

# 3

## The Leader's Character

*The course of any society is largely determined by the quality of its moral leadership.*

—PSYCHOLOGISTS ANNE COLBY AND WILLIAM DAMON

*All human beings seek to live lives not just of pleasure but of purpose, righteousness and virtue.*

—NEW YORK TIMES COLUMNIST DAVID BROOKS

*Virtue is better than wealth.*

—KENYAN PROVERB

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### WHAT'S AHEAD

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This chapter addresses the inner dimension of leadership ethics. To shed light rather than shadow, we need to develop a strong, ethical character (a well-developed moral identity) made up of positive traits or virtues. We promote our character development directly by addressing individual virtues or indirectly by finding role models, telling and living collective stories, learning from hardship, establishing effective habits, determining a clear sense of direction, and examining our values.

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### ELEMENTS OF CHARACTER

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In football, the best defense is often a good offense. When faced with high-scoring opponents, coaches often design offensive game plans that run as much time as possible off the clock. If they're successful, they can rest their defensive players while keeping the opposing team's offensive unit on the sidelines. By building strong, ethical character, we take a similar proactive approach to dealing with our shadow sides. To keep from projecting our internal enemies and selfishness on others, we need to go on the offensive, replacing or managing our unhealthy motivations through the development of positive leadership traits or qualities called *virtues*.

Interest in virtue ethics, in both Eastern and Western thought, dates back to ancient times. The Chinese philosopher Confucius (551–479 BCE) emphasized that virtues are

critical for maintaining relationships and for fulfilling organizational and familial duties.<sup>1</sup> The most important Confucian virtue is benevolence—treating others with respect and promoting their development. Other key Confucian virtues are kindness, trust, honesty, and tolerance. In the West, Greek philosopher Aristotle (383–322 BC) argued that ethical decisions are the product of individual character. In other words, good people—those of high moral character—make good moral choices. Aristotle distinguished between intellectual virtues (prudence and wisdom that provide us with insight) and moral virtues (courage, generosity, justice, wisdom). The exercise of virtues enables us to flourish, to live the best life possible. We are happiest when living well—effectively using our capacities to achieve our purpose as humans.<sup>2</sup>

Despite its longevity, virtue ethics has not always been popular among scholars. They turned instead to the ethical theories we'll address in detail in Chapter 5. Only in recent times have modern philosophers turned back to the virtue approach in significant numbers, attracted in part by its usefulness in everyday life. We must make a lot of ethical decisions on the spot, with no time to apply detailed ethical guidelines or rules.<sup>3</sup> For example, when a follower tells a sexist or racist joke, do we confront the joker? When a fellow student thinks she made a great presentation (but didn't) and asks us for confirmation, do we tell the truth or lie to protect her feelings? When a foreign official approaches us for a bribe, do we pay or not? We will respond in a more ethical manner if our character is marked by integrity, courage, and other virtues.

From a philosophical perspective, virtues have four important features. First, they are not easily developed or discarded but persist over time. Second, virtues shape the way leaders see and behave. Being virtuous makes leaders sensitive to ethical issues and encourages them to act morally. Third, virtues operate largely independent of the situation. A virtue may be expressed in different ways, depending on the context (what is prudent in one situation may not be in the next). Yet virtuous leaders will not abandon their principles to please followers. Fourth, virtues help leaders live better (more satisfying, more fulfilled) lives.<sup>4</sup>

Positive psychologists, like philosophers, are also interested in virtue ethics. Positive psychology is based on the premise that it is better to identify and promote the strengths of individuals instead of repairing their weaknesses (which is the approach of traditional psychologists).<sup>5</sup> Proponents of positive psychology treat virtues as morally valued personality traits. Under this definition, extraversion would not be considered a virtue because, though a personality trait, it is not considered ethically desirable or undesirable. Wisdom, on the other hand, would be considered a virtue because it is widely recognized and honored across cultures. Positive psychologists identify six broad categories of character strengths:<sup>6</sup>

- Wisdom and knowledge—cognitive strengths entailing the acquisition and use of knowledge
- Courage—an emotional strength involving the exercise of will to accomplish goals in the face of opposition, external or internal
- Humanity—an interpersonal strength that involve tending to and befriending others
- Justice—a civic strength underlying healthy community life

- Temperance—a strength protecting against excess
- Transcendence—a strength that forges connections to the larger universe and provides meaning

Some of the virtues identified by philosophers and psychologists appear to have particular significance for leaders. For that reason, I'll discuss these character strengths—courage, temperance, wisdom, justice, optimism, integrity, humility, and compassion—in the pages to follow. In addition to describing each virtue and its importance to leaders, I'll suggest ways to practice that strength in order to develop it.

## Courage

Of all the virtues, courage is no doubt the most universally admired.

—*Philosopher André Comte-Sponville*

Courage is being scared to death—and saddling up anyway.

—*Cowboy actor John Wayne*

Courage is overcoming fear in order to do the right thing.<sup>7</sup> Courageous leaders acknowledge the dangers they face and their anxieties. Nonetheless, they move forward despite the risks and costs. The same is true for courageous followers (see “Focus on Follower Ethics: Courageous Followership”). Courage is most often associated with acts of physical bravery and heroism, such as saving a comrade in battle or rescuing a drowning victim. Nevertheless, most courageous acts involve other forms of danger, such as when a school principal faces the wrath of parents for suspending the basketball team's leading scorer before the state tournament or when a manager confronts his boss about unauthorized spending even though he could lose his job for speaking up. Such acts demonstrate moral courage, which involves living out one's personal values even when the price for doing so may be high.<sup>8</sup> One common way in which leaders put moral courage into action is by intervening on behalf of others who are being victimized. For example, the human rights attorney representing jailed dissidents under a repressive regime risks persecution and jail. Courage can also encourage us to endure in the face of hardship, such as a physical disability or an economic setback. Ulysses S. Grant demonstrated courageous fortitude as he faced death.<sup>9</sup> To lift his family out of bankruptcy, Grant set out to write his memoirs. However, shortly after starting the project, he was diagnosed with an inoperable throat tumor. Grant refused to rest but continued writing as his condition worsened. Speaking and eating were extremely painful and he constantly coughed and vomited. The former President completed the book nine days before he died. Not only did the two-volume *Personal Memoirs of Ulysses S. Grant* restore the family fortune, but the work was also praised as an important historical record.

People must have courage if they are to function as ethical leaders. Ethical leaders recognize that moral action is risky but continue to model ethical behavior despite the danger. They refuse to set their values aside to go along with the group, to keep silent when customers may be hurt, or to lie to investors. They strive to create ethical environments even when faced with opposition from their superiors and subordinates. They

## Focus on Follower Ethics

### COURAGEOUS FOLLOWERSHIP

Ira Chaleff, who acts as a management consultant to Congressional offices, government agencies, and companies, believes that courage is the most important virtue for followers. Exhibiting courage is easier for followers if they recognize that their ultimate allegiance is to the purpose and values of the organization, not to the leader. Chaleff outlines five dimensions of courageous followership that equip subordinates to meet the challenges of their role:

**The Courage to Assume Responsibility.** Followers must be accountable both for themselves and for the organization as a whole. Courageous followers take stock of their skills and attitudes, consider how willing they are to support and challenge their leaders, manage themselves, seek feedback and personal growth, take care of themselves, and care passionately about the organization's goals. They take initiative to change organizational culture by challenging rules and mindsets and by improving processes.

**The Courage to Serve.** Courageous followers support their leaders through hard, often unglamorous work. This labor takes a variety of forms, such as helping leaders conserve their energies for their most significant tasks, organizing communication to and from leaders, controlling access to leaders, shaping leaders' public images, presenting leaders with options during decision making, preparing for crises, mediating conflicts between leaders, and promoting performance reviews for leaders.

**The Courage to Challenge.** Inappropriate behavior damages the relationship between leaders and followers and threatens the purpose of the

organization. Leaders may break the law, scream at or use demeaning language with employees, display an arrogant attitude, engage in sexual harassment, abuse drugs and alcohol, and misuse funds. Courageous followers need to confront leaders who act in a destructive manner. In some situations, just asking questions about the wisdom of a policy decision is sufficient to bring about change. In more extreme cases, followers may need to disobey unethical orders.

**The Courage to Participate in Transformation.** Negative behavior, when unchecked, often results in a leader's destruction. Leaders who act destructively may deny that they need to change, or they may attempt to justify their behavior. They may claim that whatever they do for themselves (e.g., embezzling, enriching themselves at the expense of stockholders) ultimately benefits the organization. To succeed in modifying their behavior patterns, leaders must admit they have a problem and acknowledge that they should change. They need to take personal responsibility and visualize the outcomes of the transformation: better health, more productive employees, higher self-esteem, restored relationships. Followers can aid in the process of transformation by drawing attention to what needs to be changed; suggesting resources, including outside facilitators; creating a supportive environment; modeling openness to change and empathy; helping contain abusive behavior; and providing positive reinforcement for positive new behaviors.

**The Courage to Leave.** When leaders are unwilling to change, courageous followers may take principled action by resigning from the organization.

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Departure is justified when a leader's behaviors clash with his or her self-proclaimed values or the values of the group or when the leader degrades or endangers others. Sometimes leaving is not enough. In the event of serious ethical violations, followers must bring the leader's misbehavior to

the attention of the public by going to the authorities or the press.

**Source:** Chaleff, I. (2003). *The courageous follower: Standing up to and for our leaders* (2nd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler.

continue to carry out the organization's mission even in the face of dangers and uncertainty. They are also willing to blow the whistle—to go outside the organization to bring wrongdoing to the attention of the public and government officials.

### Practicing Courage<sup>10</sup>

- Identify times when you did and did not demonstrate courage and what you learned from those experiences.
- Gradually build up your courage by tackling low-level challenges and then moving on to more difficult ones.
- Train in advance for high-threat situations.
- Seek out courageous mentors.
- Don't give up, but put more effort into difficult tasks.

### Temperance

To use things, therefore, and take pleasure in them as far as possible—not, of course, to the point where we are disgusted with them, for there is no pleasure in that—this is the part of a wise man.

