12 Foundations of Values-based Leadership for Sustainability

UNICON’s Team Development Conference 2022

Based on a talk by Daniel Skarlicki, Edgar F. Kaiser Professor of Organizational Behaviour at the University of British Columbia’s Sauder School of Business
The median tenure of CEOs among the world’s largest companies is just five years. With many more struggling after just 18 months. Why?
"This is the flip side of giftedness that causes a great many talented, hardworking, and capable leaders to believe that they don't deserve their success."

Manfred F.R. Kets de Vries
The go-to solution for those suffering from imposter syndrome is to attempt to emulate others - to wear a ‘mask’ or project a fabricated version of yourself. While this may offer a short-term confidence boost its fundamental inauthenticity soon sees the leader at a disadvantage.
“We are strongest when we are grounded in our values.”

Professor Skarlicki
What I think I should do
What I think you should do
VALUES
12 Foundations of Values-Based Leadership
Values don't change from day to day - but do evolve over a lifetime
Values underlie our self-definition and sense of identity
Values are motivational for ourselves and others
Values regulate our behaviour and link closely with our emotions
Deferring to our values saves time and energy. In this way a leader can reach the end of the day ‘with gas left in the tank.’
Values must be articulated out loud and given vocabulary to manifest
Some examples of personal values

Adaptability, Altruism, Courage, Family,
Dependability, Flexibility, Generosity,
Growth, Humility, Improvement, Inclusivity,
Independence, Integrity, Learning,
Open-mindedness, Respect, Supportiveness,
Sustainability, Truthfulness
Values come from:

- Family
- Religion
- Colleagues
- Culture
- Mentors
- Friends
- Life experiences
- Sports teams
- Art
- Teachers
"I have two kinds of problems: the urgent and the important. The urgent are not important, and the important are never urgent."

President Dwight D. Eisenhower
"When the immediate takes precedent over the important – is when we lose sight of our values. We become reactive, fighting from one fire to the next."

Professor Skarlicki
Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?

That depends a good deal on where you want to get to.

I don’t much care where.

Then it doesn't much matter which way you go.
Values are more important at work than ever

84% of employees feel it’s ‘very important’ or ‘important’ for them to work for an organization that positively impacts society.

Source: EY
“Sometimes you have to play a long time to be able to play like yourself.”

Miles Davis
Define your personal values

Speak with your team.

Create a safe space to talk about values.

Include other stakeholders in the conversation.
Formalize your values

01. Review your regular tasks, programs and approaches – do they align with your values?

02. Audit your business school or department's processes, do these align with your values and sense of purpose?
For leaders in executive education, aligning our work with personal values, can be a powerful behavioural change driver for positive societal impact.

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