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Leadership and ethics pdf

Effective leaders are constantly trying to understand how change can occur to impact the public good. In Leadership and Ethics, created by Christopher Robichaud, senior lecturer in ethics and public policy at Harvard Kennedy School, in concert with a team of the School's learning designers, individuals can acquire the skills necessary to begin the practice of moral leadership to instill change that has lasting impact on your community. "This leadership and ethics module goes above and beyond every other leadership and ethics module I've studied in the past. Using case studies and group work, you're pushed to examine your personal values and your own story and at what point you'd make trade-offs for the greater good. This is, by far, the best module I've studied on the topic." -Josephine Doueihi, PLC Learner   Les Stein, assistant teaching professor in the Master of Science in Leadership program at Northeastern University's College of Professional Studies, shares his insights on the importance of ethics in leadership.   Ethics Are the Foundation of Great Leadership One of the many advantages that come from studying leadership as a formal discipline is that it offers structure to a subject that many people erroneously believe comes naturally to them. The study of leadership offers us several theories and models to choose from. One model, for instance, might align with a leadership style that works best for entrepreneurs, another might be better suited for the pastor of a church, while others would be a better fit for those who want to lead non-profit, for-profit, or even political organizations. The bottom line is that one size does not fit all—each profession is different and requires one or more properly tailored leadership styles. We can debate the best and most effective leadership styles ad nauseum, but one aspect of leadership that should never be up for negotiation is that every leader must behave ethically. In fact, ethics should be the foundation for any discussion about leadership and it should serve as its centerpiece. Ethics should be the foundation for any discussion about leadership and it should serve as its centerpiece. Click To Tweet After all, it does little good for us to identify ourselves as transformational, authentic, or servant leaders if we are not grounded by an ethical mindset. On the surface, this seems like a simple concept. In practice, however, as we have seen from the beginning of time, ethical behavior does not come naturally. Today's competitive and technologically driven global environment muddies the waters even further and causes organizational leaders to face ethical challenges regularly. The Master of Science in Leadership program at Northeastern University offers its students the opportunity to understand the fundamental and critical role that ethical behavior plays in every leadership position. Download Our Free Guide to Effective Leadership in the 21st Century Learn how to develop the skills required to lead effectively in today's digital, global world. DOWNLOAD NOW Example of an Ethical Dilemma As a school principal, I often faced ethical dilemmas. An ethical dilemma occurs when two values are in conflict. For example, I once had a third-grade student who arrived at school with bruises on his face and upper back. When his teacher brought this to my attention, I quietly removed the student from the classroom and asked the school counselor to talk with him. The student was hesitant to discuss the cause of his injuries and it took the counselor some time to calm him down and make him realize that she would help him. After a couple of hours, he told the counselor that his mother's boyfriend hit him several times the night before. When I contacted the mother, she begged me not to call the police or the city's child protective services department because, without the boyfriend, she and her son would be homeless. This left me with a difficult choice—one that could certainly be handled in different ways. Ethical Decision-Making When the students in the Master of Science in Leadership program discuss a situation like the one above, their natural inclination is to become upset and argue their position from an emotional perspective. Our instructors, however, teach them that each situation needs to be evaluated objectively and that their emotions need to be kept under control. In my classroom, we utilize a framework as the basis for decision-making: I first ask the students to examine the consequences of each possible course of action. In the case above, for instance, what might happen if the school principal grants the mother's request and takes no action? On the other hand, what are the possible consequences associated with contacting the department of social services? Next, MSL students are asked to evaluate their duties and responsibilities to the young student, his mother, and society in general. In other words, do we have a greater duty and/or responsibility to the student, his mother, or the rules of law? Then, we ask the students to consider and evaluate their integrity by asking a simple question: What would a virtuous person do in this situation? Lastly, we provide our students with research-based decision-making steps that help them organize their thoughts and make objective decisions. Significance of Ethical Conduct for Leaders What if an ethical decision were to negatively impact your employment—both present and future? People today, and especially those in positions of authority, must often deal with situations that challenge their ethical mindsets. Again, many of them make the wrong decisions because they rely on emotion rather than an objective framework that could help them consider their options. Among the many real-world problems that we address in the MSL classroom is how to deal with an organization whose leaders are behaving either unethically or illegally. It comes as a surprise to many of my students when I tell them that most employees are loath to confront the inappropriate conduct or behavior of their supervisors or senior leaders. People who made headlines by blowing the whistle on their respective organizations, like Daniel Ellsberg (Pentagon Papers), Karen Silkwood (Kerr-McGee Nuclear Power Plant), or Sherron Watkins (Enron), are the exception rather than the rule. Certainly, such