—Dutch philosopher Baruch Spinoza

Moderation is key to practicing temperance, which is the ability to control emotions and pleasure.<sup>11</sup> The temperate person takes the middle ground between self-disgust/self-denial and self-indulgence. That means enjoying life's pleasures but not being controlled by them—for example, enjoying food without falling into gluttony, drinking but not becoming addicted to alcohol, enjoying sex without becoming trapped by desire. Temperance also means knowing one's limits and living within one's means.

Unfortunately, a great many leaders are intemperate. They are unable to control their anger and rail at subordinates, appear to have an insatiable desire for money and power, and fall victim to their need for pleasure. (See Case Study 3.1 for one example of a sexually intemperate leader.) Intemperate leaders may overreach by trying to know and control all that goes on in their organizations. They also set unrealistically high goals for themselves and their followers and fail to live within their budgets, no matter how inflated their salaries. Professional athletes far too often demonstrate the dangers of

intemperance. Many end up broke at the end of their playing careers after spending all their money on expensive cars, mansions, jewelry, homes for friends and family members, luxury clothing, and other items.

### Practicing Temperance

- Acknowledge your destructive impulses—anger, impatience, greed, jealousy—and the dangers they pose.
- Be alert to “hot buttons” that can cause you to lose control, such as time pressures, irritating coworkers, and criticism.
- Identify an emotion you would like to restrain or express more effectively. Develop a strategy for doing so.
- Identify your limits (financial, time, pleasure) and live within those constraints.

### Wisdom and Prudence (Practical Wisdom)

We judge a person’s wisdom by his hope.

—*American poet Ralph Waldo Emerson*

The goal of human life is to be good. Prudence assists us in getting there.

—*Baldwin-Wallace College professors Alan Kolp and Peter Rea*

Wisdom draws on knowledge and experience to promote the common good over both the short term and the long term. This virtue is particularly important to leaders, who make decisions that determine the collective fate of their groups and organizations. Wise organizational leaders engage in six practices.<sup>12</sup> First, they are skilled at thinking. They are smart, drawing from a broad base of knowledge to engage in complex decision making. Second, wise leaders demonstrate high emotional capacity. They are empathetic and sensitive, recognizing differences and respecting them. Third, wise leaders are highly collaborative. These individuals work well with others and seek their benefit. Fourth, wise leaders are engaged with their organizations and their worlds. They are proactive, constantly experimenting, forming networks, and adapting to changing circumstances. Fifth, wise leaders are reflective, demonstrating depth. They are keenly aware of their values, needs, and emotions and have a sound sense of self. Sixth, wise leaders are aspiring. Well-intentioned, they pursue principled objectives and hope to make themselves their organizations and their world better places.

Prudence is a form of wisdom that enables individuals to discern or select the best course of action in a given situation.<sup>13</sup> Thomas Aquinas argued that this virtue governs the others, determining when and how the other qualities should be used. For example, prudence reveals what situations call for courage or compassion and helps us determine how to act justly. Foresight and caution are important elements of practical wisdom. Prudent leaders keep in mind the long-term consequences of their choices. As a result, they are cautious, trying not to overextend themselves and their organizations or to take unnecessary risks. Billionaire investor Warren Buffett is one example of a prudent leader.

Buffett, the head of Berkshire Hathaway, sticks to a basic investment strategy, searching for undervalued companies that he can hold for at least ten years. His lifestyle is modest as well (he still lives in the home he bought for \$31,500 and earns \$100,000 a year). When Buffett and his wife die, 99% of their estate will go to a charitable foundation.

### **Practicing Wisdom and Prudence**

- Be curious and promote curiosity in your followers.
- Ask more questions; give fewer answers.
- Adopt a collaborative leadership style.
- Use case studies to practice making ethical judgments; discuss them with fellow students and colleagues.
- Exercise caution when initiating major organizational changes.
- Base decisions on data.
- Always think long term—consider how your choices and actions will stand the test of time.

### **Justice**

Justice is sweet and musical; but injustice is harsh and discordant.

—Writer Henry David Thoreau

Justice has two components. The first is a sense of obligation to the common good. The second is the fair and equal treatment of others.<sup>14</sup> A just person feels a sense of duty and strives to do his or her part as a member of the team, whether that team is a small group, an organization, or society as a whole. A just person supports equitable rules and laws. In addition, those who are driven by justice believe that all people deserve the same rights, whatever their skills or status.

Although justice is a significant virtue for everyone, regardless of her or his role, it takes on added importance for leaders. To begin, leaders who don't carry out their duties put the group or organization at risk. Furthermore, leaders have a moral obligation to consider the needs and interests of the entire group and to take the needs of the larger community into account. The rules and regulations they implement should be fair and should benefit everyone. In fact, employees often complain about injustice, and their performance suffers when they believe they are being treated unfairly.<sup>15</sup> Leaders also need to guarantee to followers the same rights they enjoy. They should set personal biases aside when making choices by judging others objectively and treating them accordingly. Leaders also have a responsibility to try to correct injustice and inequality caused by others. (You can rate your level of courage, temperance, prudence, and justice by completing Self-Assessment 3.1.)

### **Practicing Justice**

- Look for ways to go above and beyond the minimal requirements of your leader or follower role.

- Set up equitable hiring, promotion, and compensation processes in your organization.
- Make fairness a criterion for every ethical decision you make.
- Consider everyone (both inside and outside the group) who will be impacted by your decisions.
- Work to guarantee the rights of all followers; address inequalities.

## Optimism

Hope is not the conviction that something will turn out well, but the certainty that something makes sense, regardless of how it turns out.

—Former Czech Republic president Václav Havel

Optimists expect positive outcomes in the future even if they are currently experiencing disappointments and difficulties.<sup>16</sup> They are more confident than pessimists, who expect that things will turn out poorly. People who are hopeful about the future are more likely to persist in the face of adversity. When faced with stress and defeat, optimists acknowledge the reality of the situation and take steps to improve. Their pessimistic colleagues, on the other hand, try to escape problems through wishful thinking, distractions, and other means.

Optimism is an essential quality for leaders. As we'll see later in the chapter, nearly every leader experiences hardships. Those who learn and grow from these experiences will develop their character and go on to greater challenges. Those who ignore unpleasant realities stunt their ethical growth and may find their careers at an end. At the same time, leaders need to help followers deal constructively with setbacks, encouraging them to persist. Followers are more likely to rally behind optimists who appear confident and outline a positive image or vision of the group's future. Starbucks founder Howard Schultz had to balance realism and optimism when he returned as chief executive officer (CEO) of the company in 2007. Sales and quality were down and the company's share price dropped in half. Schultz made a number of painful cuts in staff and stores but continually shared his faith that the company would rebound stronger than ever. And it did. By 2011, the number of stores had expanded, the stock reached an all-time high, and Schultz was named *Fortune's* CEO of the year.<sup>17</sup>

### Practicing Optimism

- Change your thinking. Rewrite pessimistic thoughts into more optimistic ones. For example, instead of saying "I am a failure," say, "I may have failed this time but I can practice and improve."
- Set realistic goals that you can attain.
- Ask "What can I learn from this experience?" when facing setbacks.
- Limit the amount of time you spend reflecting on your failures.

## Integrity

Integrity lies at the very heart of understanding what leadership is.

—*Business professors Joseph Badaracco and Richard Ellsworth*

Integrity is wholeness or completeness. Leaders possessing this trait are true to themselves, reflecting consistency between what they say publicly and how they think and act privately. They live out their values and keep their promises. In other words, they practice what they preach. They are also honest in their dealings with others.<sup>18</sup>

Nothing undermines a leader's moral authority more quickly than lack of integrity. Followers watch the behavior of leaders closely, and one untrustworthy act can undermine a pattern of credible behavior. Trust is broken, and cynicism spreads. In an organizational setting, common "trust busters" include inconsistent messages and behavior, inconsistent rules and procedures, blaming, dishonesty, secrecy, and unjust rewards.<sup>19</sup> (You can measure the integrity of one of your leaders by completing Self-Assessment 3.2.) Performance suffers when trust is broken. Trust encourages teamwork, cooperation, and risk taking. Those who work in trusting environments are more productive and enjoy better working relationships.<sup>20</sup> (I'll have more to say about trust in Chapter 10.)

### Practicing Integrity

- Make the truth a moral imperative; seek to be truthful in all situations.
- Publicly admit your mistakes and encourage others to do the same.
- Imagine yourself as a person of integrity and try to behave in ways that lead to this hoped-for self.
- Foster trust through transparency, consistency, and concern for followers.

## Humility

Let us be a little humble; let us think that the truth may not be entirely with us.

—*Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru*

The failure of many celebrity CEOs makes a strong argument for encouraging leaders to be humble. In the 1990s, a number of business leaders, such as Carly Fiorina of Hewlett-Packard, Revlon's Ron Perelman, Disney's Michael Eisner, WorldCom's Bernie Ebbers, and Tyco's Dennis Kozlowski, seemed more like rock stars than corporate executives.<sup>21</sup> These charismatic figures became the public faces of their corporations, appearing on magazine covers and cable television shows and in company commercials. Within a few years, however, most of these celebrity leaders were gone because of scandal (some are still in jail) or poor performance. Quiet leaders who shunned the spotlight replaced them and, in many instances, produced superior results.

Management professors J. Andrew Morris, Celeste Brotheridge, and John Urbanski believe that true humility strikes a balance between having an overly low and having an

overly high opinion of the self.<sup>22</sup> It does not consist of low self-esteem, as many people think, or of underestimating one's abilities. Instead, humility is made up of three components. The first of these is self-awareness. A humble leader can objectively assess her or his own strengths and limitations. The second element is openness, which is a product of knowing one's weaknesses. Possessing humility means being open to new ideas and knowledge. The third component is transcendence. Humble leaders acknowledge that there is a power greater than the self. This prevents them from developing an inflated view of their importance while increasing their appreciation for the worth and contributions of others.

