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Value Shifts: Redefining "Leadership" A Narrative

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Joseph P. Hester, PhD

Abstract

This article provides a historical narrative documenting the major rifts and shifts in the concept of "value" in the 20th and 21st centuries. It is the author's contention that these shifts have confused the conceptualization of value, making it a rather broad and meaningless term. Thus, to define "leadership" as "values- or ethically-based," one must first provide a substantial defense of a particular moral view upon which leadership is want to be situated. This task is made arduous because "value" and "morals" have become confused in the morass of postmodernism and its political correlate, political correctness.

Introduction

Something of a taboo seems to have fallen over our discussions of ethics and values, not just in the past decade, but in this decade in particular. Anticipated by Allan Bloom[1] as "a closing of the American mind," we entered the 21st century ready to accept the dictum that truth is relative, the condition of a free-society, and that relativism is necessary to openness. This has become a dominant theme of postmodern thinkers. But Bloom warns us,

> Actually, openness results in American conformism — out there in the rest of the world is a drab diversity that teaches only that values are relative, whereas here we can create all the lifestyles we want. Our openness means we do not need others. Thus what is advertised as a great opening is a great closing. The point is to propagandize acceptance of different ways, and indifference to their real content is as good a means as any. Openness used to be the virtue that permitted us to seek the good by using reason. It now means accepting everything and denying reason's power.

This new openness has created a values shift in our society. The proliferation of experiences and images we receive from the print, audio, and video media serves this new openness to the extent that we find ourselves entrapped in a stereophonically communicated social media and in the morass of constant values confusion.

Are we now ready to accept any idea, any culture, any person on the grounds of openness — our new virtue — which also fuels its seductive postulate, political correctness? Our

openness has resulted in values confusion (Plummer, 1989). In the vacuum left by postmodern relativism it remains difficult, as much as we try, to define "leadership" as "values-based." What ethic other than openness is important for us to follow today?

The Importance of Values

According to Oscar Handlin and Lilian Handlin,[2] nothing is more central to a people than their values and nothing is more important to Americans than the values of liberty and equality, respect for others, responsibility for one's behavior, and self-reliance. But are the Handlins "back framing" the American story? We can agree that these values, and those that are predicated upon them, comprise much of the content of the story of American liberty — the struggle for equality, of ethical transformation and accommodation, of values and value shifts — as we have witnessed since the events of 9/11/01. Yet, these don't adequately explain the clashes of American individualism with the "collectivism" implied by democracy itself.

In the 20th century, it was war upon war, the struggle for equality among African-Americans and women, changing lifestyles, and laws that were the substance of value fluctuation — not only in America, but around the world. In the 1940s, George Orwell (2009) noted these value shifts as he wrote indirectly about the corruption of the socialist ideals of the Russian Revolution by Stalinism and his prophetic vision of the results of totalitarianism. Although Orwell denied that *Animal Farm* was a reference to Stalinism, he returned from Catalonia a staunch, anti-Stalinist and anti-Communist, but remained to the end a man of the left and, in his own words, a "democratic socialist."[3]

In 2012, these trends have not been abated, but added to them have been violent religious struggles, the shrinking of the world's middle class, continuous war on the African continent, immigration crises from America's southern hemisphere, what many in America claim as income inequality, and clashes in the Middle East that have been identified as religious, but have as much to do with the oil reserves that lie there as with Muslim hatred for America.

In our commitment to define a "values-based leadership," we find ourselves situated mid-stream in these struggles. It is a struggle of individualism[4] against collectivism, of the one against the many, and, in our time, of the many (the corporation) defined as the one and given a human value all its own by the Supreme Court.[5] These are broad brushstrokes and must be situated against the struggles of real people and families who are the mercy of such large historical movements.

This story is found in song and poetry, in Rap and Country music, in novels, plays, movies, books, magazines, academic literature, on FaceBook, in Tweets, YouTube, in the sit-ins around Wall Street and other American cities, and in any place we find human dialogue. We should have seen it coming. For example, in the 1928 movie *The Crowd,* Mr. Anyman is engulfed in a mass society and loses his

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identity under the pressure of soul-destroying labor. In works such as Steinbeck's the *Grapes of Wrath*, Miller's *Death of a Salesman*, Riesman's *The Lonely Crowd*, Whyte's *The Organization Man*, and Matson's *The Broken Image*, the theme of the individual's struggle

against big government, big business, nature, the military industrial complex, or the intrusions of science and technology is played out over and over again.

