

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

LEADERSHIP

by

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ABSTRACT

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This SRP shows that values and ethics are essential to leadership and that good leadership is the foundation of a successful organization. People's values drive the development of their ethical conduct and thereby play a major role in their leadership ability. Studies of successful organizations indicate values, ethics, and leadership play major roles in organizational performance and are the focal point of successful organizations. This SRP looks at the Army's position on values and ethical behavior. It looks at the commitment made by military leaders to totally live by, uphold, and enforce Army values. This SRP compares current Army values with those implied by Wal-Mart, the largest retailer in the world, in its ten established rules for building a successful business. It shows how organizational failure can occur when leaders fail to observe and adhere to good values.

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LEADERSHIP

The U.S. Army is undeniably the world's most powerful, disciplined, and well-trained armed force. As military professionals, we subscribe to a core of deeply rooted values that are enduring, as they must be for the public to maintain its trust in the organization. We must ensure that we remain the most fully prepared and the best-trained fighting force in the world. The quality of our men and women in uniform will be the deciding factor for attaining victory. Our military needs quality people who possess high moral values. Military and civilian personnel with good personal values are our most critical asset.¹

This SRP will show that values and ethics are essential to leadership, and that good leadership is the foundation of a successful organization. People's values drive the development of their ethical conduct and thereby play a major role in their leadership ability. Studies of successful organizations indicate values, ethics, and leadership play major roles in organizational performance and are the focal point of successful organizations. This SRP reviews the Army's position on values and ethical behavior. It describes the commitment made by military leaders to totally live by, uphold, and enforce Army values. This SRP compares current Army and civilian business values, using Wal-Mart, the largest retailer in the world, as its corporate example and discusses Wal-Mart's ten established rules for building a successful business as indicative of its value system. The SRP shows how both civilian and military organizations can fail if leaders cease to observe and to adhere to their organizations' values.

VALUES.

Former Chief of the Staff of the Army, General Dennis J. Reimer, declared that "values are the core of everything our Army is and does. Your commitment to living and teaching the Army's core values is critical to our success today and tomorrow."² Values have been described as a person's attitude about the worth of people and ideals. Values are bipolar, with positive and negative poles: pleasant, painful; easy, difficult, strong; weak; true, false; good, bad. The positive pole addresses positive, desirable values, which are preferred over the undesirable values of the negative pole. Values are not necessarily related to each other. Values are ideals, unachievable in the sense that we can never observe them to the fullest extent of our expectations; if we do, then we realize our expectations were set too low.³

To say a person has a value is to say he or she has an enduring belief—one that dictates his behavior. By adhering to the value, the person chooses to exhibit its corresponding behavior rather than exhibiting any opposite mode of behavior or end-state. The accepted value dictates a standard of behavior or belief that guides and determines action, attitudes

towards objects, situations, ideology, presentations of self to others, evaluations, judgments, justifications, comparisons of self with others, and attempts to influence others.⁴ "Moral values are understood to be those that make people good as a human being. Moral values are personal--not only because a person has them, but because they are the expression of one's unique personality in the innermost center of its being, as shown in the act of free choice."⁵ Human acts are either morally good or bad and humans themselves are either morally good or bad. People subscribing to good moral values become good people.⁶ Values are developed in childhood and determine who a person is and what that person is about. Teenagers are influenced morally early in life by listening to their parents, going to church, attending college or other higher institutions. People's values contribute immensely to how they act in different situations. People are shaped by what they see, hear, learn, and by individuals they meet. It is imperative that people share a common set of values if they are to accomplish a common goal.⁷

The U.S. Army openly espouses a set of values that it expects its members to follow. Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 22-100, Army Leadership, states that Army values remind us and inform the rest of the world--the civilian government we serve, the nation we protect, even our enemies-- about who we are and what we stand for. General J. Lawton Collins, Former Army Chief of Staff, declared "People rightly look to their military leaders not only to be skilled in the technical aspects of the profession of arms, but also to be men of integrity. People of integrity consistently act according to principles--not just what might work at the moment. Leaders of integrity make their principles known and consistently act in accordance with them."⁸

Army values are consistent; they support one another. Soldiers cannot decide which values they want to follow. In the Infantry Magazine (August 1947), Field Marshal Sir William Slim asserted "Moral courage is a reasoning attitude which enables one to stake career, happiness, his whole future, on his judgment of what he thinks is right. It has to be taught, because so few, if any, have it naturally."⁹ Army service schools engage in the task of building Army values, ethics, and leadership. Listed below are the Army values and their definitions that all soldiers are required to follow.