Humility has a powerful impact on ethical behavior. Humble leaders are less likely to be corrupted by power, claim excessive privileges, engage in fraud, abuse followers, and pursue selfish goals. They are more willing to serve others instead, putting the needs of followers first while acting as role models. Humility encourages leaders to build supportive relationships with followers that foster collaboration and trust. Because they know their limitations and are open to input, humble leaders are more willing to take advice that can keep them and their organizations out of trouble.

Despite its importance, developing humility may be harder than ever. In the past, leaders were taught to acknowledge their weaknesses and to downplay their accomplishments. For example, the first President Bush consistently took the word "I" out of his speeches. (When he didn't, his mother would call and complain, "George, you're talking about yourself again.")<sup>23</sup> Now, we live in a narcissistic era (see Chapter 1) that promotes selfies, positive self-esteem, self-promotion, and self-disclosure on social media. Turn to Case Study 3.3 for a closer look at fostering character in a self-centered world.

### Practicing Humility

- Complete self-assessments that provide you with data about your strengths and weaknesses.
- Acknowledge your character flaws and address them; acknowledge your character strengths and build on them.
- Solicit feedback and ideas from other leaders and followers; act on that input.
- Serve a higher purpose or goal.

### Compassion (Kindness, Generosity, Love)

All happiness in the world comes from serving others; all sorrow in the world comes from acting selfishly.

—*Leadership expert Margaret Wheatley*

Compassion and related concepts such as concern, care, kindness, generosity, and love all refer to an orientation that puts others ahead of the self.<sup>24</sup> Those with compassion value others regardless of whether they get anything in return from them. Compassion is an important element of altruism, an ethical perspective addressed in more detail in Chapter 5. An orientation toward others rather than the self separates ethical leaders from their unethical colleagues.<sup>25</sup> Ethical leaders recognize that they serve the purposes

of the group. They seek power and exercise influence on behalf of followers. Further, they recognize that they have an obligation to outsiders. Their circle of concern extends beyond their immediate group. In contrast, unethical leaders put their own self-interests first. They are more likely to control and manipulate followers and subvert the goals of the collective while treating outsiders with disdain. In extreme cases, this self-orientation can lead to widespread death and destruction.

Eunice Shriver Kennedy provides an outstanding model of compassionate leadership.<sup>26</sup> Born into the wealthy and powerful Kennedy family, which included her brother John, who became president of the United States, and her brothers Robert and Ted, who became senators, she used her money and political clout on behalf of those with mental limitations. When John Kennedy became president, she convinced him to set up a committee to study developmental disabilities, which led to the creation of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. She started a camp for the intellectually disabled at her estate and cofounded the Special Olympics. The first Special Olympics meet had 1,000 contestants. Now, more than 2.5 million athletes in 80 countries take part. Shriver's efforts played a major role in changing public attitudes toward those facing Down syndrome, mental retardation, and other intellectual challenges. They used to be viewed as outcasts and warehoused in mental facilities. Shriver encouraged Americans to see that, with adequate training, those with intellectual limitations could live productive lives and contribute to society. (See Box 3.1 for more information on the development of compassionate leaders.)

### Practicing Compassion

- Look for the good in others.
- Imagine how others feel and think (develop empathy).
- Take time to build relationships.
- Get involved in service activities.
- Serve with others to reinforce your commitment to helping.

### Forming a Moral Identity

Identifying important leadership virtues is only a start. We then need to embed these qualities into our self-concepts and behavior—to develop what moral psychologists call *moral identity*.<sup>27</sup> Investigators treat moral identity as both a trait and a state. Trait theorists argue that ethical commitments are central to those with strong moral identity. Such individuals define themselves in terms of moral principles and virtues and act consistently regardless of the situation. They are motivated to take moral action because they want to act in harmony with their self-definitions.

For those with a highly developed sense of moral identity, to betray their ethical values is to betray themselves. Martin Luther is an example of someone who refused to put his standards aside. When called to defend his radical religious beliefs in front of Catholic authorities at the Diet of Worms, Luther declared, “Here I stand; I can do no other.” Pope Francis is a contemporary leader with high moral identity. He turns down many papal perks to remain true to his commitment to the poor and to a humble lifestyle. He lives in a modest bungalow instead of the papal apartment, takes his meals with

## Box 3.1 The Journey to Humanitarian Leadership

Humanitarian leaders spearhead efforts to feed the homeless, fight sex trafficking, educate street children, bring medical care to poor rural villages, and so on. Researchers Frank LaFasto and Carl Larson wondered why some individuals “take charge of helping people in need” while most of us do not. They conducted interviews with 31 humanitarian leaders ranging from age 16 to 88 from a variety of educational and social backgrounds. The investigators found that, despite their differences, their subjects followed a common path. Seven choice points marked this journey to helping others.

**Choice 1: Leveraging Life Experiences.** Humanitarian leaders reflect on their life stories. They develop empathy for the needs of others through (1) role models (parents, teachers, religious leaders, friends) and positive values, such as caring for the poor or serving others; (2) a troubling awareness about a societal problem like sex abuse or lack of clean water; or (3) traumatic personal experiences, such as the death of parents or a cancer diagnosis.

**Choice 2: Having a Sense of Fairness.** Humanitarians are convinced that the world is divided into those who are fortunate and those who are not. The disadvantaged are victims of circumstance and are therefore worthy of help. To make the world fairer, the humanitarian leader believes in providing opportunities for those who have been denied such access by fate.

**Choice 3: Believing That We Can Matter.** Those out to assist others aren't overwhelmed by the need. Instead, they focus on helping individuals. Meeting the needs of one person is the first step to addressing the broader problem—whether

that is poverty, substandard housing, or disease. Humanitarian leaders believe that they have something to offer and know what they can and cannot do to contribute. They try to make the future better for those in need.

**Choice 4: Being Open to Opportunity.** Compassionate leaders are inclined to say yes to possibilities instead of automatically saying no. They have an external focus. They are attuned to the needs of others, and their impulse is to respond because they have a clear sense of life's direction. Unlike many people, humanitarian leaders align their actions with their convictions.

**Choice 5: Taking the First Small Step.** Every leader interviewed by LaFasto and Larson reported a pivotal or defining moment when he or she first responded to the impulse to help. Humanitarian leaders don't let the size of the problem discourage them; rather, they do something, no matter how small. While they don't know where their efforts will lead, they still make the commitment to act. Take the case of Ryan Hreljac. Ryan started his humanitarian career as a six-year-old by trying to raise \$70 to provide one well for a village in a developing nation. This small step led to the creation of the Ryan's Well Foundation, which has provided sanitation and clean water for three-quarters of a million people around the world.

**Choice 6: Persevering.** Those who tackle difficult social problems can expect to encounter a great deal of frustration. But they believe in what they are doing and are convinced that reaching their goals is worth the cost. Humanitarian leaders are also adaptable, often turning obstacles into opportunities. If funding sources

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dry up, they find new, more stable ones, for example. They maintain their positive focus by taking heart in short-term victories and remaining convinced they can make a difference.

**Choice 7: Leading the Way.** The passion of humanitarian leaders draws others to their causes. Their enthusiasm, energy, and optimism are contagious. Others join in, and movements are born.

LaFasto and Larson conclude that we all have the potential to become humanitarian leaders. However, to start down the path to socially responsible leadership, we must first answer yes to this question: Do I feel a sense of responsibility for helping others?

**Source:** LaFasto, F., & Larson, C. (2012). *The humanitarian leader in each of us: Seven choices that shape a socially responsible life*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Cardinals and visitors (taking any available seat), drives a used Renault, often runs his own errands, and makes spontaneous phone calls to ordinary citizens.

State theorists argue that instead of having one unitary self, we have a variety of selves or identities we activate depending on the context.<sup>28</sup> At school, our student self-identity is most important, for example, while our employee identity is more salient at work. These scholars are interested in how elements of the situation prime or activate our moral identity. When our moral identities are activated, we are more concerned about behaving ethically, make better moral choices, engage in more prosocial and fewer antisocial behaviors, and are less likely to excuse our moral failings. Organizations can promote the development of moral identity by (1) providing opportunities to practice virtues, (2) creating positive moral climates where cooperative relationships can flourish, (3) making space for moral discussion and reflection, (4) continuously emphasizing values and mission, and (5) encouraging ongoing involvement in the local community.

Both the trait and state approaches provide important insights into the development of moral identity. Our ultimate goal should be to make moral commitments central to our sense of self, to act in a virtuous manner regardless of the situation. Moral exemplars (see the next section of the chapter) earn this label because of their moral consistency in a variety of settings. At the same time, situational variables play an important role in helping us develop our moral identities. Whatever roles we play, we need opportunities to practice virtues, the encouragement of others, and the support of positive moral climates.

Developing ethical character or moral identity is far from easy, of course. At times, our personal demons will overcome even our best efforts to keep them at bay, and we will fail to live up to our ideals. We're likely to make progress in some areas while lagging in others. We may be courageous yet arrogant, reverent yet pessimistic, optimistic yet unjust. We may be compassionate to family members but cold toward our neighbors. No wonder some prominent leaders reflect both moral strength and weakness. Martin Luther King, Jr., showed great courage and persistence in leading the civil rights movement but engaged in extramarital relationships. Franklin Roosevelt was revered by many of his contemporaries but had a long-standing affair with Lucy Mercer. In fact, Mercer (not Eleanor Roosevelt) was present when he died.

The poor personal behavior of political and business leaders has sparked debate about personal and public morality. One camp argues that the two cannot be separated. Another

camp makes a clear distinction between the public arena and private life. According to this second group, we can be disgusted by the private behavior of politicians such as those who engage in extramarital affairs (e.g., Bill Clinton, former New York City mayor Rudy Giuliani, former New York governor Eliot Spitzer) but vote for them anyway based on their performance in office.

