Kidder Model
Of Decision Making in Media Ethics
(from Journal of Mass Media Ethics, Vol. 12, No. 4, 1997, p.205)

1. **Identify the relevant facts (including details and context).**

2. **Recognize and identify the relevant moral issue(s).**
   Where is the potential for harm? Common issues in cases include: deception; misrepresentation; unfairness; disloyalty; conflicts of interest; careervism (greed and self-interest); sensationalism; violence or threats of harm; pornography; poor taste; invasions of privacy; pandering; misappropriation of intellectual and creative property; inappropriate resource allocation; exclusion of constituent groups in society; stereotyping; typecasting; lack of concern for social responsibility and the common good; lack of respect for persons as self-determining agents.

3. **Determine the moral agent(s).**
   “If this is a moral issue, whose is it?” “Who is morally empowered to do anything in the face of the moral issue raised?”

4. **Investigate the “trilemma” options.**
   Is there a third way? A middle ground? A compromise? Identify and list all possible alternatives and courses of action.

5. **Test for right-versus-wrong issues to determine if this is a moral temptation:**
   - The legal test (Is it legal)?
   - The intuition test (Does this action go against the grain of my moral principles)?
   - The publicity test (How would I feel if this action were to become public?)
   - The moral exemplar test (Would a person of high moral stature do this?)

6a. **Test for the right-versus-right dilemma paradigms:**
   - Truth* vs. Loyalty (honesty vs. commitment, promise-keeping, Allegiance)
   - Individual vs. Community* (self, us vs. them, others)
   - Short-term vs. Long-term* (now, immediate desires vs. then, future goals)
   - Justice vs. Mercy* (fairness vs. compassion, empathy, love)

6b. **Identify other role-specific values and duties.**
   (External Factors such as organizational policies and professional guidelines)

7. **Apply resolution principles.**
   “Locate the line of reasoning that seems most relevant and persuasive to the issue at hand.” (e.g., Kant’s Categorical Imperative; Mill’s Principle of Utility; Judeo-Christian Ethics; Aristotle’s Golden Mean; Bok’s Principle of Veracity, etc.)

8. **Make the decision.**

9. **Justify the decision.**