Ethics

The core values behind behavioral choices

istock 526298052

"Conversations on Leadership"
Loma Linda University Health
July 17, 2022
Presenter; Lowell C Cooper

Legal notice and terms of use

The information in this slide deck is provided for non-commercial educational purposes only and is not intended, nor should it be used, as legal counsel. This material may not be used or reformulated for any commercial purposes; neither shall it be published by any person or agency other than an official organizational unit of the Seventh-day Adventist® Church, unless prior written authorization is obtained from Lowell C Cooper (cooperlc@verizon.net). Subject to the foregoing terms, permission to copy or use these slides solely for non-commercial education use is hereby granted upon inclusion of this notice. Use of all or any part of this program constitutes acceptance by the User of these terms.

Objectives:

1. To understand various frameworks for ethical decision-making.
2. To highlight ethical values critically important for leadership and organizational life.
3. To examine the ethical reflections that inform my behaviors.
4. To maintain an organizational reputation of ethical conduct in places where I serve.

Ethics—a practical definition

- A <u>system of moral principles</u> that inform and affect how people live, decide, and relate with each other.
- A <u>process of discernment</u> concerning the rightness or wrongness of contemplated behavior.

Values or ethics cannot be performed by themselves. They are <u>descriptions of the moral quality of an action</u>. Values must be translated into specific observable behaviors, and then those behaviors must be sought, taught, appraised and rewarded. Ethical reflection involves the <u>intentions, motivations, and consequences</u> that inform actions.

Both law and ethics deal with questions of how we should live together with others, but ethics goes farther and addresses how people ought to live and act even when others are not involved.

Law
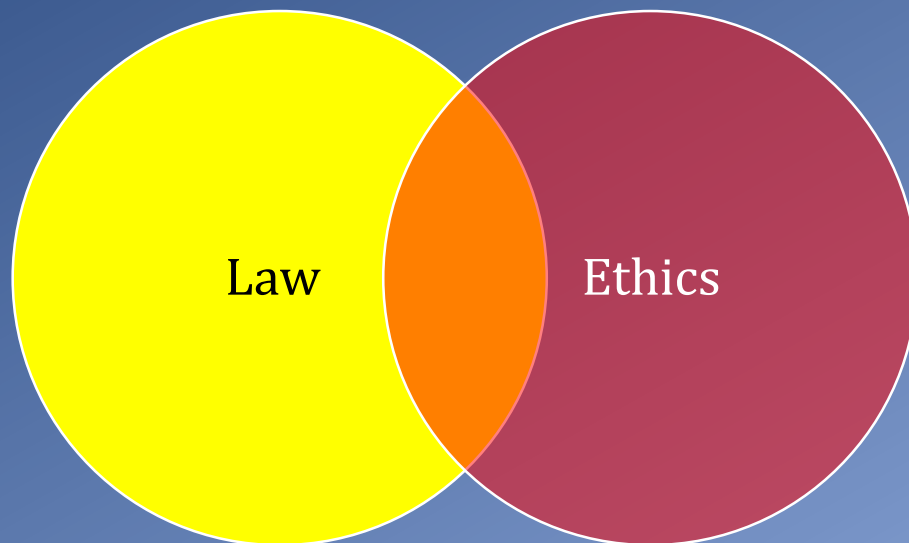
Ethics

Law and ethics may overlap but they must also be seen as distinct.

Where do ethics come from?

- Divine source—God and other religions' deities
- Human conscience and intuition
- Evaluation of most good/least harm (Also known a utilitarianism.)
- Duty/obligation arising from laws, a clear set of rules, or cultural values (Also known as deontology.)
- Example of good people
- Political power

Three ethical systems/schools:

1. Rules or obligation-based
2. Ultimate purpose or consequences-based
3. Virtue or character-based

Rule-based ethics:

- Concerned with obligation and/or permission.
- Adherence to independent moral rules or duties.
- Common for theist religions.
- Major questions: What should I do? Is it right? What duties do I owe?
- Ethical action is performed from duty not from consequences.

Ultimate purpose/results-based ethics:

- Choices which result in the correct consequences are viewed as moral acts. (The end justifies the means.)
- Key questions: Is it good? What impact will it have on the world? Am I doing more good than harm?
- Benevolence is a primary value.
- Involves the risk that self-interest may be what ultimately determines the good or the harm.