I suspect that the truth lies somewhere between these extremes. We should expect contradictions in the character of leaders, not be surprised by them. Private lapses don't always lead to lapses in public judgment. On the other hand, it seems artificial to compartmentalize private and public ethics. Private tendencies can and do cross over into public decisions. Arizona State business ethics professor Marianne Jennings points out that many fallen corporate leaders (e.g., Richard Scrushy [HealthSouth], Dennis Kozlowski [Tyco], Scott Sullivan [WorldCom], Bernie Ebbers [WorldCom]) cheated on their wives or divorced them to marry much younger women.<sup>29</sup> She suggests that executives who are dishonest with the most important people in their lives—their spouses—are likely to be dishonest with others who aren't as significant: suppliers, customers, and stockholders. Furthermore, conducting an affair distracts a leader from his or her duties and provides a poor role model for followers. That's why the Boeing board fired CEO Harry Stonecipher when members discovered that he was having an affair with a high-ranking employee.<sup>30</sup>

In the political arena, Franklin Roosevelt tried to deceive the public as well as his wife and family. He proposed expanding the number of Supreme Court justices from 9 to 15, claiming that the justices were old and overworked. In reality, he was angry with the Court for overturning many New Deal programs and wanted to appoint new justices who would support him. Roosevelt's dishonest attempt to pack the Supreme Court cost him a good deal of his popularity. Bill Clinton's personal moral weaknesses overshadowed many of his political accomplishments and later threatened Hillary Clinton's political career.

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## CHARACTER BUILDING

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In the previous section, I offered some suggestions for fostering individual virtues. These are direct approaches to character development. However, more often than not, virtues develop indirectly, as the byproduct of other activities. In this final section of the chapter, I'll introduce a variety of indirect approaches or factors that encourage the development of leadership virtues. These include identifying role models, hearing stories and living shared stories, learning from hardship, cultivating good habits, creating a personal mission statement, and clarifying values.

### Finding Role Models

Character appears to be caught as well as taught. We often learn what it means to be virtuous by observing and imitating exemplary leaders, a process based on the brain's ability to mimic the actions of others and to understand the reasons behind their behaviors. That makes role models crucial to developing high moral character.<sup>31</sup> Eunice Kennedy Shriver is one such role model; William Wilberforce, who led the fight to abolish the British slave trade, is another.

Government ethics expert David Hart argues that it is important to differentiate between different types of moral examples or exemplars.<sup>32</sup> Dramatic acts, such as rescuing a child from danger or saving someone from a burning house, capture our attention. However, if we are to develop worthy character, we need examples of those who demonstrate virtue on a daily basis. Hart distinguishes between *moral episodes* and *moral processes*. Moral episodes are made up of *moral crises* and *moral confrontations*. Moral crises are dangerous, and Hart calls those who respond to them *moral heroes*. Hutus who protected their Tutsi neighbors from slaughter during the Rwandan genocide served as moral heroes, as did Nicholas Winton, who saved Jewish children before World War II broke out. (Read more about Winton in “Leadership Ethics at the Movies: *Nicky’s Family*.”) Moral confrontations aren’t dangerous, but they do involve risk and call for moral champions. Enron’s Sherron Watkins acted as a moral champion when she challenged CEO Kenneth Lay about accounting fraud at the company. (Company leaders then explored ways to fire her.)

Moral processes consist of *moral projects* and *moral work*. Moral projects are designed to improve ethical behavior during a limited amount of time and require moral leaders. A moral leader sets out to reduce corruption in government, for example, or to introduce a more effective medical treatment or to improve the working conditions of migrant farm workers. In contrast to a moral project, moral work does not have a beginning or an end but is ongoing. The moral worker strives for ethical consistency throughout life. This moral exemplar might be the motor vehicle department employee who tries to be courteous to everyone who comes to the office or the neighbor who volunteers to coach youth soccer.

Hart argues that the moral worker is the most important category of moral exemplar. He points out that most of life is lived in the daily valleys, not on the heroic mountain peaks. Because character is developed over time through a series of moral choices and actions, we need examples of those who live consistent moral lives. Those who engage in moral work are better able to handle moral crises when they arise. For instance, teachers at Sandy Hook elementary school, who were dedicated to serving children, risked their lives for their charges when a shooter broke into their school in December 2014. The principal and lead teacher ran toward the killer (one was killed, the other wounded). Two teachers died acting as human shields, with their arms wrapped around their students. Other teachers hid children in closets, bathrooms, and offices, comforting them when they could.

Anne Colby and William Damon studied 23 moral workers to determine what we can learn from their lives.<sup>33</sup> They found three common characteristics in their sample:

- *Certainty*: Moral exemplars are sure of what they believe and take responsibility for acting on their convictions.
- *Positivity*: Exemplars take a positive approach to life even in the face of hardship. They enjoy what they do and are optimistic about the future.
- *Unity of self and moral goals*: Exemplars don’t distinguish between their personal identity and their ethical convictions. Morality is central to who they are. They believe they have no choice but to help others and consider themselves successful if they are pursuing their mission in life.

What sets exemplars apart from the rest of us is the extent of their engagement in moral issues. We make sure that our children get safely across the street. Moral exemplars, on the other hand, “drop everything not just to see their own children across the street but to feed the poor children of the world, to comfort the dying, to heal the ailing, or to campaign for human rights.”<sup>34</sup>

Colby and Damon offer some clues about how we might develop broader moral commitments like the exemplars in their study. They note that moral capacity continues to develop well beyond childhood—some in their sample didn’t take on their life’s work until their 40s and beyond. Given this fact, we should strive to develop our ethical capacity throughout our lives. The researchers also found that working with others on important ethical tasks or projects fosters moral growth by exposing participants to different points of view and new moral issues. We, too, can benefit by collaborating with others on significant causes, such as working for better children’s health care, building affordable housing, or fighting the spread of AIDS. The key is to view these tasks not as burdens but as opportunities to act on what we believe. Adopting a joyful attitude will help us remain optimistic in the face of discouragement.

## Leadership Ethics at the Movies

### NICKY’S FAMILY

*Starring:* Nicholas Winton, Joe Schlesinger, rescued children

*Synopsis:* This docudrama tells the story of Nicholas Winton and those he rescued from almost certain death. In 1938, Winton, a twenty-eight-year-old London stockbroker, traveled to Prague to visit Jews displaced by the Nazi annexation of Czechoslovakian territory. Soon, he found himself aiding desperate Jewish parents wanting to send their children to safety before war broke out. Winton set up a children’s rescue organization, raised money, and arranged host families in Britain for 669 children. His motto was “Anything that is not actually impossible can be done.” Winton’s heroic actions were forgotten for the next fifty years, until his wife uncovered a suitcase in their attic filled with documents from the rescue. She then told the story to British media. Winton

was later reunited with many of his “children” and their families. Winton’s adopted children tell of traveling by train to a new land. After the war, many discovered that their biological parents died in Nazi concentration camps.

*Rating:* Not rated but likely PG for mature themes

*Themes:* courage, compassion, wisdom, justice, optimism, integrity, humility, moral identity, role models, values

#### Discussion Starters

1. Why do you think Winton risked his life and career to help strangers?
2. Why did Winton keep his rescue efforts secret?
3. What type of moral exemplar is Winton?
4. Why are so many inspired to follow Winton’s example?

## Hearing Stories/Living Shared Stories

Fictional stories, whether told through movies, television shows, songs, video games, books, poems, blogs, plays, or YouTube videos, are more than just mere entertainment. Instead, they foster character development in several ways. First, fiction acts like a flight simulator. Pilots train in simulators that provide them with opportunities to practice maneuvers and responses to emergencies without ever leaving the ground. In the same way, fiction gives us opportunities to practice moral reflection and judgment in complex situations before we encounter them in real life. Our brains respond in much the same way to fictional events as they do to events we actually experience.<sup>35</sup>

Second, fiction introduces us to additional moral role models. These fictional exemplars illustrate the vices we want to avoid as well as the virtues we want to develop.

Third, fiction almost always reinforces a positive moral message—virtue is rewarded, antisocial behavior like violence is condemned, and villains are punished.<sup>36</sup> Consider, for example, how justice prevails in such highly popular book and movie franchises as *The Hunger Games*, *Harry Potter*, *The Avengers*, *Star Wars*, and *The Lord of the Rings*. Viewing television programs, where good nearly always triumphs, cultivates the belief that people get what they deserve. As a result, frequent television viewers are more likely to believe in a just world.<sup>37</sup>

Fourth, fiction is highly effective in changing or reinforcing our moral beliefs and attitudes, largely because we aren't aware that it is doing so. The more absorbed we are in the story, the more likely we are to shift our attitudes toward the moral arguments made in the story (e.g., evil people deserve punishment, sex outside of marriage is acceptable if the parties are in love, war is justified).<sup>38</sup> Of course, that fact suggests we choose our stories carefully; we need able to step back from the narrative to evaluate the moral(s) it communicates.

Fifth, fictional narrative helps us understand our possibilities and limits. We can try to deny the reality of death, the fact that we're aging, and that there are factors outside our control. However, stories force us to confront these issues. They also explore common human themes, such as freedom of choice, moral responsibility, conflict between individual and society, conflict between individual conscience and society's rules, and self-understanding.<sup>39</sup>

Sixth, fiction writers help us escape our old ways of thinking and acting. Their best works expand our emotional capacity, enabling us to respond more fully to the needs of others. In one study, for instance, fiction readers scored higher on social awareness and empathy than those reading nonfiction.<sup>40</sup>

The stories told by our communities, like fictional narratives, also play an important role in character development. Virtues are more likely to take root when nurtured by families, schools, governments, and religious bodies. These collectives impart values and encourage self-discipline, caring, and other virtues through the telling of narratives or stories. Shared narratives both explain and persuade. They provide a framework for understanding the world and, at the same time, challenge us to act in specified ways. For example, one of the most remarkable features of the American political system is the orderly transition of power from president to president.<sup>41</sup> George Washington set this precedent by voluntarily stepping down as the country's first leader. His story, told in classrooms, books, and films, helps explain why the current electoral system functions smoothly. Furthermore, modern presidents and presidential candidates follow

Washington's example, as in the case of the 2000 election. Although he garnered more of the popular vote than George W. Bush, Al Gore conceded defeat after the Supreme Court rejected his court challenge.