At the end of World War I, individualism dominated liberal thinking.[6] The 1920s was a decade defined by the search for individual freedom, but the desire to preserve freedom began to fence the alienated apart. After a war that many did not fully understand, ordinary Americans were searching for answers, hoping to find some coherence beneath the world's disordered surface, while academia focused on science, technique, and specialization.[7]

Nevertheless, the abstruse social gospel emanating from theological seminaries said little to the person in the pew.[8] In science and popular culture, in politics and religion, a comfortable obliviousness, an ignorant pretense, marked the babbitry of those who governed.[9] More important than the concern for civil liberties that led to the founding of the American Association of University Professors in 1914 and the American Civil Liberties Union in 1920, prohibition became the hot button issue of the day.

Where had leadership gone? The rank and file from the top to the bottom of the social scale represented unhappy searchers for stability. They had voted for progressivism, but political reform had not restored order to their lives. They made connections in society and politics by joining the KKK, the Communist Party, and the American Bund to protect and guarantee their freedoms, but in fact submerged the very individuality they wished to protect. The avant-garde that fled to France or England or to self-contained enclaves such as Greenwich Village[10] hoping to find some coherence and self-understanding found little explanatory power in religion, myth, magic, or science.[11]

Keepers of the Gate

The individualism that emerged in the 1920s served for only a season to repel communal encroachments on personal freedoms. By the mid-nineteen thirties, big government was promising relief from a depression that only World War II solved and demanded the relinquishing of basic liberties for resolutions "only" governments could bring. The 21st century is reminiscent of that time as the political debates of 2011-12 took hold of traditional American themes such as "big government" vs. "free enterprise" and "individualism" vs. "collectivism" (now identified as "socialism").

Even world philosophers, "keepers of the gate," had lost interest in the mundane, the common values and behaviors of ordinary individuals as they retreated into a "philosophies of…" mentality – philosophy of science, of law, of the mind, of religion, of knowledge, etc.

> **The democratic ideal promotes the collective nature of ethical value which, for the most part, is a concern for the welfare of others, not just us. This paradox is one that still besets definitions of "leadership" and how best to operate an organization, business, or government.**

Philosophers, too, had drifted from issues of liberty and equality to problems unassociated with the lives of the "common man."[12] Unlike the 17th and 18th centuries, philosophers are today thought of as merely academics that are irrelevant to the on goings of American social and political life.

By the early 1970s, the civil rights movement for women and African-Americans, and the seemingly never-ending

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Vietnam War further confused the fundamental values of Americans. During this time departments of philosophy were struggling to find students of ability who were interested in the historical narrative that had changed American and European life. Ignored were the religious values of Martin Luther King, Jr. that identified brotherhood and love as the foundations of democracy. Also important was the feminine ethics of care.[13] While consistent with the values of the civil rights movement, love, brotherhood, and care were ignored both politically and philosophically.

Sociologists and educators have now adopted the scientific method and are armed with their new weapon, statistical probability, to provide us with a "new reality." Social scientists admit that we can't measure everything, but only provide mathematical estimates through *probability* and *non-probability sampling*.[14] This new reality would soon be adopted by educators, grant writers, and political pollsters to provide us with weighted probabilities that would be used to engineer the way we view society. Its implications for leadership and the values that guide it remain problematic.[15] Social and educational reform would thus follow a similar pattern beyond the "freedom and dignity" of the individual and offer little to the individual whose inner spirit and quest for a meaningful life had been scorched by years of demonstrations, violence, and death.[16]

As postmodernism began to seep into the American values picture, especially those values being espoused in French post-World War II social theory,[17] the fires of relativism and even the entrails of the scientific method would soon be dampened by questions that have yet to be answered.[18]

Albeit, the post-moderns[19] also fell into these esoteric traps and the ethics and values that once defined Western Civilization were left in a morass of confused relativism.[20] It is the historical events, the religious movements, the legal and political maneuvering, and the popular culture, including the growth of the Internet and the social media that today identify who we are as a people and provides for individual meaning, but, as yet, these have found no common ethical path. We cannot ignore who we are and how we are connected to other world cultures either. Perhaps the world has grown flat as Thomas Friedman[21] suggests, but so have the common values that define leadership and personal commitment.[22] It will take another century for historians to evaluate and tell the story of how transportation, communication, and the influence of other nations and new ideas, religious pluralism, and this values quagmire have impacted our lives.[23]

Perhaps the philosophy of Nietzsche has found a new breeding ground as Charles Stewart[24] suggests,

> *Many of those who live in modern societies are now abandoning their traditional religious beliefs and adopting a more materialistic outlook on life. In the absence of any believable explanation for human existence, many now believe that there is nothing worth believing in. Without any purpose or meaning to their lives, many are descending into despair and depression. Without any clear vision for the future of the world, the nations are continuing to prepare for war.*

The modern world arose out of the collapse of ancient cosmology and a new questioning of religious authority, and eventually a scientific revolution which occurred in Europe over the course of several hundred years. No other civilization has undergone such a cultural shift as the fabric of culture itself would be changed forever.

