

Handout #2

Guiding Principles for the Journalist

<http://www.poynter.org/column.asp?id=36&aid=4349>

Commentary, analysis, & advice from the director of Poynter's ethics program

More Talk About Ethics QuickLink: A4349

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- **Seek Truth and Report it as Fully as Possible**

Inform yourself continuously so you in turn can inform, engage, and educate the public in a clear and compelling way on significant issues.

Be honest, fair, and courageous in gathering, reporting, and interpreting accurate information.

Give voice to the voiceless.

Hold the powerful accountable.

- **Act Independently**

Guard vigorously the essential stewardship role a free press plays in an open society.

Seek out and disseminate competing perspectives without being unduly influenced by those who would use their power or position counter to the public interest.

Remain free of associations and activities that may compromise your integrity or damage your credibility.

Recognize that good ethical decisions require individual responsibility enriched by collaborative efforts.

- **Minimize Harm**

Be compassionate for those affected by your actions.

Treat sources, subjects, and colleagues as human beings deserving of respect, not merely as means to your journalistic ends.

Recognize that gathering and reporting information may cause harm or discomfort, but balance those negatives by choosing alternatives that maximize your goal of truth-telling.