Stories are lived as well as told. Our moral identity is established in part from living up to the roles we play in the stories we tell. According to virtue ethicist Alasdair MacIntyre, "I can only answer the question 'What am I to do?' if I can answer the prior question, 'Of what story or stories do I find myself a part?'"<sup>42</sup> Worthy narratives bring out the best in us, encouraging us to suppress our inner demons and to cast light instead of shadow. For instance, I am more likely to welcome refugees if I believe that helping strangers is part of the tradition or narrative of my cultural, religious, or national group. If I work for a company known for its integrity, I will more likely tell the truth when promoting the firm's products.

### Learning from Hardship

Hardship and suffering also play a role in developing character. The leaders we admire the most are often those who have endured the greatest hardships. Nelson Mandela, Václav Havel, and Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn served extended prison terms, for instance, and Moses endured forty years in exile and forty in the wilderness with his people.

Perhaps no other American leader has faced as much hardship as did Abraham Lincoln. He was defeated in several elections before winning the presidency. Because of death threats, he had to slip into Washington, DC, to take office. He presided over the slaughter of many of his countrymen and women in the Civil War, lost a beloved son, and was ridiculed by Northerners (some in his cabinet) and Southerners alike. However, all these trials seemed to deepen both his commitment to the Union and his spirituality. His second inaugural address is considered to be one of the finest political and theological statements ever produced by a public official.

Trainers at the Center for Creative Leadership (CCL) have identified hardship as one of the factors contributing to leadership development. Leaders develop the fastest when they encounter situations that stretch or challenge them (as we noted in the last chapter). Hardships, along with novelty, difficult goals, and conflict, challenge people. CCL staffers Russ Moxley and Mary Lynn Pulley believe that hardships differ from other challenging experiences because they are unplanned, are experienced in an intensely personal way, and involve loss.<sup>43</sup>

Research conducted by the CCL reveals that leaders experience five common categories of hardship events. Each type of hardship can drive home important lessons.

- *Business mistakes and failures:* Examples of this type of hardship event include losing an important client, failed products and programs, broken relationships, and bankruptcies. These experiences help leaders build stronger working relationships, recognize their limitations, and profit from their mistakes.
- *Career setbacks:* Missed promotions, unsatisfying jobs, demotions, and firings make up this hardship category. Leaders faced with these events lose control over their careers, their sense of self-efficacy or competence, and their professional identity. Career setbacks function as wake-up calls, providing feedback about

weaknesses. They encourage leaders to take more responsibility for managing their careers and to identify the type of work that is most meaningful to them.

- *Personal trauma*: Examples of personal trauma include divorce, cancer, death, and difficult children. These experiences, which are a natural part of life, drive home the point that leaders (who are used to being in charge) can't run the world around them. As a result, they may strike a better balance between work and home responsibilities, learn how to accept help from others, and endure in the face of adversity.
- *Problem employees*: Troubled workers include those who steal, defraud, can't perform, or perform well only part of the time. In dealing with problem employees, leaders often lose the illusion that they can turn these people around. They may also learn how important it is to hold followers to consistently high standards and become more skilled at confronting subordinates about problematic behavior.
- *Downsizing*: Downsizing has much in common with career setbacks, but in this type of hardship, leaders lose their jobs through no fault of their own. Downsizing can help leaders develop coping skills and force them to take stock of their lives and careers. Those carrying out the layoffs can also learn from the experience by developing greater empathy for the feelings of followers.

Being exposed to a hardship is no guarantee that you'll learn from the experience. Some ambitious leaders never get over being passed over for a promotion, for instance, and become embittered and cynical. Benefiting from adversity takes what Warren Bennis and Robert Thomas call "adaptive capacity." Bennis and Thomas found that, regardless of generation, effective leaders come through *crucible moments* that have profound impacts on their development.<sup>44</sup> These intense experiences include failures, such as losing an election, but also encompass more positive events, such as climbing a mountain or finding a mentor. They generally fall into three categories. *New territory crucibles*, such as taking an overseas assignment or serving in a new organizational role, put leaders into stretching experiences. *Reversal crucibles* involve loss, defeat, or failure. *Suspension crucibles* involve extended periods of reflection or contemplation, such as between promotions and jobs. The accomplished leaders Bennis and Thomas sampled experienced just as many crises as everyone else but were able to learn important principles and skills from their struggles. This knowledge enabled them to move on to more complex challenges.

Successful leaders see hard times as positive high points of their lives. In contrast, less successful leaders are defeated and discouraged by similar events. To put it another way, effective leaders tell a different story than their ineffective counterparts. They identify hardships as stepping stones, not as insurmountable obstacles. We, too, can enlarge our adaptive capacity by paying close attention to our personal narratives, defining difficult moments in our lives as learning opportunities rather than as permanent obstacles. To see how you can learn from a specific failure, take the following steps:

1. Identify a significant failure from your professional or personal life, and summarize the failure in a sentence (be sure to use the word *failure*).
2. Describe how you felt and thought about the failure immediately after it happened.
3. Move forward in time to identify any positive outcomes that came out of the failure, including skills you acquired, lessons you learned, and any relationships you established.
4. Identify how the failure changed or shaped you as a person, noting any new traits or attitudes you have adopted and whether you are any more mature now than you were before the failure event.<sup>45</sup>

### Developing Habits

One of the ways in which we build character is by doing well through our habits. Habits are repeated routines or practices designed to foster virtuous behavior. Examples of good habits include working hard, telling the truth, giving to charity, standing up to peer pressure, and always turning in original work for school assignments. Every time we engage in one of these habits, it leaves a trace or residue. Over time, these residual effects become part of our personality and are integrated into our character. Aristotle sums up the process this way: “Men [and women] become builders by building, and lyre-players by playing the lyre, so too we become just by doing just acts, temperate by doing temperate acts, brave by doing brave acts.”<sup>46</sup> Habits also help us become more competent at demonstrating virtues.

Business consultant Stephen Covey developed the most popular list of positive habits. Not only did he author the best-selling book *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, but thousands of businesses, nonprofit groups, and government agencies have participated in workshops offered by the Covey Center for Leadership.<sup>47</sup> In his best seller, Covey argues that effectiveness is based on such character principles as integrity, fairness, service, excellence, and growth. The habits are the tools that enable leaders and followers to develop these characteristics. Covey defines a *habit* as a combination of knowledge (what to do and why to do it), skill (how to do it), and motivation (wanting to do it). Leadership development is an “inside-out” process that starts within the leader and then moves outward to affect others. The seven habits of effective and ethical leaders are as follows:

*Habit 1: Be proactive.* Proactive leaders realize that they can choose how they respond to events. When faced with career setbacks, they try to grow from these experiences instead of feeling victimized by them. Proactive people also take the initiative by opting to attack problems instead of accepting defeat. Their language reflects their willingness to accept rather than avoid responsibility. A proactive leader makes statements such as “Let’s examine our options” and “I can create a strategic plan.” A reactive leader, in contrast, makes comments such as “The organization won’t go along with that idea,” “I’m too old to change,” and “That’s just who I am.”

*Habit 2: Begin with the end in mind.* This habit is based on the notion that “all things are created twice.” First we get a mental picture of what we want to accomplish, and then we follow through on our plans. If we’re unhappy with the current direction of our lives, we can generate new mental images and goals, a process Covey calls *rescripting*. Creating personal and organizational mission statements is one way to identify the results we want and thus control the type of life we create. (I’ll talk more about how to create a mission statement in the next section.) Covey urges leaders to center their lives on inner principles such as fairness and human dignity rather than on such external factors as family, money, friends, or work. (See Case Study 3.3 to learn more about a coach who kept the end in mind.)

*Habit 3: Put first things first.* A leader’s time should be organized around priorities. Too many leaders spend their days coping with emergencies, mistakenly believing that urgent means important. Meetings, deadlines, and interruptions place immediate demands on their time, but other, less-pressing activities, such as relationship building and planning, are more important in the long run. Effective leaders carve out time for significant activities by identifying their most important roles, selecting their goals, creating schedules that enable them to reach their objectives, and modifying plans when necessary. They also know how to delegate tasks and have the courage to say no to requests that don’t fit their priorities.

*Habit 4: Think win–win.* Those with a win–win perspective take a cooperative approach to communication, convinced that the best solution benefits both parties. The win–win habit is based on these dimensions: character (integrity, maturity, and a belief that the needs of everyone can be met), trusting relationships committed to mutual benefit, performance or partnership agreements that spell out conditions and responsibilities, organizational systems that fairly distribute rewards, and principled negotiation processes in which both sides generate possible solutions and then select the one that works best.

*Habit 5: Seek first to understand, then to be understood.* Ethical leaders put aside their personal concerns to engage in empathetic listening. They seek to understand, not to evaluate, advise, or interpret. Empathetic listening is an excellent way to build a trusting relationship. Covey uses the metaphor of the emotional bank account to illustrate how trust develops. Principled leaders make deposits in the emotional bank account by showing kindness and courtesy, keeping commitments, paying attention to small details, and seeking to understand. These strong relational reserves help prevent misunderstandings and make it easier to resolve any problems that do arise.

*Habit 6: Synergize.* Synergy creates a solution that is greater than the sum of its parts and uses right-brain thinking to generate a third,

previously undiscovered alternative. Synergistic, creative solutions are generated in trusting relationships—those with full emotional bank accounts—where participants value their differences.

*Habit 7: Sharpen the saw.* “Sharpening the saw” refers to the continual renewal of the physical, mental, social or emotional, and spiritual dimensions of the self. Healthy leaders care for their bodies through exercise, good nutrition, and stress management. They encourage their mental development by reading good literature and writing thoughtful letters and journal entries. They create meaningful relationships with others and nurture their inner or spiritual values through study or meditation and time in nature. Continual renewal, combined with the use of the first six habits, creates an upward spiral of character improvement.

