

NABIE 2014 ANNUAL MEETING

Making the Right Choice: Ethical Decision Making in an Ever-Changing World

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President-Elect**

National Society of Professional Engineers

Doing the Right Thing



***National Society of
Professional Engineers®***



National Academy of
Building Inspection Engineers

NABIE



The National Academy of Building Inspection Engineers became a chartered affinity group of NSPE in 1990.

Professional Practice Issues in Building Inspection Engineering

- **Definition of Building Inspection Engineering...** “Consultation, investigation, evaluations, inspection, testimony, advice and assessment in connection with...”
 - Homes and multi-family residential buildings
 - Commercial/retail buildings
 - Industrial and agricultural buildings
 - Structural integrity/defect inspections and repair design

Professional Practice Issues in Building Inspection Engineering

“Consultation, investigation, evaluations, inspection, testimony, advice and assessment in connection with...”

- Failures/collapses
- Forensic investigation/testimony
- HUD permanent foundation inspections/design
- Property condition assessments (PCAs) and reserve funding studies

Professional Practice Issues in Building Inspection Engineering

“Consultation, investigation, evaluations,
inspection, testimony, advice and assessment
in connection with...”

- Architecture
- Phase I environmental surveys
- Storm damage evaluations/restoration
- Due diligence for investors and asset managers

Professional Practice Issues in Building Inspection Engineering

“Consultation, investigation, evaluations, inspection, testimony, advice and assessment in connection with...”

- Special inspections (cladding, roof, facade, water intrusion, mechanical, electrical)
- Builder warranty inspections
- Construction/Project design, management, plan review, and quality monitoring

Professional Practice Issues in Building Inspection Engineering

- Ethics – Key Issues...
 1. Protecting The Public Health, Safety and Welfare
 2. Demonstrating Professional Competence
 3. Maintaining Objectivity/Truthfulness
 4. Addressing Conflict of Interest
 5. Preserving Confidentiality
 6. Receiving and Providing Valuable Consideration
 7. Emerging Areas/Emerging Challenges

Doing the Right Thing



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Not Always Easy



- Choices are not always “black” or “white”.
- In today’s world, there can very often be shades of “gray”
- Personal loyalties/feelings involved.
- No-win situations – Hobson’s Choice
- Stakes high: Job or livelihood in the balance
- Conflicting guidelines

_____????

Truth and/or Consequences

Everybody, soon or late, sits down to a banquet of consequences.

[Robert Louis Stevenson](#)

Engineering Practice

- Ethics is the avenue along which the practice of engineering must travel.
- The practice of engineering can be deemed as excellent only if it is ethical.
- Our judgment says a lot about us...as engineers and as people.

Aristotle Meets Elvis



Not Exactly “Blue Suede Shoes”



“Values are like fingerprints. Nobody’s are the same but you leave ‘em all over everything you do.”

The Pride of Plato's Academy



“We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit.’

Dr. William Wickenden



President – Case Institute of Technology / 1929-1947

The Second Mile



“Every calling has its mile of compulsion...it’s round of tasks and duties, its prescribed relationships, which one must traverse daily if one is to survive. Beyond that is the mile of voluntary effort where one strives for special excellence....The best fun of life and its most durable satisfaction lies in this second mile.”

Does This Look Somewhat Familiar?

- Self-expression not material gain.
- Provision of service to the common good.
- Work that has a wide and enduring significance.

David Steinman, PE



On September 3, 1934 the National Society of Professional Engineers was officially formed. As its first President, David Steinman, PE said:

“Through membership and active participation in NSPE,” Steinman said, “the individual engineer renders his contribution toward making engineering a better and more satisfying profession than he found it.”

The Engineers' Creed



As a Professional Engineer, I dedicate my professional knowledge and skill to the advancement and betterment of human welfare.

The Engineers' Creed

I pledge:

To give the utmost of performance;

To participate in none but honest enterprise;

To live and work according to the laws of man and the highest standards of professional conduct;

To place service before profit, the honor and standing of the profession before personal advantage, and the public welfare above all other considerations.

