

NEED, RELEVANCE AND IMPORTANCE OF VALUES AND ETHICS IN FOSTERING LEADERSHIP

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Abstract

Values, ethics and morals in life hold immense significance from the point of social, spiritual and personal development. Values, morals and ethics are inextricably attached together. Values are what we learn from upbringing; the matter we obtained from our parents and absolute environment. Values are the drive control determined for accomplishment. Ethics are often centered on value systems and values such as, integrity, truth, service, freedom, responsibilities, sacrifice and rights of the individual virtuous for the universal gain. Values and morals guides, inspires and motivates in obtaining vigor and enthusiasm for existing and for doing something significant. In today's turbulent world, ethics and values are present at a number of levels for leaders who devote their time and energy to lead the process of value creation. Becoming a leader is not that simple. It requires a commitment to examining behavior, values and ethics, and willing to accept responsibility for the effects of the actions. So the present paper aims at focusing on the role of ethics and values in fostering leadership.

Keywords: values, ethics, morals, upbringing, leader, responsibility

Introduction

Ethics is a requirement for human life. It is our means of deciding a course of action. Without it, our actions would be random and aimless.

As children, we were taught by our parents that it is wrong to lie, cheat, and steal. As we grow up and enter into the real world with some knowledge of right and wrong, we see, first hand, the importance of ethics as well as its complexity. The role of ethics in our society is very necessary because it has a large influence on today, as well as the future. We need to learn about good ethics because they guide our decisions, make us who we are, and determine our future.

Ethics are learned throughout our lives as we associate with others. During years of schooling, we learn ethics as we interact with teachers and classmates and learn to respect and other skills. In the work place, we learn responsibility, teamwork, punctuality, and work etiquettes. When we understand why these ethical values are necessary, we realize the importance they have in our success as well as our everyday lives. We use these skills, along with our knowledge of right from wrong as we go about various activities such as driving, buying milk at the supermarket, filing out an application, etc. We know that it is unlawful to run a red light, shop-lift, and lie

under oath. Because good ethics make us honest, law-abiding citizens, we contribute to the good of society.

Concept and Meaning of Value and Ethics

The word ‘Value’ is derived from the Latin word “valere”, which means “to be strong”, “to be worth” Values are feelings and convictions regarding what is of “strong worth” (i.e. “important”) to us in what we think, say or do.

When the things and behavior match values, life is usually good – satisfied and content. But when these don't align with personal values, that's when things feel... wrong. This can be a real source of unhappiness. This is why making a conscious effort to identify values is so important. Values are inherent in all societies – ideals and shared beliefs that bond a community together. Values are the things that believe are important in the way live and work. One (should) be determining priorities, and, deep down, probably the measures use to tell if life is turning out the way it wanted to.

Ethics as a concept has several nonexclusive definitions and connotations. The American Heritage Dictionary (2014) defines ethics as the general nature of morals and of the specific moral choices to be made by a person.

Ethics is about actions and decisions we take. When one action choices that are consistent with beliefs and principles which we hold and which defines our personality and traits, and to the extent of its consistency with general society acceptance of those values; we generally characterize such behavior as ethical.

Another definition by the American Heritage Dictionary (2014) is that ethics are the rules or standards governing the conduct of a person or the members of a profession. The Ethical Research Centre (ERC, 2012) research indicates that ethics is the extent to which a strong commitment to standards is set at the top and the message is reinforced throughout all levels of management, and that employees perceive the ethical standards really matter in the organization's day-to-day operations.

Ethics is crucially important because it is devoted to answering questions like these:

“What is best?”

“What is the good life?”

“How should I live?”

“How should I behave towards other people?”

“What is the purpose of life?”

These are questions about what makes things valuable; they were the questions which drew attention to philosophy. Ethics is the branch of study dealing with what is the proper course of action for man. It answers the question, "What do I do?" It is the study of right and wrong in human endeavors. At a more fundamental level, it is the method by which we categorize our values and pursue them. Do we pursue our own happiness, or do we sacrifice ourselves to a greater cause? Is that foundation of ethics based on the Bible, or on the very nature of man him, or neither?

Importance of Values and Ethics in Fostering Leadership

Ethics has its roots in ancient Greek philosophy where Plato records his teacher, Socrates, as having asked the fundamental question of ethics, “*What ought one to do?*” In more modern times, ethics defined as ‘*doing the right thing even when no-one is looking!*’ and whilst the ‘right thing’ may at time be hard to define - ethical dilemmas are common - the wrong thing is usually obvious and is not influenced by culture.

