act ethically, but it's not always that simple, *amiright?* We start with the best of intentions but then we bang up against the realities of what the boss wants, the clients are shouting at us, the kids need us to get home ("stat!"), we have to sort out an issue with the plumbing, and we haven't had a proper holiday in a thousand years. American leadership guru Mary Gentile knows all about it. She's pioneered a leadership development approach, Giving Voice to Values, that starts from the assumption that most can take to lea over, around or through the barriers that inevitable arise along the way between our ethical intentions and our actions.

Mary Gentile
Thank you, Cecilia, Denis, Cathy, and the US Consulate, and Communities in Control - it's really an honour to be here.

I want to share with you the story of Giving Voice to Values, or GVV, which is an innovative approach to values-driven leadership development. I'm basically going to just tell you a story, I'm not going to use slides or anything. But before I do that, I want to mention a few of the reasons why I'm so pleased to be here.

The first is when I took a look at what this conference was about, the brochure said "The opposite of inequality isn't equality. The opposite of inequality is community." And I thought, well that's really nice. It's a reframing, trying to question the false dichotomies that we all use to limit our sense of what's possible in our lives. And Giving Voice to Values, as I'm going to describe it to you, is also all about trying to challenge those false dichotomies.

The second reason why I'm particularly pleased to be here is, because while what I'm going to describe to you is an approach that I developed when trying to develop ethical leadership for business education and for businesses, it's actually grown well beyond that original goal. Giving Voice to Values, GVV, is being used in business education all over the world, and in many major corporations all over the world.

It's also being used in other areas. It's starting to be used in legal education, medical education, and nursing. Actually, Australia has been one of the pioneers in bridging and expanding the use of Giving Voice to Values. We've been to many different Australian schools that are now using GVV. It was also one of the first places to use GVV in legal education (in Canberra), one of the first places to use it in medical education (in Sydney and Perth), and one of the first places to use it in nursing education. On my last visit, I worked with the Palliative Care Nursing Association of Australia, and we've worked with the Police Force in Queensland. We've done presentations for the public sector in Australia, too. So another reason why I'm particularly honored to share this with you is that I'm inviting you to think about how this might be useful in your work with the many different non-profits and NGOs that you all represent.

I so admire the works that you all do. I think it's some of the hardest work, and some of the most important work, there is, and if Giving Voice to Values can be useful to you in any way I will be thrilled.

So, with that as a sort of preamble, I'm going to just tell you some stories about what GVV, what Giving Voice to Values is, why it was developed, and why it works. And then I hope we'll have some conversation after that.

In case you daze out at any point – well, you've just had lunch (myself, I drank several cups of coffee) - I'm going to tell you right now what the bottom line is.

If you don't remember anything else that I say today, please remember this. Giving Voice to Values is about asking and answering a different question, a new question when it comes to ethics and values in our organisations, in our work and in our wider lives.

So, the usual question that we ask, the typical question, is "What is the right thing to do in this particular situation?" That's a hugely important question, yes, but it's a question that given the worlds that you work in you've actually thought about a lot.

What Giving Voice to Values is about is asking a different question. "Once you know what's right, how can you get it done effectively?" What do you need to say, to whom, in what sequence, and once you do what would the pushback be?

We call those the reasons and rationalisations. And then what will you say? And what data do you need to gather? And, how do you need to frame the situation that you're trying to address? Is this something that you're going to do on your own, one-on-one in a conversation, or is this a systemic issue (which I imagine many of the issues you all deal with are)in which case it needs to be addressed systemically? And if so, how are you going to script that out? How are you going to action plan for that?

That's what Giving Voice to Values is trying to address. But before that, I want to step back and tell you why we developed Giving Voice to Values the way we did, and why it works.

The story I like to tell, which is true (which is a nice advantage) is that this all began from my own personal crisis of faith. I'd been working in the field of business education for several decades - ten years at Harvard Business School, where I helped developed their first required curriculum around values and business and education, and then six years at Babson College, which is the number one school in the world for entrepreneurship.

I consulted through a lot of business schools and companies around the world. And then in the late 90s, around the turn of the last century, I had what I called a crisis of faith. I began to feel that trying to teach ethics in businesses and schools and companies and other organisations was unethical. You can tell from that that I'm sort of an earnest person. I really began to feel that maybe it was at best futile and at worst hypocritical. For a lot of reasons.