### Developing Personal Mission Statements

Developing a mission statement is the best way to keep the end or destination in mind (Covey’s second habit). In recognition of that fact, many management, life, and wellness coaching programs ask participants to create personal mission statements. Jack Groppe, the developer of the Corporate Athlete executive development program, summarizes the role of personal mission statements this way: “A mission statement becomes the North Star for people. It becomes how you make decisions, how you lead, and how you create boundaries.”<sup>48</sup> He argues that mission statements are more effective than resolutions (“I want to lose weight”; “I want to get better grades”) because they identify the underlying sources of behavior and what individuals find motivating. Consider why you want to lose weight, for example. Losing weight to look better is less motivating than losing weight so you can have enough energy to go on hikes with your significant other or to play team sports with friends.

To get started writing a personal mission statement, consider the following questions used in the Corporate Athlete program:

- How do you want to be remembered?
- How do you want people to describe you?
- Who do you want to be?
- Who or what matters most to you?
- What are your deepest values?
- How would you define success in your life?
- What makes your life really worth living?

If you are looking for examples of leader mission statements, consider these: “To serve as a leader, live a balanced life, and apply ethical principles to make a significant difference” (Denise Morrison, Campbell Soup); “To be a teacher, and to be known for inspiring my students to be more than they thought they could be” (Oprah Winfrey); “To have fun in [my] journey through life and learn from [my] mistakes” (Richard Branson, Virgin Group).<sup>49</sup>

Once you write your mission statement, share it with others (you are more likely to follow through if you do so). Don't be afraid to change your mission statement as you change and grow.

Leadership consultant Juana Bordas offers an alternative method or path for discovering personal leadership purpose based on Native American culture. Native Americans discovered their life purposes while on vision quests. Vision *cairns*, or stone markers, guided members of some tribes. These stone piles served both as directional markers and as reminders that others had passed this way before. Bordas identifies nine cairns or markers for creating personal purpose.<sup>50</sup>

*Cairn 1: Call your purpose; listen for guidance.* All of us have to be silent in order to listen to our intuition. Periodically, you will need to withdraw from the noise of everyday life and reflect on such questions as "What am I meant to do?" and "How can I best serve?"

*Cairn 2: Find a sacred place.* A sacred place is a quiet place for reflection. It can be officially designated as sacred (e.g., a church or meditation garden) or merely a spot that encourages contemplation, such as a stream, park, or favorite chair.

*Cairn 3: See time as continuous; begin with the child and move with the present.* Our past has a great impact on where we'll head in the future. Patterns of behavior are likely to continue. Bordas suggests that you should examine the impact of your family composition, gender, geography, cultural background, and generational influences. A meaningful purpose will be anchored in the past but will remain responsive to current conditions such as diversity, globalization, and technological change.

*Cairn 4: Identify special skills and talents; accept imperfections.* Take inventory by examining your major activities and jobs and evaluating your strengths. For example, how are your people skills? Technical knowledge? Communication abilities? Consider how you might further develop your aptitudes and abilities. Also take stock of your significant failures. What did they teach you about your limitations? What did you learn from them?

*Cairn 5: Trust your intuition.* Sometimes we need to act on our hunches and emotions. You may decide to turn down a job that doesn't feel right, for instance, in order to accept a position that seems to be a better fit.

*Cairn 6: Open the door when opportunity knocks.* Be ready to respond to opportunities that are out of your control, such as a new job assignment or a request to speak or write. Ask yourself whether this possibility will better prepare you for leadership or fit in with what you're trying to do in life.

*Cairn 7: Find your passion and make it happen.* Passion energizes us for leadership and gives us stamina. Discover your passion by imagining

the following scenarios: If you won the lottery, what would you continue to do? How would you spend your final six months on Earth? What would sustain you for a hundred more years?

*Cairn 8: Write your life story; imagine a great leader.* Turn your life into a story that combines elements of reality and fantasy. Imagine yourself as an effective leader and carry your story out into the future. What challenges did you overcome? What dreams did you fulfill? How did you reach your final destination?

*Cairn 9: Honor your legacy, one step at a time.* Your purpose is not static but will evolve and expand over time. If you're a new leader, you're likely to exert limited influence. That influence will expand as you develop your knowledge and skills. You may manage only a couple of people now, but in a few years, you may be responsible for an entire department or division.

## Identifying Values

If a mission statement identifies our final destination, then our values serve as a moral compass to guide us on our journey. Values provide a frame of reference, helping us to set priorities and to distinguish between right and wrong. There are two ways to identify or clarify the values you hold. You can generate a list from scratch or you can rate the values in a list supplied by someone else. If brainstorming a list of important values seems a daunting task, you might try the following exercise developed by James Kouzes and Barry Posner. The “credo memo” asks you to spell out the important values that underlie your philosophy of leadership:

Imagine that your organization has afforded you the chance to take a six-month sabbatical, all expenses paid. You will be going to a beautiful island where the average temperature is about eighty degrees Fahrenheit during the day. The sun shines in a brilliant sky, with a few wisps of clouds. A gentle breeze cools the island down in the evening, and a light rain clears the air. You wake up in the morning to the smell of tropical flowers.

You may not take any work along on this sabbatical. And you will not be permitted to communicate to anyone at your office or plant—not by letter, phone, fax, e-mail, or other means. There will be just you, a few good books, some music, and your family or a friend.

But before you depart, those with whom you work need to know something. They need to know the principles that you believe should guide their actions in your absence. They need to understand the values and beliefs that you think should steer their decision making and action taking. You are permitted no long reports, however. Just a one-page memorandum.

If given this opportunity, what would you write on your one-page credo memo? Take out one piece of paper and write that memo.<sup>51</sup>

Examples of values that have been included in credo memos include “operate as a team,” “listen to one another,” “celebrate successes,” “seize the initiative,” “trust your judgment,” and “strive for excellence.” These values can be further clarified through dialogue with coworkers. Many discussions in organizations (e.g., how to select subcontractors, when to fire someone, how to balance the needs of various stakeholders) have an underlying value component. Listen for the principles that shape your opinions and the opinions of others.

Working with a list of values can also be useful. Psychologist Gordon Allport identified six major value types. People can be categorized based on how they organize their lives around each of the following value sets.<sup>52</sup> Prototypes are examples of occupations that fit best into a given value orientation.

- *Theoretical*: Theoretical people are intellectuals who seek to discover the truth and pride themselves on being objective and rational. Prototypes: research scientists, engineers
- *Economic*: Usefulness is the most important criterion for those driven by economic values. They are interested in production, marketing, economics, and accumulating wealth. Prototype: small business owners
- *Aesthetic*: Aesthetic thinkers value form and harmony. They enjoy each event as it unfolds, judging the experience based on its symmetry or harmony. Prototypes: artists, architects
- *Social*: Love of others is the highest value for social leaders and followers. These “people persons” view others as ends, not means, and are kind and unselfish. Prototype: social workers
- *Political*: Power drives political people. They want to accumulate and exercise power and enjoy the recognition that comes from being in positions of influence. Prototypes: senators, governors
- *Religious*: Religious thinkers seek unity through understanding and relating to the cosmos as a whole. Prototypes: pastors, rabbis, Muslim clerics

Identifying your primary value orientation is a good way to avoid situations that could cause you ethical discomfort. If you have an economic bent, you will want a job (often in a business setting) where you solve real-life problems. On the other hand, if you love people, you may be uncomfortable working for a business that puts profits first.

Professors Duane Brown and R. Kelly Crace developed a widely used values system called the Life Values Inventory, which you can take online.<sup>53</sup> They outline the following as important values that are key to self-fulfillment and motivation. You can use them to help you reflect on your priorities:

Achievement (challenges, hard work, improvement)

Belonging (acceptance, inclusion)

Concern for the environment (protecting and preserving)  
Concern for others (well-being of people)  
Creativity (new ideas and creations)  
Financial prosperity (making money, buying property)  
Health and activity (staying healthy and physically active)  
Humility (modesty)  
Independence (making own decisions and choosing own direction)  
Loyalty to family or group (following traditions and expectations)  
Privacy (time alone)  
Responsibility (dependability, trustworthiness)  
Scientific understanding (employing scientific principles in problem solving)  
Spirituality (spiritual beliefs, connection to something greater than the self)

There are two cautions to keep in mind when identifying your values. First, don't put too much importance on materialistic values like wealth, possessions, status, fame, and personal image. Those driven by these external values generally have a lower quality of life. They tend to suffer from depression and anxiety, experience more negative emotions, are more narcissistic, have more physical problems like headaches and backaches, are at a greater risk for drug and alcohol abuse, have more difficulty establishing lasting relationships, and suffer low self-esteem. Materialistic individuals are also more likely to lie and manipulate others while ignoring community and environmental concerns. As employees, they report more burnout and job dissatisfaction. Instead of seeking wealth and material possessions, focus on intrinsic values that are naturally satisfying and promote psychological well-being. These include values related to self-acceptance/personal growth (choosing what to do, following your curiosity), relatedness/intimacy (expressing love, forming intimate relationships), and community feeling/helpfulness (making other people's lives better, making the world a better place).<sup>54</sup>

Second, values, though critical, have to be translated into action. Consider Enron, for example. The firm had a lofty set of ideals but leaders ignored these values as they engaged in fraud and deception. Further, our greatest struggles come from choosing between two good values. Many corporate leaders value both good customer service and high product quality, but what do they do when reaching one of these goals means sacrificing the other? Pushing to get a product shipped to satisfy a customer may force the manufacturing division into cutting corners in order to meet the deadline. Resolving dilemmas such as these takes more than value clarification; we also need some standards for determining ethical priorities. With that in mind, I will identify ethical decision-making principles in Chapters 5 and 6. But first we need to confront one final shadow caster—evil—in Chapter 4.