Virtue-based ethics:

- First two systems focus on the question: "What should I do?"
- Virtue-based asks the question: "What kind of person should I be?"
- Doesn't judge actions as right or wrong but rather considers the character of the person doing the actions and the motives that guide behavior.
- Less emphasis on rules people should follow, focus on the betterment of people and society.

Ethical choices:

1. Obligatory: It is not only right to do it, it is wrong not to do it.
2. Impermissible: It is wrong to do it and right not to do it.
3. Permissible: Doing or not doing is ethically neutral.
4. Supererogatory: Going above and beyond the call of duty. Actions that are right to do, but not wrong to not do.

Ethics as a process for moral decision-making is a very necessary and beneficial exercise in private thinking and in public discourse. Unfortunately, ethics can also be used as a weapon. If a group believes that a particular activity is 'wrong' it can use this conviction as a justification for attacking those who practice that activity.

"God's essential and primary task…is to create a people who will reflect His own character and exist for his glory and praise. All other tasks that occupy human persons and demand the investment of human will and energies are qualified by this divine task."

—Ray S Anderson, *Minding God's Business*, Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2008, p. 70.

Leadership occurs at the intersection of two basic factors: <u>information</u> and <u>influence</u>.

Information = the <u>facts</u> of the situation

Influence = the <u>impact of moral character</u>

"When I think of those with the greatest influence in my life, I think not of the great but of the good."

—John Knox, 16th Century Protestant Reformer

"Because leadership is necessarily an exercise of authority, it easily shifts into an exercise of power. But the minute it does that, it begins to inflict damage on both the leader and the led."

—Eugene Peterson, *THE MESSAGE: The New Testament, Psalms and Proverbs*, NAVPRESS 1996, Introduction to 2 Corinthians

A leader's code of conduct is a <u>personal response</u> to the question:

"What kind of person am I called by God to be?"

"He died for all so that all who live – having received eternal life from him – might live no longer for themselves, to please themselves, but to spend their lives pleasing Christ who died and rose again for them."

—2 Corinthians 5:15 (TLB)

"Let the seeking man reach a place where life and lips join to say continually, 'Be thou exalted,' and a thousand minor problems will be solved at once. His Christian life ceases to be the complicated thing it had been before and becomes the very essence of simplicity."

—A. W. Tozer (1897-1963), The Pursuit of God [1948]

A Leader's Code of Ethics

Personal	Professional
Humility	Accountability
Integrity	Collegiality
Trust	Service
Self-control	Excellence
Respect	

1. Humility

- Sometimes thought of as weakness or insecurity
- The maintenance of self-confidence without the need for pretense or arrogance
- Does not measure success by being first or best

Jesus Christ "…made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men… –

Philippians 2:7 (NKJV)

"Humility is perfect quietness of heart. It is for me to have no trouble; never to be fretted or vexed or irritated or sore or disappointed. It is to expect nothing, to wonder at nothing that is done to me, to feel nothing done against me. It is to be at rest when nobody praises me and when I am blamed or despised. It is to have a blessed home in the Lord where I can go in and shut the door and kneel to my Father in secret and be at peace as in a deep sea of calmness when all around is trouble.

—Andrew Murray

I demonstrate humility by:

- Bringing attention to God, not to myself.
- Patterning my leadership on Jesus' example.
- Giving to others the credit due them.
- Striving for objectivity in decision-making.
- Seeking counsel and feedback from others.
- Being honest with myself before God.
- Recognizing my dependence on God and others.

2. Integrity

Integrity cannot be self-proclaimed. It is a value judgment that others attach to my actions based on their perception of my motivations and patterns of behavior.

Integrity—what is it?

- The alignment of observable behavior with internal controlling purposes

- When you guard your secret life with God, your public life will take care of itself

I always give 110% to my job—

40% on Monday
30% on Tuesday
20% on Wednesday
15% on Thursday
5% on Friday

Total 110%

It is possible for observable behavior to obscure a person's real intentions. However, over the course of time the invisibility of internal purposes are betrayed by observable behavior. After all, <u>a crooked stick casts a crooked shadow.</u>

Behavior grows out of purpose, not vice-versa.

The greatest danger confronting society today is from individuals who can employ technology for widespread effects while they reject the moral value structure that necessarily needs to accompany the use of power.