- *Loyalty*: Bear true faith and allegiance to the US Constitution, the Army, your unit, and other soldiers.
- *Duty*: Fulfill your obligations.
- *Respect*: Treat people as they should be treated.
- *Selfless Service*: Put the welfare of the nation, the Army, and subordinates before your own.

- *Honor*: Live up to all the Army values.
- *Integrity*: Do what's right--legally and morally.
- *Personal Courage*: Face fear, danger, or adversity (physical or moral).¹⁰

Values are considered the cornerstone of all organizations. This is why General Eric K. Shinseki asserts the military “will remain a values-based institution where loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity and personal courage are the cornerstone of all that we do today and all of our future successes. Our soldiers, who exemplify these values every day, are the best in the world.”¹¹

Exercising integrity and honor on and off duty are extremely important, for they exhibit Army values each day. In order to earn the trust of soldiers you must be always frank, honest, and sincere with them at all times. According to former Sergeant Major of the Army William Connelly, "People do not have to exhibit toughness to prove they have professional courage. Leaders just need to listen, communicate effectively, take up for their soldiers when they are right or in a tough situation and going to bat for their soldiers without crossing the line. Simply put, in a respectful manner be willing to tell people when they are wrong and stand up for what is right. Fear is always going to be a factor in telling individuals they are wrong, but this is the way to earn respect. Not thinking about the consequences of your actions by standing firmly on your values, principles and personal convictions are essential elements of physical and moral courage. For example, occasionally staff officers will point out mistakes made by their senior staff directors and likewise those staff directors will point out a staff officer's mistake. This is how trust between leaders is made on a daily basis."¹²

FM 22-100 notes that: "People will set different Army values against one another, by saying there are problems about loyalty versus honesty or duty versus respect. Army values are compatible and reinforce each other. Duty, loyalty and honesty all support each other."¹³ Army values enable leaders to think and reason before taking action on a given situation. For example; soldiers assigned to a reserve headquarters and headquarters company took a record Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT). After taking the record test it was determined that the two-mile course these soldiers ran was not in accordance with regulatory guidance. The company commander of the unit had a dilemma: Should he require all soldiers to retake the test at a later date or should he give them credit for something they failed to thoroughly complete? Higher headquarters representatives in the operation section wanted these soldiers to be given credit for passing the APFT due to no fault of the soldiers. The company commander decided to use the result of the test for all soldiers as a diagnostic test and retest all soldiers the next month.

Although his soldiers were upset about his decision, they later respected him for doing the right thing. The company commander used his moral courage to do the right thing.

Organizations that have a value-based structure tend to function well. "Companies that enjoy enduring success have core values that remain fixed while their business strategies and practices endlessly adapt to a changing world."¹⁴ The Army has not succeeded in ensuring all soldiers follow each established value. But it is not prudent for our future senior leaders to change our current values. However, it is highly recommended that our future leaders ensure all soldiers are adhering to these established values. Senior leaders must require their subordinate leaders to put their organization's values into practice. Once organizational values are established, the next step is to establish a good ethical climate in the organization.

ETHICS.

An essential element in establishing a good ethical climate is understanding what ethics is all about. Ethics, as defined for the military by Joint Ethics Regulation, DoD Directive 5500.7, are standards by which one should act based on values. Ethics are also defined as "the discipline dealing with what is good and bad or right and wrong or with moral duty and obligation, a group of moral principles or set of values, or a particular theory or system of moral values."¹⁵

Ethics is about doing what is right, choosing the right path, and making decisions we can live with. Ethics establish the principles that govern all human conduct, that must be considered in individuals' actions. In the past, living the ideal life has always been the subject of human speculation. Doing things haphazardly will never lead to success. Eventually we all must realize there is a right and wrong way to do things. We often ask ourselves if there is truly a right and a wrong way to live. One way of ensuring success in life is having a good ethical foundation. Good ethics enables individuals to make those tough decisions in determining the right and the wrong way of doing things. Obeying the code of ethics will guide an individual to understand those acts a person ought to do, those a person should not do, and those a person may choose to either do or not do.¹⁶ Young people who have not had good role models will reflect the national acceptance of cheating and lying. New rules and warnings of punishment will not change them. Both public and private moral behavior must be defined and taught to them.