This upheaval began with the publication of Copernicus's *On the Revolutions of the Heavenly Bodies* in 1543, continued with Newton's *Principia Mathematica* in 1687, and embraced Descartes' *Principles of Philosophy* in 1644 and Galileo's *Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems* in 1632. Thus, modern physics annihilated the foundations of the ancient world-picture and weakened considerably the foundations of Christian thought. Value, ethics, and morality had lost their footing. The immediate effect was skepticism and bewilderment which was expressed in 1611 by John Donne:[25]

...new Philosophy calls all in doubt,
The Element of fire is quite put out;
The Sun is lost, and th'Earth, and no man's wit
Can well direct him where to looke for it.
'Tis all in pieces, all coherence gone;
All just supply and all Relation.

Values Confusion

As Americans, our historical narrative tells us about the struggles, the shared sacrifices, and the uncertain future that has become a seemingly natural part of our lives. As we take a peek under the covers of our own history, we find that the values that have defined our personhood and nationhood seem to impose compliance, acceptance of common norms, and collective opinion — all that Tocqueville meant in 1840 by the "tyranny of the majority."[26] The dichotomy of "individualism" and "collectivism" remains at the heart of this struggle.

From our history we uncover the foundational ethics and values that have defined each generation. The flow and ripples of this current make it difficult for us to judge and put in perspective what is expected of leaders today. Our detachment from these events is perhaps not strong enough to make an objective evaluation.

While we gathered ourselves for this century, we found that democracy had various meanings: some favored defining democratic values in terms of gender, class, race, religion, and those particular terms that indicate our uniqueness and individualism.

Others preferred to talk about "common values," sometimes referred to as "universal" or "cosmopolitan" that bring people together, but the rub of political correctness has had a tendency to erase these from the conversation.[27] This diminishing search for what is "common" among our values unknowingly emphasizes our differences and non-dependence on society, nation, and culture. It brings to leadership an individual tone of the self-made individual wielding the power of position "over" others.

Individualism[28] has always been a strong theme in American culture, but, historically, to understand American individualism, it should be viewed in juxtaposition to the democratic ideal that *there are essential values, held in common* that allow democracy to function as it does. Democratic ideals can be found in both the Preamble of the U.S. Constitution and the Declaration of Independence. The most common ones are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Others include the belief that all people are equal, in political rights, the right to food, the right to work, the right to health care, and the right to practice our culture.

In the 18th century, the problem was that what is known today as "American culture," distinct from the many European cultures from which these "Americans" had come, had yet

to emerge. The democratic ideal promotes the collective nature of ethical value which, for the most part, is a concern for the welfare of others, not just us. Yet, the great American myth of the "self-made man" and the individualism entailed in this story is one that remains at the heart of American politics. This paradox is one that still besets definitions of "leadership" and how best to operate an organization, business, or government.

Back to Basics

Education was not impervious from the influence of this values confusion. The 1960s and 1970s gave rise to a new attitude toward values and took, strangely enough[29] a value-free approach called "values clarification," pioneered by Louis Raths, Merrill Harmon, and Sidney Simon.[30] G. G. Vessels[31] comments:

> *These approaches shared an emphasis upon reflection based on moral principles, teaching the whole child, and fostering intrinsic motivation and commitment. They commonly viewed autonomy as a distinguishing feature of true morality.*

To re-emphasize, moral autonomy was the hallmark of this program. With values clarification, no teacher was to directly influence a student's moral preferences or dictate moral behaviors. In reference to this movement, Beach[32] defined, "the most deadly pedagogical sin" is moral imperialism." In time, values clarification drew criticism. Tom Lickona[33] concludes, "It took the shallow moral relativism loose in the land and brought it into the schools…Values clarification discussions made no distinction between what you might want to do and what you ought to do."