I demonstrate integrity by:

- An exemplary life of moral and ethical conduct.
- Always acting on the basis of biblical principle.
- Honesty and truthfulness in all my dealings.
- Timely and accurate reporting.
- Transparency in decision-making processes.
- Disclosing and mitigating conflicts of interest.
- Realizing my own weaknesses and limitations.

3. Trust:

- The most important relationship in society.
- The most important human resource for the Church is TRUST.
- Trust is like an eraser, it gets smaller and smaller after ever mistake.

"What upsets me is not that you lied to me, but that I can no longer believe you."　　　　　—Friedrich Nietzsche

Trust—a matter of perception.

- Built on two perceptions—character and competence
- Quickest way to decrease trust– violate a behavior of character
- Quickest way to increase trust—demonstrate a behavior of competence

"...we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God."

—2 Corinthians 4:1-2 NIV

"Anyone who can be trusted in little matters can also be trusted in important matters. But anyone who is dishonest in little matters will be dishonest in important matters."

—Luke 16:10 CEV

Two kinds of trust:

1. Personal trust—Am I a trustworthy person?

2. Organizational trust—The organization to which I belong has a noble purpose, its operations will be consistent with its policies, it will treat people and issues fairly.

Distrust emanating from a specific incident can metabolize into general distrust of the entire organization

I build trust by:

- Doing the right thing because it is right.
- Not exploiting the weakness of another.
- Admitting errors and weaknesses.
- Principle-based decisions in moments of crisis.
- Setting reasonable objectives and goals.
- Compliance with organizational policies.
- Extending trust to others.
- Knowing when/how to maintain confidentiality.

Organizational trust:

Trust always affects two outcomes — speed and cost.

When trust goes up, speed goes up and costs go down.

Low trust creates:
- Hidden agendas
- Negative politics
- Interpersonal conflict
- Departmental rivalries
- Win-lose thinking
- Defensive and protective communication

I build trust in my organization by:

- Fairness in policies and their application
- Transparency in reporting (good news and bad news)
- Representative decision-making systems
- Timeliness in communication
- Job descriptions clearly defined
- Compliance with governance documents
- Orientation for new employees, exec comm members
- Maintaining confidentiality, but no cover-ups
- Fulfilling commitments/faithfulness to mission
- Organizational culture of constructive self-criticism

4. Self-Control

"You are God's people, so don't let it be said that any of you are immoral or indecent or greedy."

—Ephesians 5:3 CEV

Two top reasons for downfall of leaders in faith-based organizations:

1. Sexual impropriety
2. Misuse of money

I demonstrate self-control by:

- Balancing priorities: family/work/rest/worship
- Managing time effectively
- Thinking before reacting
- Maintaining emotional stability when under duress
- Pursuing a healthy lifestyle
- Assessing my motivations
- Staying focused on worthwhile goals

5. Respect:

Respect involves placing genuine value on a person or a thing. It means seeing an object, someone or something, for what it is in its own right and not seeing it through the filters of my own desires, needs, or fears.

The scope of respect:

The ethical quality of respect embraces a broad range of other ethical considerations including:

- respect for justice, fairness, equality
- respect for diversity (cultural, ethnic, gender, age, opinion)
- respect for Church organizational ethos
- respect for the reputation of others
- respect for boundaries (social, cultural, organizational)

"You shall not pervert justice; you shall not show partiality, nor take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and twists the words of the righteous. You shall follow what is altogether just, that you may live and inherit the land which the LORD your God is giving you."

—Deuteronomy 16:19, 20 (NKJV)

I demonstrate respect by:

- Seeing all others as children of God.
- Speaking/acting with courtesy and good will.
- Abstaining from harassment and retaliation.
- Valuing the opinions and contributions of others.
- Affirming dignity, diversity, individuality and giftedness.
- Listening attentively when others speak.
- Acting with fairness, justice and mercy.
- Honoring the rightful roles of colleagues.

6. Accountability:

An individual's/organization's obligation to:

- answer to someone for its activities,
- disclose the results in a transparent manner,
- accept responsibility for them.

—www.businessdictionary.com

Accountability: Who? When? For What?

In large organizations many individuals contribute to the decisions and policies. It then becomes difficult, even in principle, to identify who should be accountable for the results.

