



Do the Right Thing Leadership Ethics Tip Sheet

Remember the Five Basic Ethical Principles:

1. **Do No Harm**

The avoidance of harm to others (both psychological and physical harm; both intentional and unintentional harm)

*Note: the ethical obligation to intervene increases with the magnitude and risk of harm

2. **Act to Benefit Others**

The obligation to make a positive contribution to another's welfare
The promotion of personal growth

* Note: Beneficence often needs to be balanced against doing no harm to one party while helping another, and respecting autonomy.

3. **Show Respect for Each Person**

The right to act as a free agent	Respect for the autonomy rights of others
Freedom of thought	The right to privacy
Freedom of action	Confidentiality
The right to self-determination	Informed consent

4. **Promote Justice**

Fair treatment of all persons
Fair distribution of goods, services, and rewards

*Note: Three standards should be observed: reciprocity, impartiality, and equality: To be fair, equals ought to be treated equally, and un-equals ought to be treated unequally – in proportion to their inequality.

5. **Be Faithful, Keep Promises**

The obligation to keep promises
The obligation to be loyal
The obligation to be truthful

*Note: Special obligations come with contracts between individuals of unequal knowledge or power

We have asked a number of questions about the behavior of leaders. Although these questions are difficult to answer, we offer the following guidelines as a basis for a code of leadership ethics:

- Ethical leaders do not transmit intentionally deceptive or harmful messages to followers.
- Ethical leaders place concern for others above concern for personal gain.
- Ethical leaders respect the opinions and attitudes of followers and allow followers the freedom to consider the consequences of their actions.
- Ethical leaders defend followers when they are censured for carrying out policies supported by the leader.
- Ethical leaders are consistent in their treatment of followers regardless of age, ability, religion, ethnicity, socio economic status, sexual orientation, indigenous background, national origin, or gender.
- Ethical leaders establish clear and uniform policies and procedures, which are implemented consistently throughout the group, organization, or society.
- Ethical leaders follow the “golden rule of leadership” by demonstrating a willingness to meet the expectations required of followers.