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## IMPLICATIONS AND APPLICATIONS

- Character is integral to effective leadership, often making the difference between success and failure.
- Virtues are positive leadership qualities or traits that help us manage our shadow sides.
- As a leader, seek to develop your courage (overcoming fear in order to do the right thing), temperance (self-control), wisdom (drawing on knowledge and experience to pursue the common good) and prudence (practical wisdom), justice (obligation to the common good, treating others equally and fairly), optimism (expectation of positive outcomes in the future), integrity (wholeness, completeness, consistency), humility (self-awareness, openness, a sense of transcendence), and compassion (kindness, generosity, love).
- Create a moral identity that embeds virtues into your decisions and behavior, making moral commitments central to your self-definition.
- Strive for consistency, but don't be surprised by contradictions in your character or in the character of others. Become more tolerant of yourself and other leaders. At the same time, recognize that a leader's private behavior often influences his or her public decisions.
- Indirect approaches that build character include identifying role models, telling and living out shared stories, learning from hardship, cultivating habits, creating a personal mission statement, and clarifying values.
- Never underestimate the power of a good example. Be on the lookout for real and fictional ethical role models to imitate.
- Fictional stories give you an opportunity to practice moral reflection and judgment while reinforcing positive values. Communal stories encourage you to live up to the role you play in the shared narrative.
- Hardships are an inevitable part of life and leadership. The sense of loss associated with these events can provide important feedback, spur self-inspection, encourage you to develop coping strategies, force you to reorder your priorities, and nurture your compassion. However, to benefit from them, you must see challenges as learning opportunities that prepare you for future leadership responsibilities.
- Positive habits are designed to foster virtuous behavior. Each time we engage in a good habit, it leaves a trace or residue. Over time, these residual effects become integrated into our character. The most popular list of habits includes the following: seek to be proactive, begin with the end in mind, organize around priorities, strive for cooperation, listen for understanding, develop synergistic solutions, and engage in continual self-renewal.
- Having an ultimate destination will encourage you to stay on your ethical track. Develop a personal mission statement that reflects your strengths and passions. Use your values as a moral compass to keep you from losing your way. Avoid values that focus on material possessions and financial success; focus instead on intrinsic values that are naturally satisfying and promote your well-being.

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## FOR FURTHER EXPLORATION, CHALLENGE, AND SELF-ASSESSMENT

1. Which virtue is most important for leaders? Defend your choice. How can you practice this virtue? Write up your conclusions.
2. Can the private and public morals of leaders be separated? Try to reach a consensus on this question in a group.
3. What steps can you take to develop a more positive outlook about future events?
4. Brainstorm a list of moral exemplars. What does it take to qualify for your list? How would you classify these role models according to the types described in this chapter?
5. Reflect on the ways in which a particular shared narrative has shaped your worldview and behavior. Write up your conclusions.
6. Interview a leader you admire. Determine his or her crucible moment and capacity to learn from that experience. Present your findings to the rest of the class.
7. Rate yourself on each of the seven habits of effective people, and develop a plan for addressing your weaknesses. Explore the habits further through reading and training seminars.
8. Develop a personal mission statement using the guidelines provided in the chapter. As an alternative, collect the personal mission statements of well-known contemporary leaders.
9. Complete the credo memo exercise on page 93 if you haven't already done so. Encourage others in your work group or organization to do the same, and then compare your statements. Use this as an opportunity to engage in a dialogue about values.

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## STUDENT STUDY SITE

Visit the student study site at [study.sagepub.com/johnsonmecl6e](http://study.sagepub.com/johnsonmecl6e) to access full SAGE journal articles for further research and information on key chapter topics.

### Case Study 3.1

#### A MODERN-DAY LIBERTINE

In France, multiple marriages, multiple affairs, and serial seduction don't usually mean the end of a political or business career. The French are less concerned about the personal lives of powerful people than are citizens in the United States. Particularly in the case of male public figures, affairs and seduction are often seen as signs of strength and virility and thus are admired rather than condemned.

This laissez-faire attitude toward the private sex lives of the political elite may be changing thanks to the excesses of Dominique Strauss-Kahn (known as DSK). A French economist, DSK was head of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and is credited with playing a major role in

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rescuing the world economy during the Global Recession. At one point, he was favored to become France's next president. But he lost his job and his chance of winning the French presidency when he was charged with sexually assaulting a New York hotel maid in 2011. He was cleared of criminal charges in the New York rape case but reached a financial settlement with the victim. Later, he admitted to participating in a series of upscale sex parties in Paris, Washington, and Lille, France, costing around \$13,000 each. These events began with formal dinners and ended in orgies. Strauss-Kahn reportedly wanted to have sex with three or four women at each of these parties. To meet his needs and those of other clients, event organizers sometimes hired prostitutes when they couldn't recruit enough other female participants. While prostitution is not a crime in France, employing prostitutes is. DSK was charged with being part of a prostitution ring.

DSK was acquitted after a lengthy trial that subjected French citizens to the lurid details of his sex life, including text messages in which he referred to women as "equipment" and testimony about his rough treatment of sex partners. Strauss-Kahn testified that he had nothing to do with arranging the parties, noting that he generally arrived late. The judge accepted DSK's claim that most of the women were naked and he had no idea who was a prostitute and who was not.

DSK describes himself as a modern-day libertine. Libertinism, which dates back to sixteenth-century Europe, is a philosophy based on the pursuit of "a life without moralistic limits." Its best-known advocate was Giacomo Casanova, who believed that as long as he lived within the law, he should be able to do whatever he wanted. The former IMF chief operated according to the same philosophy, at least when it came to sex, referring to the orgies as "libertinage"—wide-open sexual encounters among willing partners. In a magazine interview, DSK admitted: "I long thought I could lead my life as I wanted. And that includes free behavior between consenting adults. I was too out of step with French society. I was wrong."<sup>1</sup>

While Strauss-Kahn kept the dark side of his sexual proclivities secret, his sexual appetite was public knowledge. He was called the "Great Seducer," the "hot rabbit," and the "frisky Frenchman" before he took over the IMF. His third wife (who has since left him) even argued, "It's important for a man in politics to be able to seduce."<sup>2</sup> At the IMF, he admitted to having an affair with a subordinate.

Entitlement, not lust, may be the best explanation of DSK's libertine behavior. Members of France's elite have long ignored the sexual restrictions put on the middle and lower classes. However, the link between power and sex isn't limited to France. Powerful men and women are more likely than their less powerful counterparts to engage in sexual infidelity, no matter what their nationality. They are more confident and have access to more partners. At the same time, they are less bound by societal rules and have a greater tendency to fail to exercise self-restraint. Commenting on Strauss-Kahn, one political science professor noted:

For powerful people, it's part of the thrill that they can get things that other people can't get. They are usually surrounded by sycophantic people, and after a while, they come to believe that they have a right to be

surrounded by attractive men and women. There is a sense of entitlement that is a general attribute of power.<sup>3</sup>

DSK paid a high price for his libertine lifestyle. He lost his job and his marriage and faced public humiliation as the sensational details of sexual behavior were revealed to the public. Yet there still may be hope for DSK's political career. According to one poll, 79% of French adults surveyed said that he would make a better president than the current occupant of the office—Francois Hollande.

### **Discussion Probes**

1. Does being a libertine automatically disqualify someone from becoming a good leader?
2. How much should citizens be concerned about the private lives of their political leaders? Are Americans too concerned? Should the French be more concerned?
3. Should DSK be allowed to return to a role in government?
4. What can followers do to prevent their leaders from feeling entitled?
5. What other factors, aside from power, might encourage leaders to believe they are entitled to ignore the rules that apply to everyone else?

### **Notes**

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3. Politics, power and sex. (2011, May 21). *Belfast Telegraph*, p. 20.

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## Case Study 3.2

### CULTIVATING CHARACTER FROM CROOKED TIMBER

According to *New York Times* commentator David Brooks, too many of us focus on developing the wrong set of virtues. We strive to create résumé virtues—the skills and characteristics that help us excel on the job and appear successful in the eyes of the world. We want to be known as hard working, resilient, tenacious, ambitious, creative, and productive. Brooks argues that we ought to develop our eulogy virtues instead. Eulogy virtues are the ones that get talked about at our funerals—whether we were thoughtful, faithful, kind, and courageous.

Eulogy virtues come from the core of our being and provide us with a sense of meaning. They direct the ways in which we use our resume skills and traits. Developing these deeper qualities is a lifelong process based on the recognition that people are imperfect beings. Brooks declares that we are made from “crooked timber,” a phrase he draws from Immanuel Kant’s declaration, “Out of the crooked timber of humanity no straight thing was ever made.” Character emerges from the moral struggle against our flaws. However, engaging in this struggle takes humility, an increasingly rare virtue in a culture that promotes self-centeredness through such messages as “You are special,” “Trust yourself,” “Follow your dream,” and “Accept no limits.”

Brooks describes the lives of several historical figures who recognized that they were crooked timber and spent their lives overcoming their vices in order to develop their character. For example, Francis Perkins gave up a life of privilege to answer the call to improve labor conditions, serving as “The Woman Behind the New Deal.” Dwight Eisenhower wrestled with anger and hatred as he projected confidence and cheerfulness as a military commander and President. Philip Randolph fended off sexual and other temptations to remain incorruptible as he founded the railroad porters’ union and helped organize the 1963 civil rights march on Washington. Eighteenth-century novelist Mary Ann Eliot overcame anxiety and depression to write a series of novels (*Adam Bede*, *The Mill on the Floss*, *Middlemarch*) that illustrate the importance of tolerance for the self and other people. Augustine renounced personal control and ambition in order to experience spiritual insight and gratitude.

Brooks offers a Humility Code that outlines strategies for developing character in a world that he believes makes the self the center of the universe. Some of the provisions of his Humility Code include the following:

- We live for holiness (purpose, virtue) not happiness.
- We may be flawed, but we are wonderfully gifted with the capacity for heroic action.
- Humility is the most important virtue in the struggle against our weaknesses (and pride is the primary vice).
- Vices like fear, lust, and gluttony are short term while character virtues stand the test of time.
- Self-mastery takes help from others—friends, families, role models, traditions, institutions.

- Learn to quiet the self in order to see the world more clearly.
- Organize life around a vocation or calling that serves the community.
- As a leader, push for constant gradual change that recognizes that people are flawed; strike a balance between competing values and goals.