I demonstrate accountability by:

- Taking responsibility for my actions and behavior.
- Realizing my actions speak louder than words.
- Only making realistic promises and commitments.
- Keeping promises and commitments.
- Recognizing and commending good performance
- Addressing performance shortfalls fairly and openly.
- Being held accountable for my stewardship of office.
- Clarity in stating my views, positions, convictions.

7. Service:

The best leaders are not the ones who are advancing their own interests; instead, they work for the advancement of the organization and its mission—and largely lose sight of themselves in the process.

It is a leader's ability to forget self that is often the mark of distinction.

I demonstrate service by:

- Taking initiatives to address the needs of others
- Training church leaders/officers and entrusting them with increasing responsibility
- Being available to others
- Sharing power with others to help them grow
- Valuing other's viewpoints
- Cultivating a culture of trust

8. Collaboration:

- Requires team consciousness, not celebrity mentality
- Information age—possible for leaders to exist at every level of organization
- Create team consciousness:
  - Every position necessary
  - Every position a specialized function
  - Everyone knows the rules and procedures
  - Everyone communicates
  - Everyone performs best with support and cooperation

"I want you to think about how all this makes you more significant, not less. A body isn't just a single part blown up into something huge. It's all the different-but-similar parts arranged and functioning together... But I also want you to think about how this keeps your significance from getting blown up into self-importance..."

—Eugene Peterson, The Message, excerpts from 1 Corinthians 12

I demonstrate collaboration by:

- Empowering others and affirming their skill sets.
- Sharing information that is timely and accurate.
- Valuing the skills, motivation and creativity of others.
- Maintaining an enjoyable workplace atmosphere.
- Encouraging teamwork: everyone is needed, adds value, and helps to accomplish mission.
- Working with others in the global Church organization—pulling together, not apart.

9. Excellence:

- Based on interrelationship of competency, conduct, and consistent quality of performance
- Rigorous discipline of continuous improvement

A commitment to continued growth:

- <u>Professionally</u> with respect to responsibilities borne;
- <u>Relationally</u> with respect to understanding and interacting with diversity of persons, groups and viewpoints;
- <u>Intellectually</u> with respect to embracing an ever-enlarging grasp of the vast sum of knowledge;
- <u>Spiritually</u> with respect to deepening one's understanding of and walk with God.

I demonstrate excellence by:

- Consistent striving for high quality outcomes from my work.
- Continual growth to master my skill set or field of knowledge.
- Always meeting/exceeding minimum standards.
- Steadiness under pressure.
- Conduct that honors God.
- Mentoring/encouraging/developing others for leadership roles.

Ethical organizations:

Strategy, technique, innovation, technology, structure, performance, and social media are important words for organizational success. It is easy to become preoccupied with them. However, they are ineffectual without ethical values behind them.

Maintaining an ethical organization:

1. Ethical leadership
2. Organizational justice
3. Organizational transparency

Maintaining an ethical organization:

1. Ethical leadership
   - Character counts in organizational leadership.
   - The tone of leadership resonates throughout an organization.
   - Leaders must operate from a platform of unquestioned integrity.
   - Studies indicate that managers are responsible for 60% of workplace misconduct.

Maintaining an ethical organization:

1. Ethical leadership—cont'd
   - Moral character of speech and actions
   - Enthusiasm about mission and people
   - Empowerment of others rather than entitlement to use power for self-interest
   - Emotional intelligence—the capacity to be aware of, to control, and to express one's emotions; and to handle interpersonal relationships judiciously and empathetically.

Seven Signs of Ethical Collapse:

1. Pressure to maintain those numbers
2. Fear and silence (dissent not tolerated)
3. Bigger-than-life president/CEO, aspiring colleagues
4. Weak boards
5. Conflicts of interest not addressed
6. Success is all that matters
7. Goodness in some areas atones for evil in others
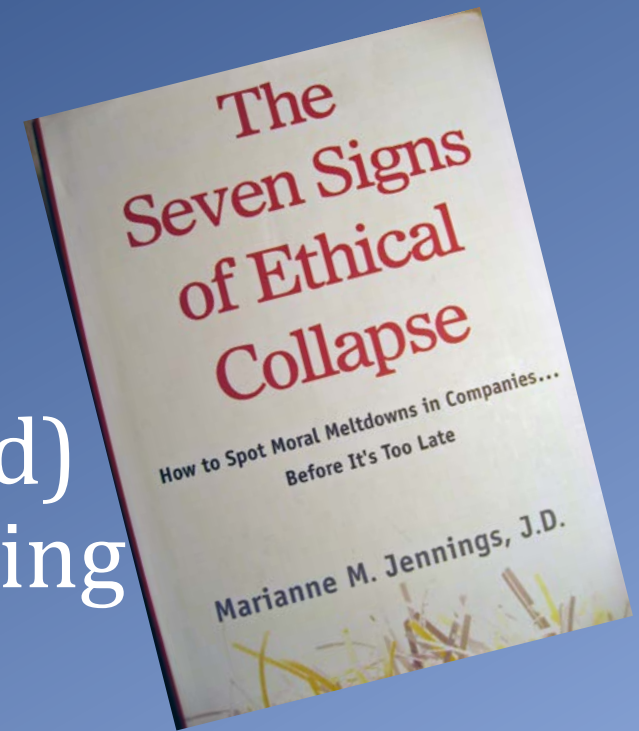
Maintaining an ethical organization:

2. Organizational justice
   - A code of conduct
   - Equal opportunity employment.
   - Equity, fairness, and non-discrimination.
   - Compliance with laws of the land.
   - Fulfillment of contractual obligations.
   - Atmosphere of safety and happiness.
   - Respect for human dignity and individuality.

Maintaining an ethical organization:

3. Organizational transparency
   - Transparent decision-making.
   - Fair and just policy.
   - Timely and accurate communication.
   - Safety in reporting misconduct.
   - Accountability.
   - Openness to change and respect for dissent.
   - Mitigating the risk of "groupthink".
   - Assessment/evaluation and benchmarking.

Conclusion:

Ethical conduct of church leaders and church organizations is obligatory, not optional, if the Church is to reflect the character of God and proclaim the gospel to the world. Let Paul's example be the goal: "We live in such a way that no one will stumble because of us, and no one will find fault with our ministry. In everything we do, we show that we are true ministers of God."

—2 Corinthians 6:3, 4 New Living Translation

Case Study #1:

Valley Vista Hospital has just obtained a piece of diagnostic equipment featuring the latest technology. It promises to make a very good impact on the financial status of the hospital since the instrument requires little maintenance, the procedures used do not cause patient discomfort, and the profit margin on procedures is very good.
—cont'd

Case Study #1: —cont'd

Hospital administration encourages the medical staff to use this new equipment as often as possible. Although the procedures might not be medically necessary at times patients can be encouraged to go through a diagnostic episode for their peace of mind. What aspects of ethics might be involved in this situation? Could a situation like this really occur?

Case Study #2:

The chief accountant at Hilltop Medical Center has announced a retirement date six weeks away. The Medical Center needs to act fast in finding a new person for the Finance Department so that a smooth transition can be achieved, and no delay experienced in the processing of financial information. —cont'd

Case Study #2: —cont'd

A meeting of top management (CEO, CFO, CMO) is convened and an offer of employment is extended to the CEO's nephew. What ethical issues might arise in a situation like this?

Case Study #3:

Pastor Short and his family have recently moved to the city where the Church operates a nursing home. Pastor Short previously served as a church pastor in a union some 500 miles south. He was released from his duties because of inappropriate relationships with a church member. He has now applied for the Chaplain position at the nursing home. —cont'd

Case Study #3: —cont'd

The nursing home administration requests a reference from the Conference President where Pastor Short was previously employed. The Conference President affirms that Pastor Short has sound theological training and is a good communicator. Based on this information Pastor Short is employed. Administration soon hears rumors about what happened at the last place of employment.

Case Study #4:

I am a teacher in a church-sponsored High School. Students at this school represent very different backgrounds—from extremely wealthy to extremely poor. Students from wealthy families have the advantages of technology (computers, internet at home, cell phones), plenty of food to eat, leisure time, and comfortable homes—each child having his/her own bedroom. —cont'd

Case Study #4: —cont'd

Children from destitute families have none of these benefits. There is a marked difference in academic performance between the wealthy and the poor. What are the ethical considerations that school administration and teachers face in situations like this?