individuals risk everything when they take action that brings to light illegal or unethical practices—but what are the potential consequences of inaction? What are our duties and responsibilities to ourselves, our co-workers, and society in general? Do we claim to be virtuous? Becoming a More Ethical Leader in your Organization Students in the Master of Science in Leadership program are offered multiple opportunities to organize and structure their thinking about ethical leadership. They quickly recognize that ethics and leadership cannot be separated—they must function synergistically. Understanding their roles and responsibilities as ethical leaders effectively prepares MSL graduates for senior leadership positions and for serving as shining examples within their organizations. To learn more about honing the leadership skills needed to succeed in today's world, download our free ebook below or explore Northeastern's Master of Science in Leadership program. Ethics refer to the desirable and appropriate values and morals according to an individual or the society at large. Ethics deal with the purity of individuals and their intentions. Ethics serve as guidelines for analyzing "what is good or bad" in a specific scenario. Correlating ethics with leadership, we find that ethics is all about the leader's identity and the leader's role. Ethical theories on leadership talk about two main things: (a) The actions and behaviour of leaders; and (b) the personality and character of leaders. It is essential to note that "Ethics are an essential to leadership". A leader drives and influences the subordinates / followers to achieve a common goal, be it in case of team work, organizational quest, or any project. It is an ethical job of the leader to treat his subordinates with respect as each of them has unique personality. The ethical environment in an organization is built and developed by a leader as they have an influential role in the organization and due to the fact that leaders have an influence in developing the organizational values. An effective and ethical leader has the following traits / characteristics: Dignity and respectfulness: He respects others. An ethical leader should not use his followers as a medium to achieve his personal goals. He should respect their feelings, decision and values. Respecting the followers implies listening effectively to them, being compassionate to them, as well as being liberal in hearing opposing viewpoints. In short, it implies treating the followers in a manner that authenticate their values and beliefs. Serving others: He serves others. An ethical leader should place his follower's interests ahead of his interests. He should be humane. He must act in a manner that is always fruitful for his followers. Justice: He is fair and just. An ethical leader must treat all his followers equally. There should be no personal bias. Wherever some followers are treated differently, the ground for differential treatment should be fair, clear, and built on morality. Community building: He develops community. An ethical leader considers his own purpose as well as his followers' purpose, while making efforts to achieve the goals suitable to both of them. He is considerate to the community interests. He does not overlook the followers' intentions. He works harder for the community goals. Honesty: He is loyal and honest. Honesty is essential to be an ethical and effective leader. Honest leaders can be always relied upon and depended upon. They always earn respect of their followers. An honest leader presents the fact and circumstances truly and completely, no matter how critical and harmful the fact may be. He does not misrepresent any fact. It is essential to note that leadership is all about values, and it is impossible to be a leader if you lack the awareness and concern for your own internal values. Leadership has a moral and ethical aspect. These ethics define leadership. Leaders can use the above mentioned traits as yardsticks for influencing their own behaviour. ❮ Previous Article Next Article ❯ Authorship/Referencing - About the Author(s) The article is Written By "Prachi Juneja" and Reviewed By Management Study Guide Content Team. MSG Content Team comprises experienced Faculty Member, Professionals and Subject Matter Experts. We are a ISO 2001:2015 Certified Education Provider. To Know more, click on About Us. The use of this material is free for learning and education purpose. Please reference authorship of content used, including link(s) to ManagementStudyGuide.com and the content page url.   next Formal leadership responsibilities include creating an ethical organizational culture, a broader view of stakeholder interests, changing ownership structures, and addressing the paradox of millennial values. Ann Skeet, senior director of Leadership Ethics at the Markkula Center for Applied Ethics, defines the field. Ethical leadership means both acting ethically and setting the standard for others to do so as well. Leaders have an opportunity to inspire others not only to do the right thing but also to consider the kind of people they want to be. Leadership is both a formal role individuals have in organizations and an activity individuals undertake in various aspects of their life as professionals, citizens, parents, and volunteers, for example. We explore issues of institutional and personal leadership in business ethics, nonprofit ethics, and government ethics. Business ethics involves the study of moral right and wrong, concentrating on issues in for-profit companies and the newer B corporations some U.S. states have adopted. Nonprofit ethics considers these issues in nonprofit institutions that have responsibilities to the stewardship of mission and public benefit goals, and the complexities introduced by relying on volunteers and donated funds, introducing additional ethical considerations. Government ethics looks at the responsibilities of elected and appointed officials for conducting the public's business with transparency and fairness. We consider the activities of individuals serving organizations formally as operational or governing leaders and also of people demonstrating leadership in everyday life, regardless of formal positions they hold. Some activities leaders engage in to set standards that encourage ethical behavior include creating clear boundaries guiding policy