Two criticisms of values clarification by Beach,[34] Lickona,[35] and Vincent[36] dominated the literature: (1) that it makes matters of ethical right and wrong that of individual preference and (2) that it lacks guidance in situations of moral collusion when a cherished value collides with another. Eventually, values clarification fell by the wayside leaving schools to deal with the aftermath. According to Lickona,[37]

> *In the end, values clarification made the mistake of treating kids like grow-ups who only needed to clarify values that were already sound. It forgot that children, and a lot of adults who are still moral children, need a good deal of help in developing sound values in the first place.*

Values clarification left many educators and parents empty. It emphasized clarifying and understanding one's most cherished values, but offered no suggestions or recommendations about what values, what moral principles, a person ought to follow in their own lives or for the well-being of the community at large. As Lickona, Vincent, and Beach have noted, it was based on no substantial ethical theory and ignored the moral foundations of American democracy.

A new movement soon rose to take the place of values clarification known as "character education."[38] *Character Education* defined a carefully formulated set of traditional values that were labeled as "virtues." Advocates of character education tried to avoid such terms as "values," "ethics," and "morals," noting the philosophical pitfalls of such an approach and not wanting to get into philosophical arguments with either proponents of values clarification or philosophers. It was a middle-of-the-road approach which endeavored to identify traditional, American-European virtues. It recommended avoiding such terms as "tolerance" and "lifestyle" and their social implications, especially to issues of abortion,

homosexuality, and same-sex marriage and their inclusion or exclusion by religious and political extremists. Vincent[39] has remarked,

> *This is a tough issue and reflects the difficulty that one has in discussing moral issues with a culture that is struggling to define what is "the good."*

Michael Davis[40] distinguishes three sorts of "character education:" (1) simple moral education that attempts to improve moral judgment or moral thinking based on the views of Lawrence Kohlberg,[41] (2) just-community education emphasizing democratic decision making outside the classroom based on the views of John Dewey,[42] and (3) simple character education which attempts to build character both in and outside of class one character trait at a time by emphasizing good behavior based on the work of Michael Josephson.[43] *It is of little wonder that educators have been confused.*

On January 23, 1997, President Clinton used a State of the Union Address to "challenge all our schools to teach character education, to teach good values and good citizenship." He joined the United States Department of Education, many state legislatures, and a long line of authors who were calling on the schools to cure the moral problems of society by molding the character of the next generation. According to Beachum and McCray,[44]

> *In the twenty-first century the character education debate continues. However, legislators, university professors, K-12 educators and people from all walks of life now are discussing the topic. We now exist somewhere between the culturally relativistic underpinnings of past decades and the urge for value consensus and culture commonality.*

Redefining Leadership

The concept of "value" and the identification of the ethical values that are important to us remain a challenge. We have been given a mixed bag, a virtual buffet of values from which to choose and one is not singled out over another. For this reason, the historic narrative of American value remains problematic as the idea of "values-based leadership" falls under the scrutiny of business, government, and academia.

- **Susan Ward**[45] provides a definition of "leadership" that suffers from the values vagueness prevalent in contemporary society. She first asks, "What is leadership?" and then defines "leadership" as *the art of motivating a group of people to act towards achieving a common goal. She says,*

  > *Effective leadership is based upon ideas, but won't happen unless those ideas can be communicated to others in a way that engages them. ... Leadership also involves communicating, inspiring and supervising — just to name three more of the primary leadership skills a leader has to have to be successful.*

This definition is not uncommon, identifying leadership as a "set of skills" and bypassing the values or the ethic that lies at leadership's foundation. Below several definitions of "leadership" found in popular leadership literature are emphasized:

- **Peter Drucker**[46] defines a leader as "someone who has followers." Drucker says that to gain followers requires influence but doesn't exclude the lack of integrity in achieving this. Indeed, it can be argued that several of the world's greatest leaders have lacked integrity and have adopted values that would not be shared by many people today.

- **John C. Maxwell**[47] points out that "leadership is influence – nothing more, nothing less." This moves beyond our effort of defining the leader, to looking at the ability of the leader to influence others – both those who would consider themselves followers and those outside that circle. Maxwell claims that indirectly, this definition builds in leadership character, since without maintaining integrity and trustworthiness, the capability to influence will disappear. Hence, Maxwell's position is that there is a values-base to leadership effectiveness.

- **Warren Bennis's**[48] definition of leadership is focused much more on the individual capability of the leader. He says, "Leadership is a function of knowing yourself, having a vision that is well communicated, building trust among colleagues, and taking effective action to realize your own leadership potential." Bennis, too, builds value into his definition; i.e. trust.