In humility and with need for Divine Guidance, I make this pledge.

NSPE Code of Ethics

Preamble

Engineering is an important and learned profession. As members of this profession, engineers are expected to exhibit the highest standards of honesty and integrity. Engineering has a direct and vital impact on the quality of life for all people. Accordingly, the services provided by engineers require honesty, impartiality, fairness, and equity, and must be dedicated to the protection of the public health, safety, and welfare. Engineers must perform under a standard of professional behavior that requires adherence to the highest principles of ethical conduct.

The Language of the Code of Ethics

Fundamental Canons

Engineers, in the fulfillment of their professional duties, shall:

1. Hold paramount the **safety, health, and welfare of the public.**
2. Perform services only **in areas of their competence.**
3. Issue public statements only in an **objective and truthful manner.**
4. Act for each employer or client as **faithful agents or trustees.**
5. **Avoid deceptive acts.**
6. Conduct themselves honorably, responsibly, ethically, and lawfully so as to **enhance the honor, reputation, and usefulness of the profession.**

Rules of Practice

1. Engineers shall hold paramount the safety, health and welfare of the public.
2. Engineers shall perform services only in the areas of their competence.
3. Engineers shall issue public statements only in an objective and truthful manner.
4. Engineers shall act for each employer or client as faithful agents or trustees.
5. Engineers shall avoid deceptive acts.

Professional Obligations

1. Engineers shall be guided in all their relations by the highest standards of **honesty and integrity**.
2. Engineers shall at all times strive to **serve the public interest**.
3. Engineers shall **avoid conduct or practice that deceives the public**.
4. Engineers shall not disclose, without consent, **confidential information** concerning the business affairs or technical processes of any present or former client or employer, of public body on which they serve.

Professional Obligations

5. Engineers shall not be influenced in their professional duties by **conflicting interests**.
6. Engineers shall not attempt to obtain employment or advancement or professional engagements by **untruthfully criticizing other engineers, or by improper or questionable methods**.
7. Engineers shall **not attempt to injure, maliciously or falsely, directly or indirectly, the professional reputation, prospects, practice or employment of other engineers**. Engineers who believe others are guilty of unethical or illegal practice shall present such information to the proper authority for action.

Professional Obligations

8. Engineers shall accept **personal responsibility** for their professional activities, provided, however that engineers may seek indemnification for services arising out of their practice for other than gross negligence, where the Engineer's interests cannot otherwise be protected.
9. Engineers shall **give credit** for engineering work to those to whom credit is due and will recognize the proprietary interests of others.

You're OK, How am I??



DFW, We May Have an Ethical Problem

We have an ethical problem when we:

- Have “that feeling in the pit of our stomach”.
- Start rationalizing about a decision.
- Use such phrases as:
 - “everyone does it”.
 - “it’s not that important”.
 - “that could hurt his/her feelings”.

Ethical Decision Making

Building Blocks:

- Preparation.
- Identification/Specifics.
- Considerations.
- Plan Development.
- Testing.
- Finalization.



Preparation



The human brain evolved so that we can **THINK** through complex issues.

What are the foundations on which an ethical decision can be made?

What do I have and what more do I need?

What conversations must I have?

Who am I?

What do I stand for?

Clarifications and Focus



Define the situation.

How did I get here?

What is my dilemma?

What are the potential impacts of my decision?

Plan Development



- Generate options.
- Assess potential impacts.
- Make a “first choice”.
- Establish how to finalize.

Testing



- Bounce decision off of colleagues, even selected stakeholders.
- Do a “gut check”.
- Does it feel right?
- Any doubts? Re-load!

Finalization



- Make the decision.
- Clearly communicate the decision or path.
- Establish “lessons learned”.
- Communicate these “findings to others.

How Are Engineers Doing?

- Nurses
- Pharmacists
 - MDs
- Engineers
- Dentists
- Clergy (8th!)

How are We Doing?

Greatest compliment that can
be given to a consultant
(individual or firm)?

