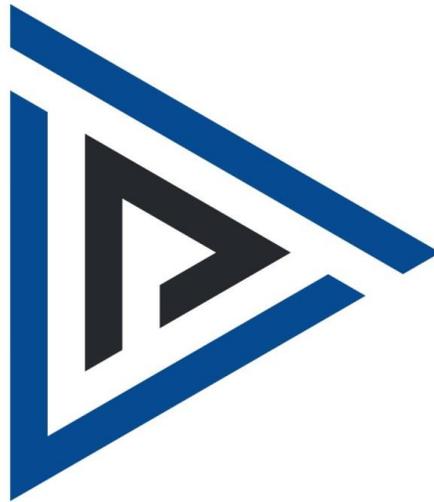


Values & Spirituality in Leadership

By

William R. Auxier, Ph.D.



Dynamic Leadership
— A C A D E M Y —

Values and Spirituality in Leadership

Values and Leadership

If a mission statement describes our final destination, then our values serve as a moral compass telling us how to get there. Values provide a frame of reference, helping us set priorities and determine right from wrong. A value is worthy of esteem and has intrinsic worth. A value is an end in itself, not merely a means to achieve some other thing of worth. A code of ethics lists important values that have been determined to be worthwhile. These values are moral values. Not all values are moral values. Values can be categorized as political values, economic values, even culinary values.

For Jews and Christians, the prevailing code of ethics is the Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments are recorded in the Bible as a statement of God's law as given from God to Moses. The Ten Commandments can be broken down into two parts. The first four Commandments define God's relation to man. They prohibit the worship of more than one god, the creation of graven images, the taking of God's name in vain, and the breaking of the Sabbath. The final six are simple and direct; honor your parents, do not kill, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not give false evidence or lie, do not envy or covet. The Ten Commandments are phrased in the negative and emphasize what not to do as opposed of what should be done.

Not everyone subscribes to the Ten Commandments. How do organizations and businesses of different cultures and different worldviews have common values? Are not the values and ethics of each organization distinct? Are there moral values widely shared by humanity that might constitute a universal code? There is no group that thinks it is right to kill

an adult, healthy member of society who has committed no crime and whose death is not required by the welfare of the group. Scholars have surveyed the ethical standards in a variety of social groupings, finding common ground in the value systems of different groups.

Bernard Gert, a moral philosopher and author of *The Moral Rules: A New Foundation for Morality*, developed ten rules that he described as the basic or fundamental rules of morality.

They are:

1. Do not kill.
2. Do not cause pain.
3. Do not disable.
4. Do not deprive of freedom or opportunity.
5. Do not deprive of pleasure.
6. Do not deceive.
7. Keep your promise.
8. Do not cheat.
9. Obey the law.
10. Do your duty (p. ii).

Hans Küng is a priest, theologian and author who examined the commonalities of the world's religions. From his research, Küng developed five basic commands to human beings: 1) do not kill; 2) do not lie; 3) do not steal; 4) do not practice immorality; and 5) respect parents and love children (p. 57). Küng contends that these five basic commands apply to both the business world and politics.

Research has developed these universal codes but the question remains, do people from disparate cultures actually share a common core of values? Rushworth Kidder, author of *How*

Good People Make Tough Choices, explored this question, interviewing individuals from around the world. To each of the interviewees he asked the same question: If you could formulate a global code of ethics for the twenty first century, what would be on it? The following core values resulted: love; truth; fairness; freedom; unity; tolerance; responsibility; and respect for life. It does appear that there is a fundamental core of shared global values.

Spirituality and Leadership

Definitions of spirituality cause great debate due to the fact that a variety of worldviews lead to a variety of definitions. For our purposes we will use the following definition: spirituality is the basic feeling of being connected with one's complete self, others, and the entire universe. This definition includes a connection within leading to the understanding of self-meaning, a connection with others which is expressed through concern over coworkers, teamwork, respect and community involvement, and a connection with the entire universe which refers to developing a relationship with a larger force such as God or nature.

Spirituality is assumed to be a dimension of the human being that is shared by all persons. Any leader looking at her spirituality will likely consider some or all of the following attributes; inner journey, meaning and significance, wholeness and connectedness. Inner journey is about self-discovery. This is accomplished by looking deep inside to search for truth and meaning as an individual and as a leader. Meaning and significance refers to the idea that leaders continuously question why they want to be in a leadership role. Leaders need to understand their motivations and how they determine right from wrong. Wholeness is an awareness that transcends self leading to encounters with others. Connectedness refers to one's interaction with community. For many, the place of work is where they spend more time than

anywhere else and is their primary source of community. Wholeness demands connectedness with community which includes work.

In a study of top executives at publicly traded companies, William Judge, author of *The Leader's Shadow: Exploring and Developing Executive Character*, found that spirituality is central to executive character. The majority of CEOs he surveyed were connected with an organized religion and routinely engaged in spiritual activities such as prayer. Middle and upper level managers are more religious than the population as a whole. That being said, it is important to note that religion and spirituality overlap but are not identical.

Organizations have become dominant institutions in society and their importance has grown. Employees work more hours or do whatever it takes to make sure they are not the next to be laid off or have his job eliminated. The end result is we develop more friendships with coworkers because we spend so much time with them. Organizations can benefit from more connected members. Spirituality has been found to enhance commitment to mission, core values, and ethical standards. In addition, multiple studies have found that spirituality fosters organizational learning and creativity, improves morale, generates higher productivity, and encourages closer collaboration. In short, spirituality helps build more effective organizations.