

Inquiry into the effectiveness of the broadcasting codes of practice

I believe that from observation in many settings (work, politicians, business people) the frequent use of the F word (and other related words) reflects carelessness and recklessness. Ramsey is a perfect example of this. His foul language is just the flag waving on the top of a sad way of relating. Not that I think he's all bad.

His show has some genuinely interesting content. He gets some people out of some nasty trajectories toward financial brick walls & gets them doing their best. However, I don't think the ends justify the means. Because of his language and approach I can't stand the show. I think some of the popularity of shows like this is people's attraction to watching people being hacked to pieces, emotionally or physically. Eg. Australian Idol, or people being thrown to the lions.

I believe it is correct that people should be given the freedom to make their own choices - within limits. The tricky thing is finding the limits. However, I believe that Ramsay is way beyond reasonable limits.

I particularly dislike swearing but I cop less at work in a week than I do in 5 minutes of making a cup of tea in the kitchen where I can't avoid Ramsay's audio.

Look at Ramsey's web site. The fact that he f's frequently is obviously a major part of his branding and differentiation. How vacuous. The guy obviously has talent but is on a massive ego/marketing-trip with what he can see he's (wrongly) getting away with. TV stations will do what ever serves the might dollar. There will always be a tension between the call of the stock-holders on the one hand and moral stewardship on the other. The current status is much too near the stock-holders end of the spectrum.

The issues go beyond just the language to the promotion of an unrestrained attitude wherein no consideration is given to how the other person feels in how your opinion or advice is expressed.

In many places of work in Australia it is compulsory to complete training on recognizing and avoiding harassment in the work place. Ramsey is in a real work place. In each show how long is it before he violates anti-harassment laws? In each show how many times does he violate these laws. It is hypocritical to have laws which (justly) condemn work-place harassment, then implicitly promote the same harassment on TV for the sake of ratings and the resultant money.

It's interesting to read the submissions of those advocating only regulation by viewers using their remote controls. I think this doesn't work. It's like total free market economists. Look where that's got the USA (sub-prime mortgage melt-down & international follow-on effect).

This is allied to the 'everyone is doing it' mentality. Our society has huge problems with confusing 'everyone is doing it' with 'it's OK'. This is the phenomenon of the heat in the frying-pan increasing gradually - ie. desensitization. It happens over years or decades. Generally people are not good at recognizing trends which develop over such long time periods. Then one day they think about what they've passed on to their kids and how society in general has ended up & it's too late to go back to what they'd like to hand on.

Teenage binge drinking, gang destruction - it's all part of the same continuum and attitude. A small factor in contributing to the arrest of this is to not permit the likes of Ramsay's behaviour into the media.

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28apr08