The military takes a different view. Some behavior that is often tolerated or overlooked in the civilian world is prohibited in the military. Drugs are prohibited. Abuse of alcohol can destroy one's career. If you are married and have a sexual relationship with someone other

than your wife it violates military regulations. Military dishonesty is always punished severely. Every ethical leader's dream is to have subordinates who instinctively do what is right, whether or not regulations give guidance. Military leaders have a mandate to ensure good values and ethical standards are followed by all assigned soldiers in their organizations.¹⁷

ENSURING GOOD VALUES AND ETHICS IN ORGANIZATIONS.

Personal convictions provide the most effective basis for moral and ethical behavior. Personal convictions fluctuate, especially in a diverse secular society. Studies show that most individuals believe their own ethical standards are higher than those of others and believe their profession is more ethical and responsible than other professions.¹⁸ We rationalize our behavior for not being ethical at all times: My actions do not hurt anyone, everyone else is doing it, sometimes you have to fight fire with fire and treat them the same way they treat you. A common American attitude is that if it doesn't hurt anyone else, I can do whatever I wish. What I do in my private life is my business. My employer has no right to evaluate or punish me for my private conduct as long as my job performance is not degraded.¹⁹

Sometimes, instead of personal conviction of right and wrong, self-preservation from fear and consequences may cause people to live at the edge of ethical boundaries and sometimes step over them. If the leader does not set the right example or sets the wrong example, the subordinate will often follow blindly to maintain what he sees as self-preservation. Fear is a powerful motivator. Some repressive governments make it their primary tool of coercion and compliance. In reality, it also affects much of our democratic culture. Fear of one's career derailment, of public exposure, of court-martial, of job security--all provide motivation to obey by some set of moral rules. This is why the ethics of leaders must remain untarnished.²⁰

The motivation to live by our code of ethics is based on our view of law, or fear, and on our personal convictions. Retired Major General (Retired) Jerry E. White, in his article on ethics and values, asserts laws and regulations provide guidelines in establishing an individual's behavior, but regulatory guidance will never cover every circumstance. Regulations are limited in their effect and the law should be a last resort when private morality does not prevail. Responses to a survey conducted in 1988 among senior enlisted soldiers training at the Sergeant Majors Academy at Fort Bliss, Texas, show that some soldiers in the Army do not find it easy to adhere to all of the Army values. Without strong personal convictions, the philosophy of relativism is often applied, especially by young people, to using drugs, abusing alcohol, using profanity, lying and cheating. Increasingly, the courts concur with this position.²¹ It is very rare for soldiers to want to be bad, but a lot of them are not strong enough to do the right thing all by

themselves, and at times a little help is required. We must have faith in our soldiers and continue to encourage them to keep standing for what is right.²² Commanders and all leaders, both officers and enlisted, must set the example at all times and must frequently speak out on ethical and unethical issues. Leaders must reward their soldiers for displaying integrity and punish them for lack of integrity.²³

MG (Ret) White speaks for the military belief that integrity and ethics must be built from within, reserving law and fear only as last resorts. He sees three ways the military can promote the internalizing of ethics:

- Recognize that young soldiers being brought into today's military must be properly taught ethics and morality.
- While you are teaching young people going through basic training or Officer Training Schools, do not assume they have developed a foundation of integrity, morality, and ethics.
- Commanders and leaders at all levels must set an example for their young soldiers that reflect morality and integrity if they wish to positively influence their soldiers' lives. Commanders must speak out on these issues often.²⁴

Most people agree that integrity, honesty, and moral conduct are essential characteristics of a good leader. Disagreement sometimes arises when these standards are applied equally to personal and professional lives. The current American attitude, however, requires that private and professional ethics be the same. The public agrees with Vince Lombardi, famous coach for the Green Bay Packers, who believed "The quality of a person's life is in direct proportion to their commitment to excellence, regardless of their chosen field of endeavor."²⁵ In recent times, the Navy's "Tailhook" and the Army's Aberdeen incidents, highly publicized sexual harassment cases that resulted in the dismissal of senior leaders and soldiers for sexual misconduct, have impelled military leaders to publish guidelines on fraternization, sexual harassment, and sexual conduct. The Army instituted mandatory training to implement these guidelines. The military has seen that it can no longer assume that ethics and integrity are givens for people who solemnly take their oath of office as military personnel. It acknowledges a need to institutionize controls and accountability. Leaders, be they civilians or military, must ensure that their subordinates come to understand that their lives and their professions are not separate, that the same code of ethics applies to both.²⁶

MAINTAINING AN ETHICAL CLIMATE.