One of the reasons, having worked in this field for several decades, was that it seemed that every few years there would be a spate of huge scandals that hitting the business press. In the 70s we had the defence industry scandals, in the 80s we had the insider trading scandals, we had the dot-com bubble in the 90s, and then all hell broke loose. I mean, we had Enron and WorldCom and Parmalat and Galleon Group and the Global Financial Crisis and, more recently, Volkswagen and Wells Fargo and Equifax, et cetera. I you happened to be working in a leading business school, as I was, when these things hit the press, the response came to be predictable.

Basically, there'd be a lot of op-eds in the business press saying, "What the heck are they teaching in business schools?" Because it was usually executives who'd gone to the leading business schools around the world who were the ones doing the perp walks on the front pages.

There would be a scurry and a flurry of activity in the business schools. We'd interview the students, and we'd interview the faculty, and we'd review the curriculum, and we'd interview the recruiters, and we talked to the alumni, and we tried to understand - What is it that we're teaching? What is the explicit curriculum, and what is the implicit or the invisible curriculum? And why are people walking out from here thinking that this is okay, that this is the way to run their organisations?

After doing this, we'd create a new course and we'd hire some new scholars. We might start a research centre, and the press releases would go out, and then, a few years later, the whole cycle would start again.

I had lived through this a number of times, and it began to feel that we were basically just ticking the boxes - because things weren't changing. That was one reason for my crisis of faith.

A second reason was that around this time, Kirk Hanson invited me to a debate. Kirk used to run the Business Ethics Program for Stanford Business School, and then he moved on to run the Markkula Center for Professional Ethics at Santa Clara University in California. Kirk decided he was going to host a public debate, with two people on one side arguing that after 25 years of good-faith effort trying to address values and ethics in our organisations and in our business schools we'd made a huge amount of progress, and two people on the other side to say we hadn't made any progress at all. And on that side, they had Milton Friedman's son (who was also an economist).

But they'd asked me to be on the side of the debate that boasted about how much progress we'd made. I sat down to write my remarks for this debate and was in something of a quandary. Could I lie in an ethics debate? That worried me. I ended up with some sort of nuanced statement that I felt I could honestly say, something like "Any of us who'd been educators or trainers know that there are individuals that we've had an impact on, people whose lives we know we've impacted in a positive way."

If I'd talked about it more broadly, though, I couldn't actually say we'd made much progress, if any. That wasn't exactly what Kirk was hoping I'd say, but it was the best I could do. And that was kind of a watershed moment for me, because I thought, gee, I've been working on this stuff for several decades, is that really the best I can do? But the major reason for my crisis of faith is what I actually saw happening in classrooms and in organisations when I went in to talk about values and ethics, and it was this.

Typically, when we were going to talk about those issues, we'd give people some thorny ethical dilemma, some case study to read before we walked into the room.

Everybody would have read the case, and they'd come into the room with an idea of what they thought the right thing to do was. But in the course of the conversation, two things would happen. The first thing that would happen is that the group's thinking would become more complex. They begin to think, "Maybe I didn't have all the information. Maybe this is just the way it's done in this company, or in this industry, or in this part of the world. Maybe it's wrong, but if I try and do something, I'm probably not going to make any progress and I may make it worse, at least for myself."

So, their thinking would become more complex. I actually think that's a good thing. You don't want people to walk into these situations naively. But the second thing that would happen was more troublesome. I don't know if you've had this experience, but typically in these kinds of group settings there's usually one or two people that when they speak, everyone turns to listen to them. They might be the most articulate, or they might be the ones who always have a witty story to tell to illustrate their point of view. Back in the day, when I was at Harvard Business School, they were usually the people who came from the industries that everybody else wanted to go to. People would listen to them because they thought, "Oh, they've got the special sauce."

But whatever it was, when those people spoke - the ones that everyone listened to when we were having these ethics discussions - they were usually the ones who would be saying, "Mary, I know what you want me to say. But in the real world, it's just not possible to do it." So, I thought, boy, people are walking out of these conversations more confused and less empowered -- because the people they listen to, the people they respect, are saying "This is impossible".

I thought, come on, life is short. I want to do something that matters. This isn't making a difference. I'm going to take a step back from this work. And I did. I stopped doing this work. Around that time, a couple of things happened.

The first thing was that I got invited to do a consulting project at Columbia Business School, and while I was there I began working on something else. A group of senior faculties in finance and economics and strategy and business law who were still working on this ethics issue knew about my past work at Harvard and said, "Can we show you what we're doing?" I said, "Sure." This was their idea, not mine.