- The **Roman Catholic Diocese of Rochester**[49] is more specific about values-based leadership. Their leadership definition is "the process of influencing the behavior of other people toward group goals in a way that fully respects their freedom." The emphasis on respecting their freedom is an important one, but again, many values — individualism, collectivism, selfishness, compassion, etc.— fall under the idea of "respecting freedom."

From **Robert Greenleaf's**[50] conceptualization of "servant leadership," to that of **Valparaiso University's idea that leadership is values-based**, we indeed are challenged to define "leadership" and the values it entails. To help us define leadership, it may be helpful to remember what **Warren Bennis**[51] wrote almost 50 years ago…

> *Always, it seems, the concept of leadership eludes us or turns up in another form to taunt us again with its slipperiness and complexity. So we have invented an endless proliferation of terms to deal with it . . . and still the concept is not sufficiently defined.*

A Paradigm Shift

Relying on the historic narrative that defines American democracy, words like "value" and "ethics," even "person" and "individuality," or "freedom" and "emancipation" have for many taken on the air of religious tradition and, for others, that of a sterile secularism. For the most part, a debate still rages in the minds of men and women about ultimate values as it did in 1950.[52]

It is difficult to pinpoint when dramatic changes in the American character began. Some cite the end of World War II, while others drop it back to the end of Reconstruction. There are those who point to the Great Depression of the 1930s, and still others cite the dropping of the first Atomic bomb and the beginnings of the Cold War.

In all, the sixty-seven years since the ending of World War II have been years of major value-shifts, major and minor quakes that have agitated the precarious and insecure values of Western Civilization causing rifts, dips, and changes in what we believe and the ways in which we behave.

Whatever the exact point of time, Americans no longer believe they are the chosen people, undefeatable in war, unparalleled economically and immune from the corruption and vagaries of the rest of the world. Indeed, we can look back to and learn from our history. In 1974, Roper pollsters reported that 65 percent of the nation believed that things had gotten

off track in the country. Daniel Yankelovich reported that 47 percent of Americans believed that unrest and ill-feelings were leading to a real breakdown of the nation.[53]

In 2012, this situation has changed but little. Instead of thinking of America as a beacon of hope for the world's underprivileged and those suppressed by totalitarian governments, and instead of thinking of America as *the* world's superpower, many are now pointing to America's soft underbelly of poverty and discrimination and to the inequalities in its economic system of capitalism. Some are claiming that America is not the only superpower in the world, but one among others.[54]

Just five or six generations ago, 19th century Americans believed they had escaped the fate of the "old world" and its feudal values. As Robert Heilbronner[55] has pointed out, "We were permitted the belief that we were the sole masters of our destiny, and as few peoples on earth have been, we were." Little then was said about the major value changes initiated by new technologies that were pushing America into an industrial age. The weak underbelly of the corporate world would be later exposed in the Great Depression of the 1930s and the Great Recession of 2008. The seeds of corporate American had been planted: corporations now have a personal, albeit, human identity, dominated by a few absentee owners, controlled by fluctuations in market prices, dominated by Wall Street with the aid of new federal financial entities, and run by a new teams of middle managers who no longer promise its workers security and a stable income as production and services are moved around the world in search of more cheap and efficient labor.

And what of values-based leadership? Are people happier? It's hard to tell but the signs of distress are all around us as individual and corporate crime, divorce, alcoholism, and other forms of addiction are on the rise in what some have called *the post-industrial age.* These signs of change include: (1) a growth in anonymity and a paradoxical growth in the social media as a possible response; (2) a growth in meaninglessness as Americans are continually deprived of their history and traditions; (3) a growth in the electronic media that has led to a proliferation of information but with little connective tissue to history, ethics, or community civility; (4) a disintegration of the family as increased mobility has placed strains upon family cohesion; (5) an extension of bureaucracy and specialization that is codified and regulated for increased efficiency; and (6) a new world view that is imbued with secularism and a faith in technology, and saturated with a different view of human nature and a loss of personal and national history.

By now we should have learned about the importance of ethical and civic values, values that respect the individual, not just corporate purposes, and values that stress fairness, honesty, and responsibility from the top to the bottom of the corporate ladder. But placing ethics as a component of courses in American schools of business or even offering a separate business ethics course in these schools has been a slow process. On the upside, in a recent survey by the Aspen Institute,[56] four-fifths of business schools now require students to take a business and society course compared to just 34% in 2001. Judy Samuelson, Aspen's director of business and society says,

> *The financial crisis caused schools to be more introspective about what they are teaching. They were criticized for being part of the problem, and not part of the solution. And that has created an environment where faculty can innovate and make change.*

On the other hand, the Institute says that schools have yet to significantly reform "core" subjects like finance and accounting. Samuelson says that change is coming slowly and is being propelled by "students who want business to be seen in the context of the big issues of our day."