Ethical behavior must be the top priority for every member of an organization, regardless of their place in the chain of command. Leaders of all organizations expect their followers to be totally honest. When followers become aware of problems, they must report them at once to leaders rather than attempting to cover them up. They must be truthful with themselves and with each other. Dishonesty, on the other hand, leads to loss of respect, trust, and more dishonesty. It should never be tolerated by anyone in the military or corporate America. When we make a mistake, we must accept the responsibility and the consequences and strive to do better the next time. Leaders should never think less of their followers for being honest, because people depend on workers in organizations to do the right thing every day.

Demonstrating uncompromising integrity, following values and standards, developing appropriate ethical norms and building moral discipline in an organization takes wisdom, patience, attention, careful supervision, persistence and time. It also takes moral courage. It is more convenient to allow shortcuts and bending of established rules, simply because it accomplishes tasks easier and faster. After all, rewards seem to be accrued by those who accomplish the mission, not to self-righteous failures. Accomplishing the mission, however, involves more than just getting the job done. It must also involve building a healthy, efficient and accountable organization that deserves lasting trust and confidence from those it serves. Leaders who do not actively develop an ethical climate throughout their organizations or who simply allow day-to-day pressures to distract them from this most fundamental task of leadership cheat their country, their organization, their subordinates and themselves.

People depend on leaders to do the right thing. That means training, modeling, enabling; it means selecting personnel who are capable of making and implementing the policies, following regulatory guidance, and doing what's in the best interest of the country. Loyalty and good character are paramount factors of consideration. We cannot please everybody, but we must make decisions that we can live with: "Do the right thing." Ethical leadership demands teamwork at every level.

The Army prides itself on having soldiers who demonstrate good ethical behavior. Laws and regulations are established to ensure soldiers understand the negative impact of not demonstrating good ethical behavior on and off duty. However, regulatory guidance in itself will not establish a good ethical climate. If leaders are perceived as unethical or lacking good ethical behavior, their subordinates may be unwilling to follow them. Leaders must be credible at all times. Without demonstrably ethical leadership, an organization cannot maintain a healthy ethical climate. The ability to influence people's values, ethical behavior and personal

convictions culminates in leadership.²⁷ The Army must create conditions for proper leader attributes to flourish and develop. Effective Army leadership is essential for creating an ethical climate throughout the Army.

LEADERSHIP AND ITS ATTRIBUTES.

Leadership comes from a combination of personal characteristics that give a person the ability to influence a group or individual. The person who speaks up and persuasively communicates an organization's objectives, thus energizing the motivation process, is a leader. Leadership encourages others to do what the leader wants them to do. A good leader must be able to motivate his followers in order for them to put forth their best efforts at all times. Many leaders come by their leadership skills intuitively, but others know that leadership can also be learned.²⁸

Every group has a leader, and with leadership comes power. Formal power is attained when one is elevated to a position of formal leadership. But personal power is demonstrated when a natural leader, despite lacking an official position, nevertheless earns an informal position of influence. If individuals with personal power move to a new position or join a new committee, they will influence the new groups as they formerly influenced other groups.²⁹

In professional life, leadership is about "influencing people by providing purpose, direction, and motivation, while operating to accomplish the mission and improving the organization."³⁰ Former President and retired General of the Army Dwight Eisenhower has said that in order to be leaders, we must have followers. And to have followers, we must have their confidence. This position has been recently supported by the comments made by respondents to a 1989 survey conducted by James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner. They found that leadership is a reciprocal process, confirming Eisenhower's observation. Only followers determine when someone possesses the qualities of leadership. Leadership may be considered to be in the eye of the follower. Kouzes and Posner surveyed over 10,000 managers nationwide from both private and public organizations to determine what they look for and admire in their leaders. A majority of them identified honest, competent, forward-looking, inspiring individuals as leaders. Respondents wanted leaders to demonstrate credible values. Followers are not always fair in their perception of leadership, but a leader without followers simply is not a leader.³¹

