Four Resolution Principles

(After Kidder)

I. **"Do what's best for the greatest number of people."**
— ends-based or utilitarian (J S Mill)

II. **"Follow your highest sense of principle."**
— rule-based or Kantian

III. **"Do as you would be done by."**
— care-based, the Golden Rule

IV. **"Live admirably."**
Virtuous ethics.

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Case 1: Publish and be Damned?

KF is the editor and publisher of a daily paper.

A banker's son is under investigation for arson of a popular restaurant.

The banker also owns a competing restaurant.

Unconfirmed leaks: indictment of son is imminent, but not generally known.

Advice to KF: *publish now, lest we are scooped.*

The banker to KF: *my son has been framed—publication of rumours would ruin his life. And he won't be charged.*

KF owes the banker for past (open) favour.

Conflict between KF and the executive editor: *Publish now!*

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Case 1, continued

Type of dilemma:

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Case 1, continued

Type of dilemma: Truth v Loyalty

Resolution:

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Case 1, continued

Type of dilemma: Truth v Loyalty

Resolution: gather information, seek alternatives, otherwise a moral principle?

    I.   Ends-Based:

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Case 1, continued

Type of dilemma: Truth v Loyalty

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 I. Ends-Based: What's the greatest good? — the story?

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Case 1, continued

Type of dilemma: Truth v Loyalty

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I.   **Ends-Based: What's the greatest good? — the story? The greatest number? — not the banker and his family, but the public.**

II.   **Rule-Based:**

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Case 1, continued

Type of dilemma: Truth v Loyalty

Resolution: gather information, seek alternatives, otherwise a moral principle?

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    II.   **Rule-Based: The highest rule? — "Publish the truth and hang the consequences"?**

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Type of dilemma: Truth v Loyalty

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III.   **Care-Based:**

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II. **Rule-Based: The highest rule? — "Publish the truth and hang the consequences"? "Always protect the innocent?" Other editors in similar conditions?**

III. **Care-Based: Who are "others"? — the banker's son? the banker? KF: in the banker's shoes, don't publish.**

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Case 1 continued

Result: Hold the story!

**Why?
Was seeing the competition sufficient to risk ruining someone's life and reputation? What public interest is there in publishing *early*? Yes, she owed the banker, but irrelevant. Same decision even if father unknown? — Yes.**

A week later the son was indicted, and the paper still published first.

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Case 2: What the tow-truck driver saw.

Driver pinned in cab after hitting a tree.

Cab on fire — could explode at any moment.

Police arrived: driver — *Shoot me! Shoot me!*

Flames spread. Policeman draws his revolver.

Then, instead, the cop grabbed a can of CCl_4.

Sprayed the driver's face — unconscious. Cab explodes.

The cop's dilemma:

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The cop's dilemma: Short v Long, Justice v Mercy.

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Case 2 continued

I.   **Ends-based: saving 1 v losing both? easing pain v agony of burning?**

II. **Rules-based: "Never kill!" (and can't forsee consequences 100% — fire brigade?)**

III. **Golden Rule?**

1. **Assumptions of the driver/the cop — a third way?**

2. **Police don't kill, or ethical heroism to break the law and shoot?**

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Case 3: May's ex and his new girlfriend

May is a councellor at an STD clinic.

Finds she has 2 STDs herself, but sex only with her long-term partner.

Confronted, he denies infidelity. The relationship ends.

Later May councels a young ♀ with 1 STD, whose boyfriend, she learns, is her own ex.

May's dilemma: warn the ♀ or keep quiet?

Dilemmas:

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Case 3 continued

I. **Ends-based: consequences?**

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Case 3 continued

I. **Ends-based: consequences? diseases spread to others? May compromised if silent? May scaring ♀ off her ex if she tells? ∴ Tell (to save community)**

II. **Rules-based: (consequences mere speculation). Rule: "Save life!" whose?**

III. **Golden Rule: if May the ♀, then Tell.**

Third alternative: turn the ♀ over to another counsellor?

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Case 4: The Loyal Employee

Bill works with Maud, a very loyal employee, wrapped in work.

But never in 20 years of service did she quite fit any position.

Generous, careful, slow, deliberate, technophobic, a creature of habit.

Unable to change, no family, no savings, 6 years from retirement.

Cost cutting $\rightarrow$ Maud replaced by a computer, and no other work for her.

The firm can't easily carry Maud; but Maud needs the job until retirement.

Bill's dilemma: self v comunity.

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Case 4: continued

I.   **Ends-based: risk the community's survival for a single person? No.**

II.   **Rule-based: consequences not certain — a new need for Maud? her loyalty is extreme — use it? favourite niece of a rich old uncle? ∴ stick to the rule? "People are ends, not means?" Less an employee, more a family member?**
   Or: "Always strengthen the team?" how? fire? or keep?

III.   **Care-based: who is "other"? Maud? Other employees, at risk?**

Resolution depends on knowing Mary really well.

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Tuesday's Homework (individual)

1. Read the Ford Pinto case and Damian's summary of Jackall (both handed out). Answer the questions in the Course Outline under Tuesday's HW.

2. Can you resolve two questions from Mr Ethicist or the Australian CEO using the principles of resolution?

3. Complete your second Reflections diary note.

4. Due by 9am tomorrow, max five pages or less. (Be prepared to share in class.)