

People

One of the virtues of being in journalism is the Dickensian set of characters you work with. How can a leader cope — and still produce the next hour's live shot or tomorrow's daily miracle?

William Hearst III

(Prominent venture capitalist) John Doerr says when you're evaluating an investment, be sure to think whether or not you'd be willing to get into trouble with these people. Because sooner or later you probably will. And who will you get back out of trouble with?

Steve Isenberg

Newsrooms have very intelligent people. That doesn't mean they don't have their neuroses and they don't have their small moments. But they're curious people. They're deeply idealistic people. They are people for whom you must never let the ship move toward cynicism. It's a great distinction between that and skepticism.

Skepticism to me is a questioning that's based on noticing the ironies, the shadows, the less-than-seen-and-known in life. Not taking everybody's motive just as it's declared, understanding that there are things that lie under stones and that there are institutions in this world that don't want to tell us the truth. ...

Without skepticism, one would be naïve. Without skepticism, you wouldn't be a questioning, discerning reporter or editor.

Cynicism is absolutely purging from your own view of the world the fact that anyone could make an honest mistake — that there isn't a huge conspiracy behind every coincidence. (A cynic believes) that there isn't anyone whose motives could ever be good, that we can never forgive, that money corrupts everything.

What use are you, if you're a cynic? If you're a cynic, you don't belong in a newsroom unless maybe you write a column called "The Cynic: He Knows It All, He Always Knows It All, He Always Knew It All, and He Will Always Know It All No Matter What Things Change In the World," because a cynic is not an inquirer. A cynic already knows it all. That's not the (kind of) men and women who make a great newspaper.

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Karen Jurgensen

(On managing characters,) I think the worst mistake you can make is to be cowed by them. You have to just stand your ground.

William Hearst III

I remember a story about a publisher who burst into the business section and was mad about a story that was, in his judgment, a bleeding-heart story about layoffs somewhere. And he slammed the paper down and told the business editor in a voice that could be heard in every cubicle, "Goddammit, business is about numbers. It's not about people."

I think that's exactly wrong. If you can't lead people, if you can't get them to fall in behind the direction (you're going in), you're never going to get the numerical success you want.

Dick Wald

The power-mad person winds up with a staff that isn't worth playing with.

Matt Storin

[Former *Boston Globe* editor] Tom Winship had a great quality of never being hide-bound by the way that we had done things before.

One time he switched all of the (arts) critics. And in fact, not only did he have the theater critic doing dance and vice versa, but he had the movie critic covering the city council and stuff like that — just for a few days, to get a new approach to the news.

He let a guy write a story in Latin on the front page once. George Frazier wrote about the Latin address that's given at Harvard commencement. He let the writer write the story in Latin, which was, of course, ridiculous.

Ben Bradlee

The best management decision I ever made was to work with Katharine Graham. And I mean that. Some editor asked me how good do you think you would have been if you were editor of [*The Washington*] *Star* and not the *Post*? It answers itself.