

## **COLLEGE ETHICS SYMPOSIUM**

### **Intro to the Case Study Approach.**

**Overview** – About 100 years ago Harvard Business School implemented the case study learning methodology. They have been a champion of this method ever since, and many higher educational institutions have since adopted it. At its simplest, the case method is a discussion of real-life situations that people have faced. The success of this approach became the basis for the case study method used at the symposium. You will be working through problems with your peers in a collaborative way, not as individuals. As you review each case, you will put yourself in the shoes of the key decision maker, analyze the situation, and decide what you would do to address the challenges. Then you'll meet with your discussion group, a diverse mix of six or eight peers, who will spend time each day discussing the cases.

**Case Method Creates Value** – Students discover that the objective of the case study is not to reach consensus or make the final decision. Nor, will some instructor say what the right answer is. Rather, the process of learning comes from understanding how different people use the same information to arrive at diverse conclusions. Experiencing this diversity of thought, you can appreciate the reasons why those decisions were made.

#### **Case Discussion Preparation Details**

**Introspection** - The time you spend here is deeply personal. Avoid - “group thinking”. Don't ask yourself, what would my friends and associates say? Start from your own personal perspective based on the moral and ethical values of your upbringing, culture, faith, education, life experiences, and gut instinct. You are not only working with case materials, but are also taking on the role of the person making those tough decisions. How would you react in those situations?

**In your small group setting** -The discussion group is a critical component of the College Ethics Symposium experience. You are working closely, in person, with a group of six or eight peers from different colleges, and geographies. Because they bring their unique experience to play, you begin to see that there are many different ways to wrestle with a problem—and that is very enriching.

**In the classroom** -The facilitator guides you in examining and resolving the issues — they don't provide you with the answers. You are interacting in the classroom with other students — debating the issue, presenting new viewpoints, countering positions, and building on one another's ideas. And that leads to the next stage of learning. It is vital to respect the viewpoints of your peers. Their position is based on one's own unique life experience. A great example of this is simply how we greet one another – shaking hands (traditional with the right hand or complex motions and patterns), high 5s, bows, double air kisses on cheeks, touching foreheads, arm grasps, fist bumps, hugs, and many others. Which one is right? All of them, of course. Some of them are more intimate, while others demonstrate distance and respect. They are just different. While your facilitator has wide ranging life experiences, their perspectives are simply just another set of input to be considered and respected.

**Beyond the classroom** – Once you leave the classroom, the learning continues and amplifies as you get to know people in different settings—over meals, at social gatherings, during leisure activities, over social media, or as you are walking to the class room. You will begin to distill the takeaways that you want to bring back and apply in your life to ensure that the decisions you make will create more value for you and your future enterprises.

#### **Case Study Best Practices:**

- ➔ **Prepare** – The key to being an active listener and participant in case discussions—and to getting the most out of the learning experience—is thorough individual preparation.
- ➔ **Discuss** - We've set aside formal time for you to discuss the case with your group. These sessions will help you to become more confident about sharing your views in the classroom discussion.
- ➔ **Participate** – Actively express your views and challenge others. Don't be afraid to share related "war stories" that will heighten the relevance and enrich the discussion.
- ➔ **Relate** – If the content doesn't seem to relate to your life, don't tune out. You can learn from a case, even though it may not apply to the here and now.
- ➔ **Apply** – Actively apply what you are learning to your own specific situations, both past and future. This will magnify the relevance.
- ➔ **Note** – People with diverse backgrounds, experiences, skills, and styles will take away different things. Be sure to note what resonates with you, not your peers.
- ➔ **Understand** – Being exposed to so many different approaches to a given situation will put you in a better position to enhance your value to your future endeavors.