Leaders of organizations are acknowledged agents of change in their organizations; without threatening their followers, they exhibit sufficient personal power to introduce new ideas and persuade others to try them. Effective leaders understand their source of power and adopt a leadership style appropriate to the situation and to their followers.³² No real success is

possible, irregardless if the organization is a section, gang, an army, or a corporation, if our followers are not confident in our abilities to lead. A leader's first great need, therefore, is integrity and high purpose. Leaders exude integrity--which means wholeness or completeness--continuity of life in all our actions. Personal ethics, morality, and integrity strongly influence a professional ethical conduct.³³

CIVILIAN LEADERSHIP.

A corporation's values or rules provide a foundation for guiding the behavior of its employees. Those values must be modeled by the corporation's leadership. In every Kouzes and Posner survey, the characteristic *honest* was selected as admirable more often than any other leadership characteristic. In their discussions with respondents, Kouzes and Posner found that it was the leader's behavior that managers judged. In other words, regardless of what leaders say about their integrity, their followers want to be shown. If leaders behave ways consistent with their stated values and beliefs, then followers will entrust such leaders with their careers, their security, and ultimately even their lives. Surveyed respondents said that leaders' behavior provided the telling evidence. In other words, no matter what leaders say about their integrity, followers look at their actions. Followers consider leaders honest only if they do what they say they are going to do.³⁴

Competence was the next most frequently chosen leadership attribute in Kouzes and Posner's survey. To enlist in another's cause, respondents said they must believe that person knows what he or she is doing. They must perceive that person as capable and effective. A capable and effective leader will demonstrate those abilities when performing assigned duties, but leadership competence does not necessarily refer to a leader's technical abilities. Rather, the competence followers look for varies with the leader's position and the condition of the company. For example, people expect strategic planning and policy-making abilities from leaders with higher rank, compared with lower ranking personnel.³⁵

Of many leadership qualities, the one most wanted is *credibility*. Inspiring leaders must possess unquestioned credibility. Followers feel more secure when they believe their leader is credible. However, credibility is extremely fragile. It takes years to earn it, but one instant to lose it. It can be lost with one false step, one thoughtless remark, one inconsistent act, one broken agreement, and with one lie or cover-up.³⁶

The third most sought after leadership trait selected in Kouzes and Posner's survey was *forward-looking*. Leaders are expected to have a sense of direction and a true concern for the future of their company. At times the terms "vision" and "dream" are used to refer to this sense

of direction as a calling or personal agenda. Whatever the term, it is very clear that true leaders must know where they are going.³⁷

Two other surveys were conducted by Kouzes and Posner with top executives that reinforced the importance of clarity of purpose and direction. In the first study, 284 senior executives rated developing a strategic plan and forecasting capability as the most critical concern. Senior managers selected a leadership style of honesty and integrity, followed by a long-term vision and direction for the company as the single most important characteristics a Company Executive Officer can possess.

Those surveyed also indicated they expected their leaders to be enthusiastic, energetic, and positive about the future--a bit like cheerleaders. A leader cannot just have dreams about the future. Leaders must be able to communicate their visions effectively to encourage followers to sign on for the long haul. Finally, according to Kouzes and Posner, leaders are pioneers--people who seek out new opportunities and are willing to change the status quo. They constantly explore ways and devise experiences to improve their organizations. Mistakes are treated as learning experiences and leaders are prepared to meet all challenges faced.³⁸ The Army values are more effective when constant changes are prohibited.

