

### Introduction

Remember that learning by the case-study method depends much more on interchange among students than it does upon solitary study. It is a participatory method of learning, and both students and instructor bear a responsibility to the entire class to share their insights and points of view. Careful preparation is not in order to insure a good grade, but rather to prepare to learn and to help others learn as well. The following notes are merely some elementary hints on how to study cases; you will soon develop your own style of getting at the materials.

- I. Immerse yourself in the case; get to know all the details.
- II. Analyze the case after reading it
  - A. Write out the cast of characters
  - B. Develop a chronology of events in the case
  - C. Identify the basic issues (especially those things - acts, values, attitudes - about which decisions need to be made).
  - D. Try to see all the positions reasonable persons might take
  - E. Then try to see how to raise issues with these various positions
- III. Mull it over - i.e., just ruminate about it casually, let things flow through your mind, free-associate
- IV. Think of any theoretical material which would be helpful in clarifying or resolving the issues in the case
- V. ~~Remember~~ that there is usually no one right answer

### Participation

- I. Push your ideas, and be willing to give reasons for them
- II. Listen to others, and evaluate their positions
- III. Keep an open mind, be willing to change it upon new insights or evidence
- IV. Enjoy yourself

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These notes were prepared by Professor M. B. Handspicker of Andover Newton Theological School on the basis of talks by Professor M. Thomas Kennedy at Harvard Business School.

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Aftermath

- I. Jot down any new ideas which occur to you in the course of discussion
- II. Make note of any information or theoretical knowledge for which you feel a need as a result of the discussion; find out where to get it
- III. Evaluate your own participation; what could you do to improve it next time?

Note: These suggestions on how to study cases have been compiled from notes given to case-study instructors on how to prepare for and evaluate their own teaching by case-study method. Continuing mutual evaluation and feedback can make this method one of constant growth for everyone involved.