Leader plays an eminent role in all the aspects of life. An efficient leader is defined as a person who is followed by the others. Besides that, a leader has to know about the human nature, and be able to direct people reducing the group's doubts about succeeding. Some people believe that a leader is born that way and there is no way, practicing or studying, to create a leader. They are wrong because inside of each and every one of us there is a leader waiting to be awake and holding on an opportunity to come out. A leader is capable of influencing and inspiring the people around him to voluntarily commit towards accomplishing a certain goal. There are different types of leadership people who specialize in trying to understand this important phenomenon. The only kind of leadership in which a person communicates true self are by way resonates with other people. This behavior is highly individual and situational for both the leader and follower and therefore there are a huge variety of ways in which effective leadership occurs. On top of that, when we think about the characteristic of a leader, we often think of leaders that are dynamic, which makes each of us to follow. We could take an example, such as Hitler. He did not have the values that we should follow, but he had that inspiration for the country to follow. If we also stop to think about the leaders today, we do not get the same vision of a leader that has a dynamism that is hard to resist, but rather a leader that has a good quality. The characteristics of a leader are not behaviors that will be new to those that strive to master them. Developing a good leadership skills take time, just like perfecting an idea or delivering on a project. Without an investment of time, very few people will have the skills to become the great leaders. Thus, there are many types of characteristic of being a good and efficient leader. A good leader is confident in doing everything.

Leaders need values like honesty, integrity, compassion, courage, honor, responsibility, respect and fairness. They are used to define and differentiate right from wrong, good from bad, desirable from undesirable, and just and fair from unjust and unfair.

In order to lead and set direction a leader needs to appear confidently as a person and in the leadership role so that this person inspires confidence in others brings out the trust and best efforts of the team to complete their work well. A leader who conveys confidence towards the proposed objective inspires the best effort from team members. Believing in their abilities is an essential way of a good leader. The next character of an efficient and good leader is responsible leader. A leader influences people and has a lot of power to move his team and followers. An irresponsible leader can create a disaster if he does not act responsibly to the situations. A leader in an act must know that he is responsible for the team's achievements and success. If in any case his team fails, he must have the nerves of taking responsibility for that, and should then take necessary steps to resolve the situation. He also should not have to blame his team members unnecessarily if they have failed to achieve the desired goals. Considering a good characteristic of a leader, honesty is also one of the important characters of an efficient, smart and good leader. Nowadays, people and management want to trust their leader. The best way to identify and gain trust in a leader is through the honest and trustworthy. In order to grow that characteristic of honesty, you must go out of your way to display that honesty as an individual. When you do not admit that something did not work, you are making a mistake. When you are honest you turn into an influence to other people. A good leader, as well as keeping the main goal in focus, is able to think methodically.

Leaders' values are increasingly important as businesses seek to become more responsible, accountable and transparent. Values-based leaders can help employees, customers and other stakeholders find meaning and purpose in what they do.

Following are the important values for leadership.

- **Humility** is essential to learning and becoming a better leader
- **Integrity** is essential to building trust and encouraging others to collaborate
- **Collaboration** enables teamwork
- **Justice** yields decisions that are accepted as legitimate and reasonable by others
- **Courage** helps leaders make difficult decisions and challenge the decisions or actions of others
- **Temperance** ensures that leaders take reasonable risks
- **Accountability** ensures that leaders own and commit to the decisions they make and encourages the same in others
- **Humanity** builds empathy and understanding of others
- **Transcendence** equips the leader with a sense of optimism and purpose
- **Judgment** allows leaders to balance and integrate these virtues in ways that serve the needs of multiple stakeholders in and outside their organizations.

Leaders set the moral tone for their team, and can drive ethical practices beyond the team. The value created by any project or organization is dependent on their supply, or 'value' chain. Creating an environment focused on 'shared value' by implementing policies and practices that focus on enhancing organizational competitiveness while simultaneously enhancing the conditions in the host community and supply chain drives value - a win-win outcome for everyone.

Conclusion

Strong leaders are needed now more than ever as we live and work in a fast and dynamic world that has moved far away from the original and fairly simple requirements. Leaders must be strong, steadfast, and determined to avoid the multiple and complex pitfalls that exist in society. Thus values and ethics play a very crucial role in development of leadership. A must develop virtues, character, ethics with competence and commitment will lead to become an effective leader and respected in the society. It is essential to know duties, responsibility, working genuinely in achieving goals, sticking to values and to be confident.

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