They had invited all the incoming MBA students at Columbia - at the time, a cohort of about 600 - upon matriculation during orientation, to answer one question, to write a little paragraph. They never put their names on it. This was the question. “Tell us about a time, in your work experience so far, when you were explicitly told or implicitly pressured to do something that conflicted with your own values, and how you handled it.” So the students wrote all these little one-page essays.

The faculty that had collected these stories came to me and said "Well, we asked them to do it, and they did it, and now we're not sure what to do with them. But they're really interesting - would you like to read them?" I said "Sure."

I read hundreds and hundreds of these - over 1000, over several years. They were really interesting. Let me tell you what we learned.

If you think about the kind of people who get an MBA at a school like Columbia, at least back then, certain industries ended to be more heavily represented than others. They're in New York City, so there were a lot of people from the finance-related industries.

There were a lot of people from Big Pharma, because so many of the pharmaceutical multi-nationals have headquarters in that area. There were a good number of people from the big consulting firms of the world, and some from hi-tech industries. Because certain industries were more heavily represented than others, anyway, the first thing we learned was that the kinds of stories they told got repetitious really quickly.

The other thing was that the kinds of people who were getting an MBA, at least at that time, tended to have three to five years of work experience already - so it was interesting that I could probably count on the fingers of one hand the number of people who said, "I was never asked to do something that conflicted with my values." They all had a story to tell. Because they all had stories to tell, and because certain industries were more heavily represented, the kinds of stories they told got repetitious really quickly. "I was pressured to inflate or deflate my billable hours in a way that didn't correspond with the work I was doing, in order to increase revenue for my employer.”

Or, “I was encouraged to tamper with, and adjust the equations of the benchmarks, the analytics I used to evaluate the relative attractiveness or lack of attractiveness of a particular financial transaction, in order to encourage our clients to take actions that would maximise revenue for our firm.”

Or, “I was encouraged to exaggerate the capabilities of a product, a new piece of software or a new pharmaceutical product, beyond what our data could actually support in order to maximise sales revenues."

There were always issues around corruption, pressures to pay bribes or facilitating payments in order to gain access to certain markets or to be competitive for new work in a certain business. There were always the ubiquitous human resource issues around harassment and hiring-and-firing and discrimination. While the stories got repetitious really quickly, however, responses to them differed. And the responses fell into several recognisable buckets.

The first bucket, the largest bucket, was that a little less than half of them said "Yes, I had a conflict, and it bothered me, it didn't just roll off my back. It wasn't that I didn't care about it. But I really didn't think I had any options - so I just sucked it up and did what they told me to do." That was the largest group.

And then there was a small group who said, "Yes, I had this conflict, it bothered me so much, I couldn't bring myself to do it, but I also didn't think I had any real choice." So these people removed themselves from the situation - got themselves transferred to a different work group or a different manager. A few of them even quit their jobs. But this was a small group.

The remainder - we're now talking about a third of them - said, "Yeah, I had a values conflict and I tried to do something about it." A small group of those said "I tried, and I failed." But about a quarter of the whole group said, "I tried, and by my lights, I was successful." So we thought well, what's the difference?

These are all people who got into Columbia, they've all got some level of intelligence, competence, and experience.

They're talking about the same companies, they're talking about the same industries, they're talking about the same kinds of pressures, and yet some of them are able to do this and others are not. We realised that this is self-reporting, not really empirical data, but from a teaching perspective and a development perspective and a training perspective we thought it might be suggestive.

We brought a researcher in to look at all these stories and to slice and dice them and to see are there any generalisations we could make from this data. In the end, we couldn't say that one group of people were more morally troubled than the other group, because by definition we'd let them define the issue. It wasn't as if I gave them a scenario and it mattered to one but it didn't matter to another. They'd all identified the issues that were a values conflict for them.

And it wasn't that one group was more organisationally sophisticated or politically savvy than the other group, because while some of the people who had acted on their values effectively were in fact clever and had managed ingenious win-wins, some of them were really clumsy and even naïve in the way they did it. That wasn't the big difference. In the end the only thing we could really say is that the people who were able to do this effectively had at some point, said something outside of their own heads. It might have started by talking to a spouse, or a partner, or a friend, but eventually it found its way into the organisation and it changed the trajectory of things.

I thought "Well I'm a little disappointed with that. I'm not sure what you do with that." I was discouraged. I was back to my crisis of faith.