Whereas in past decades the Army values underwent four major revisions and senior noncommissioned officers became unhappy with their officer leadership, Wal-Mart has not altered their values. Their employees and customers are satisfied. Wal-Mart encourages feedback; Wal-Mart employees are trained to listen carefully to customers; Wal-Mart managers are trained to listen carefully to their subordinate. This has made Wal-Mart the number one retailer in the world. Wal-Mart sets the standard for all successful organizations. Likewise, leaders must ensure all soldiers internalize established military values. An effective ethical climate in an organization plays a major role in the success of the organization. Military leaders have a mandate to establish a strong ethical culture in their organization.³⁹

It is appropriate to look at Wal-Mart, the largest retailer in the world, to see how this successful organization encourages its employees to observe organizational values by means of ten Wal-Mart rules. Sam W. Walton, founder and chairman of Wal-Mart Stores, Incorporated, provides an excellent example of trustworthiness and "anteing up first" in leadership. In 1983, Walton was rated the richest man in the United States by Forbes Magazine. Walton bet his employees that if they achieved a greater profit than during the previous year, he would wear a hula skirt and hula down Wall Street. They did. And he did. He kept his word and did what he said he would do. This demonstrated a lot of integrity, although it meant public embarrassment.

If he had not kept his word, he would have lost credibility with his employees. Sam Walton's ten rules for a successful business are:

- *Commit to your business.* Believe in it more than anybody else.
- *Control expenses better than your competition.* This is where one can always find the competitive.
- *Swim upstream.* Go the other way. Ignore the conventional wisdom.
- *Exceed customers' expectations.* If you do, customers will come back over and over again.
- *Motivate your partners.* Money and ownership alone are not enough.
- *Communicate everything one possibly can to partners.* The more they know, the more they will understand.
- *Listen to everyone in your company* and figure out ways to get them talking.
- *Appreciate everything your associates do for the business.* A paycheck and a stock option will buy only one kind of loyalty.
- *Celebrate successes. Find some humor in failure.* Don't take yourself so seriously. Loosen up, and everybody else will loosen up.
- *Share your profits with all your associates, and treat them as partners.*⁴⁰

Wal-Mart does not have a mission statement, but its leadership believes providing top-quality products at low prices and offering excellent customer service are extremely important in maintaining a successful business. On 8 Oct 1999, Wal-Mart was awarded an once-in-a-lifetime recognition when it received the Retailer of the Century award from the Discount Store News (DSN). J. Roger Friedman, President of Lebhar-Friedman, said Wal-Mart won the award not because of its size, its profits or growth record; rather Wal-Mart was selected because, among of all worldwide companies, Wal-Mart cared most about the individual, whether that individual works for Wal-Mart or is a customer.⁴¹ Wal-Mart was honored by ranking number three in Fortune Magazine's annual list of "America's Most Admired Companies" in 2001. Wal-Mart has been ranked in Fortune Magazine's top ten for the last 20 years. Fortune Magazine selects their top companies by asking 10,000 executives, directors and security analysts to select ten companies they admired most.⁴² Wal-Mart encourages and listens to input from their customers and employees. Their unchanged rules give clear and specific guidance for building a successful organization.

ARMY LEADERSHIP.

Leadership is considered the life blood of The Army. Confident and competent leadership unites the other elements of combat power and serves as the catalyst that creates conditions for success. While interpersonal, conceptual, technical, and tactical skills provide what a leader must *know*, soldiers must also earn the trust of peers, subordinates, and superiors, and give that trust back in return. Sound judgment is always a requirement of leadership. Army leadership begins with what the leader must BE, the values and attributes that shape a leader's character.⁴³

As stated in Army Field Manual 22-103, *Leadership and Command at Senior Levels*, a firm ethical base is the cornerstone of the Army. Senior leaders have the responsibility to ensure that they are worthy role models; they must promote the ethical development of their subordinates by teaching them how to reason clearly about ethical matters.⁴⁴

The Army is all about people. Generally Army people are really good. It does not make any difference where they come from. Former General of the Army, Omar N. Bradley observed, "The American soldier is a proud one and he demands professional competence in his leaders. In battle, he wants to know that the job is going to be done right, with no unnecessary casualties. The noncommissioned officer wearing the chevron is supposed to be the best soldier in the platoon and he is supposed to know how to perform all the duties expected of him. The American soldier expects his sergeant to be able to teach him how to do his job and he expects even more from his officers."⁴⁵

The Army must create conditions for leadership attributes to flourish and develop. It is apparent that our senior noncommissioned officers are not satisfied with their officer leadership. Leaders--whether they are officers or enlisted soldiers or civilians who are unwilling to listen to their subordinates, who are disloyal, who fail to display established values and ethical conduct, and who are preoccupied with personal success are a detriment to their unit.

WHEN LEADERS FAIL.

