



Values-Based Leadership

Building a Values-Based Culture

To build a values-based culture in an organization consider incorporating them, to the greatest extent possible, into daily operations. What does that mean? What it means is to purposefully frame them in conversations and discussions such as when recognizing, disciplining, coaching, or mentoring members of the organization. Incorporate them into staff meetings at every level of the organization.



RECOGNITION – When recognizing employees, base the recognition on the organization’s core values. Whether recognition is a formal institutional recognition program, or the more effective and meaningful personal approach, tie the performance to the core value. “Vanessa, I just want to take a moment and acknowledge the work you did on the ACME report. Although the research and data entry may have been tedious, the task was important, and the results had a direct impact on the success of the ABC project. Your tenacity and attention to detail are a clear indication of your commitment to our core values of excellence in all we do, and teamwork. Thank you”. See how the [US Army Core of Engineers](#) Southwestern Division Office in Dallas recognizes its engineers each year based on the US Army core values, L.D.R.S.H.I.P.

DISCIPLINE – Of course discipline is just as important as recognition – as long as we remember discipline is about improving performance and not punishment. Like recognition, values play an important role in the disciplinary process. Incorporating core values into the disciplinary process makes disciplining easier and more effective. Many supervisors and leaders are uncomfortable disciplining an employee and as a result, avoid it when it’s needed. Values can help by taking out the personal/relationship element and replace the supervisor and let the “boss” (values) do the disciplining. “Jim let’s talk. You heard Dave discuss our core value of respect at the last staff meeting. This morning you had words with Mary about XYZ. Arguing a point is ok, needed sometimes. However, the words you used and how you said them weren’t respectful, it impacts performance and morale. Let me call Mary in here and we can . . . “

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PERFORMANCE REVIEWS – Annual, or semiannual, reviews are an excellent opportunity to address and reinforce organizational core values. During this time, it might also help to explore personal core values and facilitate alignment with organizational core values. Everyone has values that define who we are, what we believe in, or how we want to be known. These are personal. How do we make an organization's core values apply across the board to dozens, hundreds, or thousands of different people, backgrounds, etc? Addressing or discussing core value alignment helps with individual buy-in and understanding the connection of the individual to the culture of the organization.

REGULAR AND CONSISTANT ENGAGEMENT – Research on influence and persuasion by social scientist Robert Cialdini clearly shows how consistency in previous words and deeds can influence future choices and decisions. When organizations actively and openly dialog about organizational core values they remain at the forefront of our minds. Consider this. If you hold regularly scheduled staff meetings, open it up with no more than a two-minute presentation on just one of your organization's core values. Now don't get preachy on me, keep it casual but from the heart and without discussion - you have a meeting to run.

- 1.) State the core value, (i.e. Pursue Excellence)
- 2.) Share with everyone why this core value is important to you and the success of your team. Pull from other values to help clarify or explain. (i.e. To have excellence we must . . . have tenacity, be proactive, be open-minded, etc.),
- 3.) Share an anecdotal story in support. It can be your own, someone else's, recent or in the past, perhaps a parable. "Just last week I was reading about . . . The writer spoke of a famous football player's pursuit of excellence and what separated him from other players. He wasn't extraordinary just by showing up. He practiced his game all year not just during the season, he studied the game, he continued to look for small improvements - and he worked to help other players be great."

Once YOU, and only YOU, have presented each core value, your organization's vision and mission statements, then turn to one of the attendees to your meeting (preferably start with one who will support your new tradition with enthusiasm) and say, "Debbie, would you do me a favor; you know how I've been presenting one of our core values each week? Would you please pick one and next staff meeting, do the same thing? Thank you." For the meeting after next ask someone else. Continue until everyone has participated - then start all over again with yourself.

NOTE: If you are not already doing this, you're probably going to get push-back, either directly or behind your back. That's OK, you're extraordinary. You're not afraid. You're confident and tenacious. Make it happen. Don't surrender.

Why Is This Important?

Just like in the scenarios I mentioned above, when core values are discussed regularly and openly, they tend to be at the conscious level - initially. Long term they become our character.

Throughout life, we are often faced with moral dilemmas, choices, decisions. An employee might be thinking "Eh, it's good enough" or "Hmm, I could probably just take a shortcut and get out of here". But at yesterday's staff meeting, someone just spoke about excellence. Thus, prompting a second thought that says..."No, let me do it right".

Of course, over time, your two-minute presentations become something of a tradition, an expectation, dare I say part of the culture and soon a way of life. For new hires, it sets the stage. Extraordinary leaders have extraordinary character; with an extraordinary character, they are not afraid.

Next time: Values alignment – personal and organizational

Be Extraordinary!



Anthony Tormey – International speaker, trainer, and executive coach. Anthony has conducted seminars and given motivational speeches across the nation and internationally on subjects of Leadership, Management, Strategic Planning, Continuous Improvement Processes, Project Management, Experiential Teambuilding, and Effective Communication. Anthony has coached senior executives, leaders, and supervisors in both government and private sectors.

His powerful and highly charged motivational presence does not come from standing behind a lectern, but by taking you on a journey of discovery through thought-provoking dialog. Equally comfortable presenting a 6-hour seminar, after-dinner keynote, or sit down one on one, Anthony clearly defines for you how to achieve success through personal leadership coupled with leading others to reach successive goals. He inspires business leaders, executives, supervisors, and frontline employees to not simply be good at what they do - - but to be extraordinary. Anthony uses his incredible passion, and ability to communicate; To illustrate his principles for leadership and success – he states, "Extraordinary leaders have extraordinary character . . .with extraordinary character they are NOT AFRAID." At home, at work, across the nation, and around the world - we need extraordinary leaders.

Would you like to talk about how I can help you and your organization?

Let's Talk

Successful people live by a set of closely followed rules and values, have you read LDi's *Rules for Success*? These rules will help you hone in on the best success practices that benefit you in all areas of your life, personal and professional. You can find LDi's *Rules for Success* [HERE](#).