



LEADER DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

The Value of Values Based Leadership

When I first started writing Rules and Tools for Success, Rule number 10 was, Live by a Set of Rules. In that rule I spoke about values and character and when push comes to shove these are what, ideally, guides us in our actions and decisions.

For the past year, actually longer, I've been contemplating and looking into organizational values, culture and character. What I found was interesting. First I found that although many organizations claim to have "published" organizational core values, many are identified and stated by the organizations' leadership. In itself that is not bad – or good, it simply is. It's good in that the leadership is setting the tone for the organization stating "This is what we expect of you". Many school teachers, especially in the elementary grades, engage the students in creating the classroom rules or norms. What if employees were engaged in defining the organizational core values? Like a lot of leadership principles, it's about engagement and ownership. People are more likely to embrace something if they have ownership. Whether it is third graders or thirty somethings, we want to be a part of it. From a group of fifty to 5,000, it's doable, and really not that difficult. Perhaps a little more time consuming than five people in a room, but doable – with a plan and a process.

Secondly I have found many employees, including the very leadership who may have had input in creating the values, either don't have a clue what they are, or worse feel no one adheres to them. This is the bad part. Sadly, when I speak to leaders about this, the perception is that the core values are known, they're intrinsic, they're common sense, and "I shouldn't have to remind people of them." Yes, actually you do.

Here's why. People have conflicting values, different understandings, interpretations, and we are often faced with moral dilemmas. Some are drastic. From some of the current global affairs we read about or see on the news, to cultural and racial issues we continue to struggle with right here in the United States, to the latest corporate or government agency scandal, we see values compromised. So yes, actually you do.

For example, I know many organizations that identify "Respect" as a core value, yet how many examples can you come up with where an inappropriate behaviors not categorized as very respectful, are going on in the workplace? Even at home I see parents insist their children say, "Yes sir", or "No Ma'am". Then turn around and insult or humiliate them in an activity or sporting event. Or if not directly, indirectly by calling a spouse a name, or being disrespectful to a stranger in front of the children. At work we gossip, spread rumors, undermine the boss, or resort to outright name calling. So yes, actually you do.

Over the next several newsletters/blog posts, I will share how to create a culture of success, personally and organizationally, built on values based leadership. I'll take a look at some personal and organizational core values and oh, I don't know . . . talk about them. Maybe you'll talk about yours. Maybe you'll share why they are important to the success of your office, department, organization or company. Maybe it will open the door to a conversation with your children, your spouse, and increase the happiness of the family.

Look for this article on Leader Development Institute's Facebook page and share your thoughts, opinions and comments. Share a core value, why it's so important to the success of _____, and maybe an example of it in action, help me understand with a story.

Be Extraordinary!

Next time:

How to build a values based culture that will leverage productivity and mission success, at home and at work.