

Should Managers & Supervisors Teach Right From Wrong?

By Mark E. Bowser

What do you think of this question: Should managers and supervisors teach right from wrong? Let me ask you another question. What do you think of Enron, Worldcom, and the other companies that are in deep trouble because of unethical behavior? Should managers and supervisors teach their employees (the future managers and leaders) right from wrong? YES! YES! YES! If we and our companies are going to thrive then we must adopt into our lives and teach into other peoples' lives the attitude that character does mean something. It is interesting that this has become a national debate. This is good. Even though it doesn't appear that character wins all the time-----TRUST ME; CHARACTER ALWAYS WINS IN THE END. For the next few minutes, let me guide you on a journey to three values we must teach to our teams and then how we can motivate them to live them.

The first value we must teach our teams is the value of **integrity**. There is a motivational speaker who used to go around defining integrity as wholeness. In his view, as long as we are whole or congruent to our values then we have integrity. Well, he is half right. What if we have the values that it is alright to murder people? If we are whole and congruent then according to his definition we have integrity. That is why a half truth can mess your life up. He is right that integrity is wholeness. But the dictionary doesn't stop there. It tells us exactly what to be whole to. It talks about truthfulness and honesty. Being whole to those values. That is the integrity we must live and teach.

The second value we need to impart to our teams is that of **leadership**. Yes, true leadership is a value. So, what is leadership? I like John Maxwell's definition. He defines leadership with one word—"Influence." Leaders are able to influence people to take action. I believe true leadership is "morality influence." We need to motivate people to put morality and ethical goals into action.

The third value we need to express is that **results at any cost are dangerous and wrong**. Not following this rule is what has gotten companies in such deep water. If we want to have true success then we must be results minded but with ethics leading the way.

Alright, there you are, three values—Integrity, Leadership, and Result at any cost are dangerous and wrong. Now, how do we get our teams to grab hold of them? I believe there are three ways to do that. One, we must **live it**. We set the tone. We are the example. We are the model. Two, **teach it and preach it**. We have to be the voice of right. I think it was President Theodore Roosevelt who spoke of using the bully pulpit. We must use our bully pulpit to positively teach right from wrong. Third, **expect it**. Don't settle for anything less. Keep your standards high. Expect the best!

There are more than 100 organizations around the country that can help us in our endeavor to be teams of character. For example, in the Cincinnati area there is an organization called Character Council of Greater Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky. Their spokesperson is Hall of

Fame football player Anthony Munoz. The Character Council is a non-profit, non-religious organization promoting character in the community. They provide support, trainers, consultants, and resources to individuals and companies who want to encourage and live good character. For more information on the Character Council or to find out if you have one in your area contact:

Character Council of Greater Cincinnati & Northern Kentucky

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