According to Lieutenant Colonel Thomas W. Baker, who conducted a survey on Army Leadership in 1988, teamwork and loyalty are necessary for any unit to accomplish its assigned missions. His survey found that successful officers must receive the wholehearted support and cooperation of their soldiers. Loyalty must be exercised up and down the chain of command. It found loyalty to subordinates is an essential component of team--building and unit cohesion. A leader must look for ways to demonstrate loyalty. Yet less than 6 percent of the respondents surveyed felt officers are loyal to enlisted soldiers, while 62 percent felt officers were only

slightly loyal to enlisted soldiers, and more than 74 percent of the Combat Service Support NCO's felt officers were not very loyal to enlisted soldiers.⁴⁶

Leaders must create and sustain a leadership climate in which people will learn that mistakes can lead to positive experience, thereby encouraging subordinates to develop to their full potential. Baker surveyed 141 students of the class of 1988 at the Sergeants Major Academy at Fort Bliss, Texas, fewer than 8 percent of them felt officers were worthy role models for junior NCO's. Sixty-Eight percent of the Combat Service Support NCO's felt officers were not worthy role models. Over 50 percent of the respondents felt officers, to a great extent, seldom admit mistakes. A leader must be loyal to his people and willing to stand up to superiors on their behalf. Less than 8 percent of the respondents felt officers would be willing to confront superiors on their behalf. The least positive responses were from Combat Service Support NCO's. Seventy-two percent of them felt that officers could not be counted on.⁴⁷ The respondents in Baker's survey were senior NCOs of the Army.

History reveals how unethical leadership behavior can affect an organization. The cost to any organization from individual unethical behavior puts the entire organization in disrepute, exposing it to public humiliation and loss of public trust.

In the past several decades, during which there have been eleven successive Chiefs of Staff of the Army, each has provided his own guidance, directly or indirectly, to those who write field manuals, training circulars, or lesson plans on ethics and leadership. From 1968 to 1998 stated Army values underwent four major revisions, expanding from three to seven in number. During this same time the definition of leadership went from being an art to a process, to an essential element of combat power, and then back to a process.⁴⁸

The Army's Inspector General's office believes there are a number of indicators that leaders should look for in their organizations to determine whether an ethical environment exists. For example, if leaders are using words like "Results are what counts," "Don't tell me how you did it, I don't want to know," or "If you can't do it, I'll get someone who can," then senior leaders need to get involved. Even though these comments do not necessarily mean that leaders are unethical, they create an environment in which unethical behavior may be encouraged. Subordinates want to do the right things and support their senior leaders in accomplishing a required mission, but sometimes there is a conflict. When senior leaders are under stress, their loyalty to subordinates fades. For example, when commanders perceive the need to improve their numbers of soldiers passing their record Army Physical Fitness Test and weight control standards, some subordinate leaders will overlook some regulatory guidance on standards in order for soldiers to pass the event.

In the business world a former Enron Chief Financial Officer, with a MBA from the Kellogg School, was charged with fraud, money laundering, and conspiracy in a criminal complaint in Houston. This led to the downfall of Enron, which was once, thought to be a very successful major corporation. Alexei Marcous, who teaches ethics at Chicago's Loyola University says "we may place blame on the bad character of top Enron executives, or we could look at how the company's institutions, compensation methods determined the values of Enron executives, while the shareholders shared other values."⁴⁹

In another event, an Oregon federal jury concluded that Wal-Mart managers violated state and federal wage laws by forcing employees to work overtime without pay. A spokesman for Wal-Mart, responded that Wal-Mart policy would pay all employees for any hours worked and comply with any federal and state regulations regarding worker compensation. But a former Wal-Mart store personnel manager testified she docked overtime hours from workers' paychecks at the direction of her supervisors and required employees to work more than 40 hours a week without additional pay.⁵⁰ Even an exemplary organization has lapses. But Wal-Mart was quick to admit its errors and to set things straight.