### **Discussion Probes**

1. Do you agree with Brooks that modern Western culture makes the self the center of the universe?
2. What is the value of viewing humans as “crooked timber”? What might be the dangers of this perspective?
3. Is humility the foundation for character development? Why or why not?
4. Which provisions of the Humility Code do you agree with? Take issue with?
5. Can you think of other prominent leaders who struggled to develop their character while wrestling with their weaknesses? How did they cope with their flaws, and what virtues did they develop?

### **Source**

Brooks, D. (2015). *The road to character*. New York, NY: Random House.

## Case Study 3.3

### STARTING AT THE FINISH LINE

Al Buehler is one of the most influential coaches in the history of U.S. track and field. Buehler coached and taught at Duke University for sixty years, retiring in 2015 at age eighty-four. Over that time, he trained 12 National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) champions, 10 All-Americans, and five Olympians. He served on the U.S. Olympic coaching staff in 1968, 1972, 1984, and 1988 and organized a number of national and international meets, including the first to invite African runners to the United States and a competition with the Soviets at the height of the Cold War. Buehler is a member of the U.S. Track Coaches Association Hall of Fame and recipient of the U. S. Sports Academy’s Jackie Robinson Humanitarian Award.

Buehler’s character is even more impressive than his accomplishments as a track coach. Known for living out his principles, Buehler invited the team from North Carolina Central University (NCCU), an all-black liberal arts college, to train at Duke in the 1950s. This was several

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years before the first African American undergraduates enrolled at Duke and segregation laws were still on the books. He and NCCU coach Dr. LeRoy Walker focused on different events with their combined teams. Buehler refused to participate in any meet that would not accept Walker. When Carlos Rogers and Tommie Smith were booed for protesting racial injustice on the winners stand at the 1968 Mexico City Olympics, Buehler supported the duo, telling them that they had made a genuine statement. He volunteered to drive them to the airport after they had been kicked off the Olympic team. Buehler trained female runner Ellison Goodall Bishop before Duke had a women's team, and she went on to become an All-American. Later, he gave up his men's track scholarships to help implement Title IX, the act aimed at bringing equality to women's sports on college campuses. Every Sunday morning for thirty-five years, Buehler (described by his family as tone deaf) climbed a rickety ladder to play the bells at the church on Duke's campus.

Buehler describes himself as a teacher who happened to specialize in track and field. With that in mind, he focused on the total student, not just on the individual's athletic abilities.

Basically I am concerned with the overall development of my athletes and students. How high they jump or how fast they run is not nearly as important as what kind of person they turn out to be. I want them to be good husbands, fathers, wives, mothers, sons, daughters, and first-rate citizens.

Buehler used the race metaphor to help prepare his students for life. He asked them to remind themselves why they were doing what they are doing, to remember that they could survive challenges because they have done so before, and to stick to their race plan regardless of what happened. However, Buehler believes that finish lines aren't just endings but also beginnings:

In my view of life, the finish line is a starting point . . . for dreams, for opening long-closed doors, for challenges, for change. Starting at the finish line also means carrying your principles and values forward beyond the finish line of any race or goal and into how you live your life.

Buehler made a lasting impression on colleagues, athletes, and students. Duke basketball coach Mike Krzyzewski calls him "the best example of a teacher-coach in intercollegiate sports." Carl Lewis, Dave Wottle, Joan Benoit Samuelson, and other Olympic champions describe him as a mentor. When Buehler had a brain tumor removed, he received a constant stream of calls and notes from his former students. Seven-time National Basketball Association (NBA) all-star Grant Hill, who received encouragement from Buehler as a freshman, served as executive producer for a documentary on Buehler's life; and another former student, Amy Unell, served as director. After the documentary aired for the first time, Buehler and Dr. LeRoy Walker received a standing ovation from hundreds of friends, students, and alumni.

Though retired, Buehler's words of wisdom (which he shared with his teams every day) live on:

- If you don't follow your principles, then that's being a phony.
- Take good care of those you love.

- By being true to yourself, you can generate a genuine enthusiasm that will motivate you and inspire those around you.
- Turn your attention on those positive things that enable you to be the best you can be.
- Take responsibility. Only you can determine the course of your life.
- Take action, even when all the odds seem to be against you.

### **Discussion Probes**

1. What virtues does Al Buehler demonstrate? What virtues does he hope to develop in others?
2. What does it mean to you to “start at the finish line?”
3. How does starting at the finish line compare to Covey’s second habit: Begin with the end in mind?
4. How does Buehler serve as a moral exemplar?
5. What can we learn from Buehler’s example and advice?

### **Notes**

All quotations come from Unell, A. E., & Unell, B. (2012). *Starting at the finish line: Coach Al Buehler’s timeless wisdom*. New York, NY: Perigree/Penguin.

### **Sources**

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## **SELF-ASSESSMENT 3.1**

### **The Leadership Virtues Questionnaire (LVQ)**

*Instructions:* Ask someone else to rate you on the following items, or select one of your leaders and rate that individual. Scale: 1 = not at all, 2 = once in a while, 3 = sometimes, 4 = fairly often, 5 = frequently, if not always. Reverse scoring where indicated. You will generate a score for each individual virtue and a total perceived character score.

1. Does as he/she ought to do in a given situation
2. Does not carefully consider all the information available before making an important decision that impacts others
3. Boldly jumps into a situation without considering the consequences of his/her actions

4. Does not seek out information from a variety of sources so the best decision can be made
5. Considers a problem from all angles and reaches the best decision for all parties involved
6. Would rather risk his/her job than to do something that was unjust
7. May have difficulty standing up for his/her beliefs among friends who do not share the same views
8. Fails to make the morally best decision in a given situation
9. May hesitate to enforce ethical standards when dealing with a close friend
10. Ignores his/her "inner voice" when deciding how to proceed
11. Seems to be overly concerned with his/her personal power
12. Is not overly concerned with his/her own accomplishments
13. Wishes to know everything that is going on in the organization to the extent that he/she micromanages
14. Gives credit to others when credit is due
15. Demonstrates respect for all people
16. May take credit for the accomplishments of others
17. Respects the rights and integrity of others
18. Would make promotion decisions based on a candidate's merit
19. Does not treat others as he/she would like to be treated

Prudence

1. \_\_\_\_\_
  2. \_\_\_\_\_ (Reverse score)
  3. \_\_\_\_\_ (Reverse)
  4. \_\_\_\_\_ (Reverse)
  5. \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ out of 25

Courage (Fortitude)

6. \_\_\_\_\_
  7. \_\_\_\_\_ (Reverse)
  8. \_\_\_\_\_ (Reverse)
  9. \_\_\_\_\_ (Reverse)
  10. \_\_\_\_\_ (Reverse)
- \_\_\_\_\_ out of 25

Temperance

11. \_\_\_\_\_ (Reverse)
  12. \_\_\_\_\_
  13. \_\_\_\_\_ (Reverse)
  17. \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ out of 15

Justice

14. \_\_\_\_\_
  15. \_\_\_\_\_
  16. \_\_\_\_\_ (Reverse)
  18. \_\_\_\_\_
  19. \_\_\_\_\_ (Reverse)
- \_\_\_\_\_ out of 30

Total \_\_\_\_\_ out of 95

**Source:** Riggio, R. E., Zhu, W., Reina, C., & Maroosis, J. A. (2010). Virtue-based measurement of ethical leadership: The Leadership Virtues Questionnaire. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, 62(4), 235-250.

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## SELF-ASSESSMENT 3.2

### Perceived Leader Integrity Scale

*Instructions:* You can use this scale to measure the integrity of your immediate supervisor or, as an alternative, ask a follower to rate you. The higher the score (maximum 124), the lower the integrity of the leader rated.

The following items concern your immediate supervisor. You should consider your immediate supervisor to be the person who has the most control over your daily work activities. Circle responses to indicate how well each item describes your immediate supervisor. Response choices: 1 = not at all, 2 = somewhat, 3 = very much, 4 = exactly.

- |                                                                                                                          |   |   |   |   |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Would use my mistakes to attack me personally                                                                         | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 2. Always gets even                                                                                                      | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 3. Gives special favors to certain “pet” employees but not to me                                                         | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 4. Would lie to me                                                                                                       | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5. Would risk me to protect himself or herself in work matters                                                           | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 6. Deliberately fuels conflict among employees                                                                           | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 7. Is evil                                                                                                               | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 8. Would use my performance appraisal to criticize me as a person                                                        | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 9. Has it in for me                                                                                                      | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 10. Would allow me to be blamed for his or her mistake                                                                   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 11. Would falsify records if it would help his or her work reputation                                                    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 12. Lacks high morals                                                                                                    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 13. Makes fun of my mistakes instead of coaching me as to how to do my job better                                        | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 14. Would deliberately exaggerate my mistakes to make me look bad when describing my performance to his or her superiors | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 15. Is vindictive                                                                                                        | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 16. Would blame me for his or her own mistake                                                                            | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 17. Avoids coaching me because she or he wants me to fail                                                                | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 18. Would treat me better if I belonged to a different ethnic group                                                      | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 19. Would deliberately distort what I say                                                                                | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 20. Deliberately makes employees angry at each other                                                                     | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 21. Is a hypocrite                                                                                                       | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 22. Would limit my training opportunities to prevent me from advancing                                                   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 23. Would blackmail an employee if she or he could get away with it                                                      | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

24. Enjoys turning down my requests	1	2	3	4
25. Would make trouble for me if I got on his or her bad side	1	2	3	4
26. Would take credit for my ideas	1	2	3	4
27. Would steal from the organization	1	2	3	4
28. Would risk me to get back at someone else	1	2	3	4
29. Would engage in sabotage against the organization	1	2	3	4
30. Would fire people just because she or he doesn't like them if she or he could get away with it	1	2	3	4
31. Would do things that violate organizational policy and then expect subordinates to cover for him or her	1	2	3	4

Total Score \_\_\_\_\_

**Source:** Bartholomew, C. S., & Gustafson, S. B. (1998). Perceived leader integrity scale: An instrument for assessing employee perceptions of leader integrity. *Leadership Quarterly*, 9, 143-144. Used with permission.

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