Sole source selection!!

Could the equation be this simple?

Competence + Ethical
Behavior = Sole Source
Selection

NSPE Commitment to Ethical Practice

- A core value and strength of NSPE.
- Regular offerings for Continuing Ethics Education.
- The NSPE Board of Ethical Review.
- Talk the talk...WALK THE WALK.

DISCOVER



LET'S MAKE A DIFFERENCE

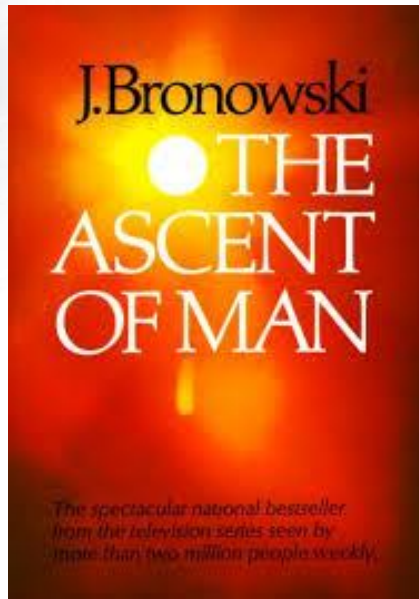


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Our Profession

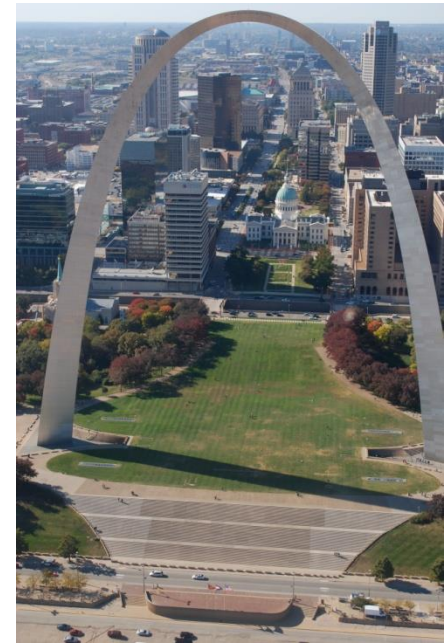


“All living creatures leave behind traces of what they were; Man leaves behind traces of what he has created.”

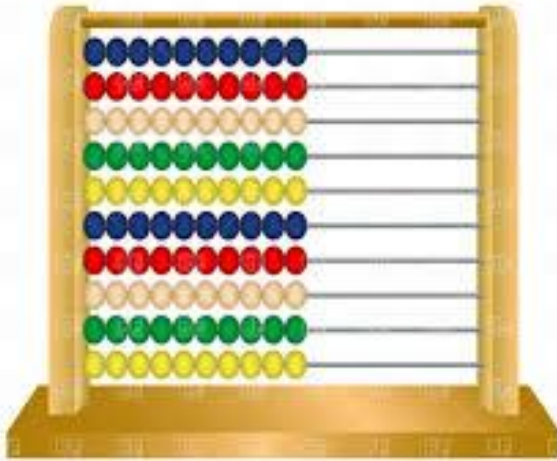
How Far Have We Come?



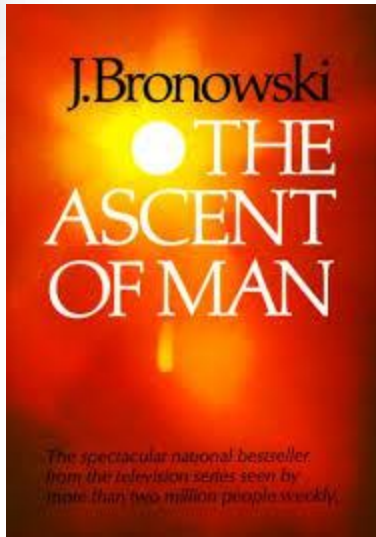
How Far Have We Come?



How Far Have We Come?



Engineers



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Happy Engineers Week!

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