development asking the right questions reframing issues to bring forward ethical considerations creating systems designed to motivate ethical action taking responsibility for creating ethical cultures in organizations Article by Peter Bothum Photo by iStock January 25, 2021 You don't have to be an ethical leader to win a Super Bowl or an election or rise to the level of CEO of a Fortune 500 company. But according to a new study co-written by Kyle Emich, associate professor of management in the University of Delaware's Alfred Lerner College of Business and Economics, possessing the characteristics of "ethical leadership" is absolutely essential in order to steer an organization through a crisis. Ethical leaders are generally defined as leaders who build meaningful relationships with followers, model upstanding behavior, prioritize process over results and encourage two-way communication. "There are many examples of highly successful unethical leaders who come to mind. They win sports titles and elections alike, and lead major companies," Emich said. "But what unethical leaders have massive amounts of trouble doing is holding their teams together after failure." The study, published recently in the Journal of Business Ethics, aimed to explain this phenomenon and illustrate why ethical leadership matters. Leaders who have risen to top jobs but ultimately failed due to a lack of ethics include Volkswagen CEO Martin Winterkorn, who resigned in 2015 and will face trial later this year for his role in a diesel emissions-cheating scandal; John Stumpf, the Wells Fargo CEO who has been banned from banking and forced to pay a massive fine because bank employees opened millions of fake accounts set up to meet sales quotas; and Harvey Weinstein, the wildly successful Miramax co-founder who also launched the #metoo movement by committing a string of sex offenses. Unethical leaders crash and burn quickly, and spectacularly, garnering gobs of media attention. On the other hand, ethical leaders who shepherd their organizations through rough times are slower-moving success stories that make them less salient. Still, as Emich and his colleagues' research shows, this slow process results in maintaining increasing confidence in their organizations and employee desire to keep working there. However, this often leads to the perception that most leaders are unethical or ethical leaders matter less. "The reason for this is that whereas unethical leaders are prone to spectacular downfall, the benefits of ethical leadership build up through a slow, continuous, perhaps unexciting daily commitment," Emich said. He cited the case of Jim Goodnight, founder and CEO of business analytics software vendor SAS, who has consistently rejected calls to make his company public so that he can focus resources on his employees. SAS provides benefits such as onsite daycare, healthcare, an onsite recreation and fitness center, hair and nail salon, and paid parental leave. Interestingly, SAS also maintained increasing profit margins through the 2008 financial crisis. Emich also pointed to Dick Clark, CEO of The Portland Clinic, who was in the process of approving adjustments to employee benefit policies in the fall of 2018. Unfortunately for the clinic, employees were confused by the initial plan Clark and his HR team rolled out. This confusion could have resulted in reduced commitment, engagement and performance from a variety of hospital workers including nurses, aides and kitchen and janitorial staff. However, instead of ignoring employee concerns – as an unethical leader would do – Clark put together a task force composed of representatives from all affected parties, meaning that doctors and nurses worked with staff to come up with a new plan that worked for everyone. "He seriously listened to their proposal, adjusted his plan and implemented several formal and informal methods to clearly communicate the plan to employees and allow them to voice any concerns," Emich said. "Because of these ethical actions undertaken by Clark and his team, such as prioritizing relationships, processes and two-way communication, the new rollout was widely accepted by employees and is considered a great success." Previous research conducted by Emich and others has found that success and failure play a large role in how teams view themselves. That conclusion might seem obvious, but teams that win feel confident they can do so again and want to stay together, while teams who lose also tend to lose confidence in themselves, which often results in their members opening themselves to leaving for better options. This pattern has been found across industries, including in the military teams Emich and his colleagues studied in their most recent paper. However, their study showed that ethical leaders were able to break this pattern and maintain a team's confidence in itself and members' desire to remain a team even after failure. In other words, unethical leaders can be successful as long as they start winning early and keep winning. "Because everything is fine as long as a team is winning," he said. "But, when unethical leaders lose, people jump ship." Still, some teams are more prone to failure than others. For example, any team doing something creative or innovative has natural potential for failure because doing something new involves inherent risk – and risk definitionally means that there is a certain chance of failure. Similarly, competitive teams naturally involve failure because one team fails to win every game (or product launch or battle for resources). Because of this, companies who develop cultures and norms that ignore or actively promote unethical leadership are rolling the dice with their success. Alternatively, while prior research has focused on individual team-member differences in traits like grit or robustness, Emich and his colleagues' work suggests that leadership styles and behaviors play an important role in creating stalwart teams. Specifically, ethical leaders run teams that endure through setbacks, failures and poor performance. Accordingly, when organizations are forming teams, deciding whom to promote, or considering what sorts of leadership development is useful, they should prioritize ethical leadership. "Although you may see an unethical leader succeed in the short term, in the long term ethical leaders will always come out on top," Emich said.