

BUSINESS, SOCIETY & ETHICS

Disentangling Motive from Purpose in Business

As you read the material for our next class, keep the questions below in mind. To answer these questions you will have to reflect critically on what you have read and possibly re-read important passages. Keep in mind that there are two basic kinds of information that you need to look for in the reading:

1. What are the main points or conclusions that an author accepts with respect to a particular issue?
2. What are the reasons, important considerations, and evidence that lead the author to accept that conclusion?

For our purposes, *it is information of the second sort that will be our primary concern* since our most basic task is to *evaluate the reasons and evidence* that are offered to support accepting one possible conclusion about an issue, rather than another.

Although I strongly suggest that you write out brief answers to these questions, you do not have to turn in written responses. You do, however, need to be prepared to speak intelligently about these issues at our next class meeting.

Reading

- Duska, R. F. (1997, September). The Why's of Business Revisited. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 16(12/13), 1401–1409.

Questions

1. Throughout his article, Duska talks about two possible purposes for business. What are they? Why does Duska believe that understanding the primary purpose for business is important for business ethics?
2. What is the difference between motives for an action and purposes for that action? How does Duska use education and the practice of medicine to illustrate this distinction?
3. For the two possible purposes for business (from question 1 above), which is supposed to be the motive and which is supposed to be the purpose? What justification does Duska's provide for this position?