But then I remembered some research that I'd seen years earlier, when I was still at Harvard - two different studies by two different scholars, Douglas Haneke and Perri London. Independently, both of these guys had decided they wanted to study people who had acted with great conviction in times of really high stakes. Independently they both said "We're going to do qualitative research. We're going to do in-depth interviews with the people from World War II who are often referred to as rescuers -people who had put their lives at stake to help save others who were in danger during the Holocaust."

Both of these scholars found populations of these people and did in-depth interviews. They asked "Did these people have any common family background, personal experience, education, or religion - something that might lead them to be able to act that way when so many others did not?" They came up with a series of things, most of which I don't remember.

But there was one thing that they found that resonated with me when I first read these studies. probably because I was an educator, and that came back to me now as I looked at these stories from the Columbia students.

It was this. They said that the people who had acted with this kind of conviction in these high-risk situations reported that at an earlier point in their lives, usually as a young adult, they'd had the experience with someone more senior to them - a boss, a mentor, a teacher, even a parent - of rehearsing out loud what "Would you do if….?" about various kinds of moral conflicts. They'd had the literal experience of pre-scripting and rehearsal. They couldn't of course, have anticipated the holocaust, but there was both a cognitive and an emotional, a behavioral, component to this.

At the cognitive level they'd had to define the values that mattered to them and they'd put words to them in articulation and script. At the behavioral level, they'd had the experience of literally voicing these values out loud to someone more senior to them who stood in as a proxy for the kind of person they might need to talk to in the actual circumstances.

Well, I thought, this is kind of interesting, this idea of rehearsal, of pre-scripting, perhaps we should do some more exploration. So we did two things.

The first thing was that we just gathered more stories. We already had all those stories from the Columbia students, but we did interviews with other people, from thosee who were right out of school all the way up to executives in major corporations, and we asked them that same question - "Tell us about a time when you had a values conflict, and how you handled it."

We also looked at the scholarship.

This was about 10 years ago, and there was starting to be a lot of research in a number of different disciplines that suggested that if you want to impact people's behavior, rehearsal, pre-scripting, peer coaching - literally, practice - is a very effective strategy. There's even more of this research now.

In the field of psychology you've probably seen some of the research around habit formation. There's also a school of thought in psychology where the research they do is often described as a study of positive defiance - people who deviate from the norm, but in a positive direction. They have a nice way of phrasing it. They say (their phrase, not mine) "If you want to have an impact on people's behavior, rather than asking them to think their way into a different way of acting, it's more effective to ask them to act their way into a different way of thinking." That was provocative.

I spoke to folks who were very well versed in in the field of cognitive neurosciences and there was a lot of research, I'm sure you've read some of it, by Antonio DeMasio and others into brain plasticity and creating new neural pathways through habit, through repetition. But the research I really want to tell you about, because I think it's the most tangible and because it helps me remember, comes from the field of kinesthetic – studies of physical movement.

Back in the day, when I was at Harvard Business School, I decided to take a self-defense class. I had never in my life felt the need to take a self-defense class until I went to work at Harvard Business School; maybe it's kind of accurate. There were a lot of these courses around Boston, and they all teach pretty much the same thing - fist to bridge of nose, and heel to instep, and knee to groin - and they have you practice these moves in the air.

And the idea is that now if anyone ever attacks me, I know what to do. But one class was different. It was called model mugging. It was a developmental model, so they would still have you practice all these moves in the air, but then once you knew them they'd bring in a gentleman in a padded suit, like the Michelin man. They would line us all up, and we would take turns getting attacked, full force, by this guy.

Then we could use our moves on him, full force, because he was protected.

In the beginning it was kind of ludicrous, because you just waited your turn to get attacked. As the class went on, though, week after week, I never knew when it would happen - I'd be talking to someone, and he might come and grab me at any time – and I never knew what hold he was going to use, so it was utterly nerve-racking. They explained to us, and those of you who are athletes will be familiar with this, that this was based on specific-state muscle-memory research.

The idea was if you rehearse something in the same physiological and emotional and cognitive state that you will be in when you need to use it, then, even if you freeze in the moment, your body remembers. A tennis pro practices her serve over and over, so that when she goes to a tournament and is under all that stress her body will automatically assume the proper form.