The military deals in life and death, while businesses deal only with monetary success and failures. Military personnel are and must be, held to a higher standard of values than business personnel. In 1968 in Viet Nam, Lieutenant William Calley allowed the My Lai Massacre to take place. Five hundred unarmed civilians--old men, women and children--were killed. The massacre occurred during a combat operation which was intended to neutralize Son My Village as a logistical support base and staging area and to destroy elements of an enemy battalion thought to be located in the Son My area. An officer issuing unethical orders to persons in the chain of command within the company was primarily the cause of the massacre. A cover-up of that massacre ensued by a number of assigned persons who knew of the killing of noncombatants and other serious offenses committed by members during the Son My operation in March 1968, but failed to make an official report.⁵¹

In response to the My Lai massacre in 1968, the Chief of Staff of the Army retired General William Westmoreland in November 1969 directed the Commandant of the US Army War College, Major General George S. Eckhardt, to conduct a thorough review of the ethical climate in the Army and to provide an analysis leading to prompt and corrective action. The conclusion of the study was that the Army exerted untoward and unhealthy pressures to strive for success on the part of officers. It also concluded that systems that regulated the selection, education, promotion, and reward of Army officers needed a major correction.⁵²

Doug Linder's article on the My Lai Courts Martial states LT Calley's utter lack of respect for the indigenous population was apparent to all in his company. One soldier said if they wanted to do something wrong, it was all right with LT Calley. Soldiers systematically beat unarmed civilians and some civilians were murdered. This is an excellent example of how a leader's actions have a negative impact on his or her organization and the Army. It also clearly indicates the importance of establishing value-based organizations that reward good ethical behavior and select effective ethical leaders.⁵³

RECOMMENDATIONS.

Military leaders have a mandate to establish a strong ethical culture in their organization; they must ensure all soldiers observe established military values. Our leaders are doing well in many areas by creating positive ethical climates in their units and ensuring all subordinate leaders continue learning those leadership attributes.

Whenever soldiers feel that their superiors are fair and impartial, they will give everything that they have toward accomplishing a mission. To inspire subordinates to strive toward ethical perfection, senior leaders must ensure all subordinates place more emphasis on their values on and off duty. Words are not enough; leaders' behavior makes a real difference.

Leaders must do a better job ensuring subordinate leaders treat all soldiers with respect and must ensure all subordinate leaders learn that respect is earned through fairness. Subordinates may not appreciate all decisions, but they will respect them.

More emphasis at the highest levels must be placed on continued teaching of ethics and the importance of adhering to military values. Senior raters must address those values that their rated soldiers need to improve on during mandatory counseling sessions. All senior raters must strictly enforce established regulatory guidance in regard to counseling soldiers. Senior leaders must require all subordinate leaders to develop actions to put their organization's values into practice.

More emphasis must be placed on leaders' receptivity to feedback. Senior raters must emphasize over and over again to subordinate leaders that soldiers must not be punished for being frank and honest when they point out a leader's shortcomings, when something is not going to work or could be better accomplished another way.

All leaders, both officers and enlisted, must do a better job encouraging feedback and effective listening to their soldiers' concerns and ideas. Leaders must trust and rely on subordinates to stimulate organizational and individual growth in improving ethical behavior and

leadership skills. Soldiers must be given the freedom to do their jobs effectively and be allowed reasonable latitude for taking risks and making mistakes.

Finally, leaders must reward soldiers for ethical behavior by clearly specifying what is ethical and what is not, by establishing a sense of ethical purpose, and by demonstrating ethical behavior. Leaders must always exhibit military values and must ensure their soldiers understand those values so they can always do the right things in difficult or stressful peacetime or wartime situations.

SUMMARY.

Some leaders take honesty for granted in the Army. Our leaders and followers are expected to be honest. If subordinates suspect their leaders are not honest, they lose their credibility and subordinates are not as likely to execute their leaders' vision. President Wilson advised, "You cannot indulge yourselves in weakness...You cannot forget your duty for a single moment because there might be a time when that weak spot in you should affect you in the midst of a great engagement; and then the whole history of the world might be changed by what you did not do or did wrong. And so, you see, the stakes are enormous."⁵⁴ Personal candor and constructive criticism, honestly and wisely considered, will make military leaders and soldiers stronger.

Our military is part of American society, and wholly accountable to the American people. We owe it to them to adhere to the highest values. The American people hold the military to a higher standard. Soldiers make commitments and accept missions that are not entrusted to others. Our military values assure that we keep these commitments and carry out the most difficult missions. These values can be instilled and maintained only by leaders who live them and share them throughout their organizations.

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