

Ethical Leadership



Every man must decide for himself whether he will walk in the light of creative altruism or the darkness of destructive selfishness. This is the judgment. Life's most persistent and urgent question, what are you doing for others?

-Martin Luther King

Ethical leadership is knowing your personal values and living with integrity every day in all situations for the common good. As a leader, possessing good values is not enough if you do not contribute to society. Each leader will do that differently and will inevitably struggle along the way.

Take a moment to write down the top three values that are most important to you. As you choose your values consider the following questions:

- Why are these important and how did I choose these three values over others?
- Do I display these values at home? In my community? At work?
- How do these values contribute to the common good?
- When are these values most transparent in my life?
- When have I compromised my values?

Keep in mind that these values will change over time as you gain more life experience. The main idea is to be consistent and transparent so that you have guiding principles by which to make decisions.

The Common Good can be somewhat vague. There is no universal definition that can apply to all situations. When making decisions, ask yourself these questions:

- Is it inclusive? Who is left out?
- Does it address our interdependence and connectedness?
- What is the role of mutual responsibility?
- Is it just? Does it address the different forms of justice – social, environmental, and economic?

Santa Clara University, in the family of Jesuit Colleges and Universities, has a center dedicated to the study of ethics. Their website provides a framework for ethical thinking, decision-making, case scenarios, along with additional resources. <http://www.scu.edu/ethics/practicing/decision/framework.html>

You must be the change you wish to see in the world.

Mahatma Gandhi

Always do right--this will gratify some and astonish the rest.

Mark Twain