I was in this class one day, lying on my back on the floor, having failed to protect myself, just looking at the ceiling, and I thought "Gee, you know, could you create a kind of moral muscle memory?" In other words, could you create a default to voice? Not just to speaking up, because I'd found from interviewing all these people who were acting on their values effectively that it wasn't really a matter of shaking their fists and stamping their feet and speaking truth to power.

It was much more strategic, much more tactical, much more organisationally sophisticated. I thought, "Could you create a kind of default to informed voice?" That was the insight- this idea of rehearsal, practice, pre-scripting, peer coaching, action planning. I thought "Well, what do we do currently when we try and prepare people for ethical action?" I was looking at Business Schools, but I've seen the same thing now since then as I work with companies and law and medicine and nursing, et cetera.

I got a little depressed again, because what we typically do now is two things. We teach what we call awareness, which means we're going to expose you to a lot of scenarios so you'll you'll be aware of the kinds of values and conflicts you might encounter. And we teach analysis, which means we're going to teach you the various models of reasoning in the relevant regulations, rules, norms, policies, and value statements so that you'll be able to look at a scenario and think rigorously and consistently about whether this is over the line or not.

This was a little troubling, because while awareness building is of course necessary, it's not sufficient.

In the scenarios I mentioned you at the beginning of my remarks, there were a lot of people who knew something was wrong. They were aware - they just didn't think they had any options. Analysis, too, is also necessary and important - because there are a lot of complicated issues that aren't immediately apparent – but, again, it's not sufficient, because … well, I'll tell you a story. I interviewed this guy, a CEO, an entrepreneur, very successful in the US. He had a consumer products firm, privately held. A lot of people said, "Go talk to him, he's very thoughtful about values in organisations."

He told me this story. He said that he had recently had a young man in his office who had just recently got his MBA from a leading US business school and who he was interviewing for an important high-potential job in his organisation. The CEO had asked "Did you take an ethics class in your business school?" and the guy said, "Well, of course, it was required."

So the CEO asked, "What did you learn?" and he said, "I learned all the models of ethical reasoning - utilitarianism, ontology, virtue ethics - and then I learned that whenever you encounter a values conflict, you decide what you want to do. And then you select the model of ethical reasoning that will best support what you want to do."

As the CEO was telling this story he was smirking at me - he was yanking my chain, right, because I was the ethics lady.

You know, though, there's a certain amount of truth to this. These models of ethical reasoning do conflict with each other, by design – that's why they're useful, because what you see from a duty-base perspective you might miss from a consequentialist perspective. They don't tell you what's right, they just help you think clearly. And once you know what you think is right, they certainly don't tell you how do get it done.

The way we were doing ethics education was, if done poorly, a schooling in sophistry. We were teaching people to be able to rationalise anything.

That wasn't the intent, but unfortunately that's what people were rehearsing, that's what they were pre-scripting. Well, I thought, we do awareness, we do analysis, we need to add the third A, for action. We need a pedagogy, a way of developing people for values-driven and ethical leadership.

Back when I was at Harvard I used to run their case-writing program. I'm sure many of you have seen typical case studies. They're usually about 10 pages long and feature a senior executive. At the end of the case he looks out the window and asks, "What should I do?"

Then you have people discuss this. I decided “If we want to use cases, we need a different kind of case”. What we did is create what we called the Giving Voice to Values pilot experiment. Our cases are very short - often just a paragraph, sometimes a few pages. They feature people at every level in the organisation, because people start encountering these issues right away, it doesn't wait until you're CEO.

The big difference, though, is that they're what we call post-decision-making. Our cases end with a protagonist who's already decided what the right thing to do is, and the discussion is about how they can get it done effectively.

What would they need to say and do? What would the pushback be? What will they say then? We teach people different skills for reframing problems, and we look at the research about how people make decisions around ethical conflicts. Interestingly, what we've learned from recent research is that people don't look at a scenario and then take a step back and say “Let’s see. Aristotle would say this, John Rawls would say this, Immanuel Kant would say that….” They don't do that kind of intellectual reasoning and then act. People tend to act emotionally immediately and then rationalise afterwards why that was the right thing to do, or the only thing they could do.

We realised that our previous model of education wasn’t really helping people. It's not how they make ethical decisions. What we wanted to do was to give them the chance to literally rehearse, to pre-script, to make this kind of reaction part of their muscle memory, and what we're finding from the research is that once people actually feel as if they have more strategies available to them they recognise issues that they would not have seen otherwise.

They recognise those issues rather than acting emotionally and rationalising post-hoc. We're trying to rewire that part of our brain.

