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Ethics can be more than seeing a problem, determining its worth, and then making the right decision based on our values. What is the right thing to do in an ethical situation? Lately I have notice that Leaders tend to put aside or forget the Army values. In our military, our *values* are our corner stone. Our military will remain strong as long as there is a good set of values for it to abide by. We as individuals and leaders general want to do the right thing. Today's Military seems to be no different in dealing with it ethics and values, than that of the civilian organization. The military society is built on strong ethical base that sets us apart from civilian environment.

We are thought to use the Army Values as our guide when faced with ethical decisions. Fortunately, our parents had already instilled comparable values in us that had and still has a tremendous influence over how we prioritized our decisions. Placing an equal importance on our values allows us to define ethical violations. The ability to define an ethical problem does not make reaching an ethical decision any easier or faster. Our personal values play the largest role as to how we proceed to making the right ethical choice.

Our Ethics and moral values will become that of future generations. As such, we must re-evaluate what it is that makes us professionals. There are a variety of definitions pertaining to ethics. Ethics can be define as the "study of the general nature of morals and the specific moral choices an individual makes, in relating to others"; the rules or standards of conduct governing the members of a profession;" and a "branch of philosophy dealing with values relating to human conduct, with respect to the rightness and wrongness of certain actions.

We as Senior Non-Commissioned officers and leaders are tasked to train and mentor our subordinates in the ways of the Army, the right way. Teaching them to make correct choices,

choices that does not question or test them morally or ethically; when such occasions occur, that would be the appropriate time to guide them in the right direction, to do the right thing morally and ethically. Do the right thing always, be always morally and ethically correct with or without an audience.

What are the rules? A rule along with regulations governs our conduct as we go about our daily duties and tasks. Some are written down; others are inherent standards norms ingrained in our personalities and characters. As leaders and Senior NCOs, we have all, or at one time or another faced a situation that questioned our moral and ethics. We have also observed our fellow Officers and Non-Commissioned Officers being put in situations where they had to make ethical and moral choices and even test their values. We will critique the decisions that were made, if we perceived them not to standard we automatically see their faults as a direct reflection on the leaders that they grew under.

We have to reevaluate our attitudes of the past, those questionable decisions in the past that were okay, can now cause us to question its value. Remember the TDY trip we like so much, the money makers, if we exercise a check on learning, in reality we could have done that mission/task over the phone or Email; Taking five days to complete a one day task; was that the right way to go about those tasks? Was it conducive to the military values, moral or ethics?

As seniors NCOs we sometimes lose site of our positions of leadership, which mandates leading from the front. Leaders lead first and manage second. We need not forget that we are constantly under a microscope by those we mentor and lead. We should reframe from committing ourselves before first taking time to time judge our actions. As leaders and senior NCOs we are judged by our actions and have to live by them; remember, there is always someone around to point out our mistakes and use them against us.

We as leaders are entrusted with young men and women that are depending on us to instill the ethical and moral attitude needed, to carry them through their military careers and beyond. In these times of shrinking budgets, the public and the media have us under a microscope. Our tax payers perceive themselves as having all rights, expecting of us as professionals, that we handle ourselves both ethically and morally right. “Garbage in, garbage out” as the saying goes, if we are to preserve America’s future, it is our responsibility to instill valuable values in all Soldiers that we lead and influence. Before we do that, look within ourselves, determine if we comply and in turn, judge ourselves to standards. It’s my belief that knowing and applying Army Values can only enhanced our moral and ethical decision making.

Remember, ***Loyalty*** is “a feeling of faithfulness or allegiance”. Bear true faith and allegiance to the U.S. constitution, the Army, and other soldiers. Be loyal to the nation and its heritage. As leaders we must be faithful and consistent with Soldiers, articulating clear and consistent messages. When leaders are loyal they take on the responsibility for their Soldier’s failures and their accomplishments.

Duty is “something that one is expected or required to do by, moral or legal obligation”. Fulfill your obligations. Accept responsibility for your own actions and those entrusted to your care. Find opportunities to improve oneself for the good of the group. Duty holds the Army’s values together; it attributes us to be morally and ethically strong and encourages our subordinates to do the same.

Respect is “the condition of being esteemed or honored”. Rely upon the golden rule. How we consider others reflects upon each of us, both personally and as a professionally. Respect is something that is given to people, institutions, positions, or even the uniform that we wear. Leaders must have respect for their subordinates, and subordinates for their leaders

Selfless Service is giving all of yourself with little regard for your own interests. Put the welfare of the nation, the Army, and your subordinates before your own. Selfless service leads to organizational teamwork and encompasses discipline, self-control and faith in the system.

Honor is “honesty, fairness, or integrity in one’s beliefs and actions”. Nothing is more important for a Soldier to have than honor. Live up to all the Army values, Soldiers study and evaluate their leaders daily. If you’re not fair when issuing punishments and rewards, they see it. Soldiers talk amongst them, there is very little that gets by them. Leaders usually make the mistake of thinking that nobody’s watching, but your Soldiers are.

Integrity is “the uncompromising adherence to ethical principles”. Do what is right, legally and morally. Be willing to do what is right even when no one is looking. It is our "moral compass" an inner voice. People can take away many things from you, but nobody can take away or compromise your integrity but yourself. We do not want our Soldiers to think that they have to bend the rules, do not deprive them ethically or morally. Let our Soldiers know that no one is perfect, encourage them to learn from their mistakes

And Personal Courage has two components, physical and moral courage. The chance may come to demonstrate physical courage maybe once in your lifetime, but or display of moral courage is a daily occurrence. When you attempt a physical act of courage, your peers and subordinates are usually together with you, but with moral courage we generally stand alone.

Our traits emphasizes how we lead, remember we are “backbone of the Army”. We are the bearer for the Army’s values. We have to establish an ethical climate with in our organizations that will support the Army’s Value. Our Soldiers must have the sense that we are available to them and have free flowing communication for advice on any ethical decisions that

they may face. Our professional standards should be derived from those traditions that have proudly made us who we are morally and ethically.

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