

What Should Journalism Do?

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Adapted from *Doing Public Journalism* by Arthur Charity and *Coming to Public Judgment: Making Democracy Work in a Complex World* by Daniel Yankelovich.

"I propose that the quality of public opinion be considered good when the public accepts responsibility for the consequences of its views and poor when the public, for whatever reason, is unprepared to do so. When the public offhandedly rejects the need for tax increases to reduce the federal budget deficit on the unrealistic grounds that correcting "waste, fraud, and abuse" would cause the problem to disappear this is poor quality. There may be sound grounds for opposing tax increases, but the ritualistic incantation about 'waste, fraud, and abuse' serves merely as a rationalization that people seize upon because it permits them to avoid the issue" (Yankelovich, 1991, p. 24).

I. Making Citizenship Work

A. According to Charity, "Public journalism is nothing more than the conviction that journalism's business is about making citizenship work" (1995, p. 9).

B. Charity adapts the three-step process described by Yankelovich .

II. Three Stages

A. Consciousness-Raising

1. According to Yankelovich, "Consciousness raising is the stage in which the public learns about an issue and becomes aware of its existence and meaning" (qtd. in Charity, 1995, p. 4).

2. Helping the public set an agenda

B. Working Through

1. Reduce issues to choices

2. Examine core values

3. Spell out costs and consequences

4. Bridging the expert-public gap

5. Facilitating deliberation

6. Promoting civility

C. Resolution

1. This is "the actual making of a stable, responsible choice" (Charity, 1995, p. 7).

2. Requires media to prod politicians to take action on public choices.