Steven Mintz[57] comments, "From my experience many instructors are reluctant to teach ethics. Some feel uncomfortable doing so. Others are concerned about becoming too preachy. Still others do not believe ethics can be taught." Even in universities and colleges ethics remains as only a special course in philosophy. Thus, values and ethics remain on the fringes of education and have yet to find a central place. They are the *outliers* of our society seeking a central place in our lives. In 1989, Joseph T. Plummer[58] wrote,

> *Long-held beliefs about the meaning of work in one's life, relations between the sexes, expectations for the future—indeed, about many aspects of daily living and important relationships among people—are undergoing reexamination and reappraisal.*

Plummer calls this a paradigm shift — a fundamental reordering of the way we see the world around us:

> *We are now gradually moving away from those traditional values that drive our societies through the first three-quarters of this century and toward the emerging new values being embraced on an ever-widening scale.*

Plummer agrees with David Riesman's[59] observation in *The lonely crowd: A study of the changing American character*, first published in 1963, that there is an ongoing movement of people who are more inner-directed than tradition- or outer-directed.

Tradition-directed individuals tend to look to the past for value security and sustenance. They change little and see change as an enemy of basic values in the home, school, church, and workplace.

Outer-directed individuals, on the other hand, value belonging and success. Status is important and is obtained by following rules and owning the material goods the society acknowledges as valuable.

Inner-directed individuals don't deny the values of the first two types, but value personal experience and creativity more as they strive toward self-actualization. That people are moving in this direction more and more is an indicator of a paradigm shift in American values. Plummer has identified some of the characteristics of this "shift" which he says demonstrates…

- A new focus on individuality is seen in corporations that value a high level of creativity, flexibility, and responsibility to people rather than bigness, consistency, and uniformity.

- The expectation of high ethical standards of leaders and employees, political figures, and advertisers.

- A greater value is being given to experience and has prompted a growth of travel, the arts, sports, and lifelong education.

- Finally, health behavior is shifting from curing illness to promoting wellness which is seen most dramatically in a decline in smoking and red-meat consumption.

Recently, Dr. Philip Vincent[60] remarked,

> *I think there is something else that is beginning to erode our foundations, and that is a lack of trust – economic trust. We all feel, or at least those of us who work outside*

government that this is beginning to change, that our jobs, lives, welfare could quickly change for the worse. Maslow talks about a hierarchy of needs and when you consider his ideas…it doesn't take much to tip a society over and have people gasping for some truth that will restore some foundation of consistency and predictability. We now do not trust our own narrative.

Stephen Convey[61] says,

As we work with people and companies around the world, we come in constant contact with the pain and struggle many are dealing with as it relates to trust. One of the reasons the pain is so great is because somehow deep inside people innately know that the benefits of high-trust relationships, teams, and organizations are incomparably more productive and satisfying. They can sense that their lives would be a lot better, their jobs a lot more fulfilling, and their personal relationships a lot more joyful if they could only operate in an environment of high trust. And that makes the absence of trust all the more frustrating.

Conclusion

Mick Yates[62] includes an emphasis on values in his comments about leadership. He says,

Leadership is the energetic process of getting people fully and willingly committed to a new and sustainable course of action, to meet commonly agreed objectives whilst having commonly held values.

It will take insight and effort to define the values supporting leadership and this will be an on-going process. Donald Clark[63] is perhaps on the right course as he comments,

Leaders do not command excellence, they build excellence. Excellence is "being all you can be" within the bounds of doing what is right for your organization. To reach excellence you must first be a leader of good character.

The test of values-based leadership thus is being of "good character." We are back to square one – "What is character and more importantly, what is good character?" These are questions that must be explored, clarified, and put into the context of leadership in the 21st century. This task is important and is nothing less than a quest for ethics and civility in the workplace.

H. Darrell Young[64] says even more strongly that our purposes – values and beliefs – must drive organizational mission and not the other way around. He comments, "Character is the foundation of leadership and is found in our courage to exercise our decisions from this perspective." It is our values that provide stability to the organizations which we lead and manage and "We must have stability of purpose in order to deal with instability of environment." In his opinion, our moral values allow us to step up to a lifestyle of performance responsibility. This responsibility, Young reminds us, is situated in the dignity and moral value of people and the ethic that is derived from this value.

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