Now it's all based on a model where we say, "Look, our idea of how this works is that you're working along, you've got your head down, you're doing your job, and something happens." You see something that you think is wrong. Someone comes to you and asks you to do something. Your boss tells you to do something. A friend asks you to do something, and you get that moment where you feel "Oh my God, I don't know what to do." It's a deer-and-headlight moment, you just act and then you go get back to work and you rationalise it all afterwards. What our model does is spread out the time between that moment when you get the feeling in your gut that something's dodgy and the moment when what we call pre-emptive rationalisations rush in – "Maybe it's not really wrong. Maybe I don't have all the information. Maybe it's wrong but it's really not my responsibility. Maybe I'll just make it worse."

We want to spread out the time between feeling something's wrong and pre-emptive rationalisation. We want to create a kind of safe space, a sort of laboratory in which we can ask "What if I was going to act on my values here? How might I get that done?" What we're trying to do is not ask people "What would you do?" Because if you ask them that, the over-defensive rethink kicks in and people talk about how it's not wrong or how they don't have a choice. Instead, we just ask, "If you were going to do this, how might you get it done?" Now the way you can show you're smart and sophisticated is by thinking creatively.

We're trying to shift this from an ethical defining moment, a test of moral character, into more of a mere problem-solving, action-planning pre-scripting. We want you to use all the skills you already have, and that you apply every day in your job, to ethical issues and values conflicts - because typically, when we encounter these values issues, we almost dumb ourselves down. If we think that they're a test of moral character, of my identity, we freeze. What we want to do is get people to be able to tap into all their other skills - communication skills, negotiation skills, power and influence. That's really what we're trying to do there.

That’s basically the GVV thought experiment. We've created hundreds of pieces of material, and we've made them available for free. People have started piloting them, and they're now being used in different places on all seven continents.

It's just a refrain. Instead of asking what's right, we ask, how do you get the right thing done? And it's based on three flips. We've reversed “What is this we're talking about when we talk about ethics?” We've reversed “Who are we talking to?” and “How are we having this conversation?”

In terms of what it is we're talking about, instead of talking about the so-called grey issues, the ethical dilemmas, we talk about the more clear-cut issues. Where people would say “It's just a clear issue of right and wrong,” that looks easy. But just because many of us think it's easy, that doesn't mean we think we can get it done. And if you only focus on the ethical dilemmas, you never get past the discussion about how many angels can dance on the head of a pin - so we go to those clear-cut issues, right-wrong issues, but issues that are still hard to handle, and we focus on action.

The second flip is “Who we think we're talking to?” We used to go into an organisation and they’d say "You know, most people here are good people. We still have a few bad apples." We think of our audience differently. We think of the people in the organisation as a bell curve, where on one tail-end of the bell curve are the folks who would self-identify as opportunists - people who would say, "I will do whatever is in my self-interest, regardless of values." and at the other tail-end of the are the folks are who would self-identify as idealists who’d say "I would always do what I think is right, regardless of the impact on my material self-interest."

Nobody falls into one of these categories all the time, but these are people who say “That's my primary motivation.” What we premise is that the majority of us fall under the middle of the bell - I’d put myself there - and we call them pragmatists. We define pragmatists as people who’d say, "I would like to act on my values - as long as it doesn't put me at a systematic disadvantage."

Now that's not the same as saying “As long as I know I'll succeed”, it's not the same as saying “As long as I know I'll never pay a price” - it simply means “As long as I think I have a shot.”

If you define your audience that way, I don't think I have the power to change the opportunist - I think they'll always be with us - and I'm not so worried about the idealist, except I want them to be more skillful - but we're really focusing on the pragmatist.

We're saying “We want to give you the scripts, and we want to give you the skills. We want to give you the positive examples. We want to give you the literal practice rehearsal, pre-scripting, peer coaching to be who you already want to be at your best. We're not trying to change you, we're trying to empower you.”

Because when I talk to people about times when they acted on their values, and when I ask them why they didn’t if they didn’t, they almost always say “Because I didn't think I had a choice.” What GVV is about is about helping people realise they have more choices.

The final flip is asking “How do we do all this?” I’ve already explained that we focus not on asking what's right, but on asking “How do you get the right thing done?” That's GVV in a nutshell. Most of the material is available for free online- Giving Voice to Values.org. Feel free to download anything you like. Thank you for letting me share this story. That's okay. Thank you.

ENDS

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