Web Exercises

# Chapter 12: Addressing Ethics in Leadership

## Altruism and Leadership

Ask students to find and read the article “Is Pure Altruism Possible?” by Judith Lichtenberg (October 19, 2010) in the *New York Times* (<http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com>). The article explains the different motivations for altruism using current events as examples. The article generated some reader posts in response, which can also be assigned for students to read. Class discussion should center on whether altruism is desirable and, if so, how to increase altruism in the world. How is altruism related to leadership?

## Why the World Needs Wikileaks

Ask students to watch an interview with Julian Assange on the ethics of leaking classified information at *TED talks* (<http://www.ted.com/talks>). Have them reflect on the following questions, in writing or in small group discussions:

* What is Assange’s primary purpose in releasing classified documents?
* What types of information might organizations try to conceal?
* What are legitimate secrets?
* What are Assange’s self-identified core values?
* Is Assange a villain or a hero?
* In what ways is Assange a leader?

## The Tragic Gaps

Ask students to listen to the podcast by Parker Palmer on “The Tragic Gaps” at the Center for Courage and Renewal website (<http://www.couragerenewal.org>), which takes about 7 minutes. In class, discuss: What is the tragic gap for leaders? How do hearts break open? What are circles of trust and do the students have them?

## Personal Leadership Goals

Ask students to develop and write down a set of leadership goals for themselves (or review ones they already have) using the website examples as inspiration. The goals should address at least three of the six factors related to ethical leadership (e.g. character, actions, power). (<http://gradcourses.rio.edu/leadersis/leadership_goals.htm>)

## Exit, Voice and Loyalty

In 1970 Albert Hirschman wrote a compelling book that examines the alternatives available to us in light of misbehavior on the part of organizations. Each of these three options (exit, voice, and loyalty) has consequences and may or may not affect the organization as intended. Have students research Hirschman’s ideas on the Internet and consider their applications in addressing ethical dilemmas in organizational settings. Potential resources include the following webpages:

* Wikipedia – “Exit, Voice and Loyalty” (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Exit,_Voice,_and_Loyalty>)
* The Social Contract

(<http://www.thesocialcontract.com/pdf/four-four/hirschma.pdf>)

* “The Astonishing Voice of Albert Herschman” (<http://rajivsethi.blogspot.com/2010/04/astonishing-voice-of-albert-hirschman.html>)
* Wall Street Journal – “To Squawk or to Go?” (<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887323869604578370743034963414.html>)

## Whistleblowers

These individuals bring to light corruption and ethical failures, often at great personal cost. Have students research famous examples of whistleblowing and consider the following questions:

* What prompted the individual to “blow the whistle?”
* Did they accomplish what they hoped in doing this?
* How did the public revelation change the lives of the whistleblowers?
* Do you think they would do it again if faced with the same circumstances?
* What would you do in a similar situation?

## City Year

City Year is a national service program run by AmeriCorps, that “partner[s] with most-at-risk schools to help bridge the gap between what their students need and what the schools are designed to provide. In so doing we’re helping students reach their full potential and graduate high school in communities across America” ([www.cityyear.org](http://www.cityyear.org)). Programs are located in 28 U.S. cities, and employ recent high school and college graduates for a gap-year experience working with under-prepared and under-resourced youth.

1. Have students visit the CY website and read blog posts by City Year volunteers about ethical issues related to poverty and education inequality. Some options:

11/21/16 – Alexis Hyczko

10/31/16 - Christopher Love

4/11/16 - Colleen Morgan

5/19/15 – Kris Bryson

3/26/16 – Andrew Dwyer

1. What character traits are the service workers developing in themselves and their mentees?
2. What morally appropriate actions are the service workers demonstrating?
3. What are their goals, and challenges in meeting those goals?
4. What questions would you ask them if they came to YOUR class?
5. Have students read the City Year Pledge. What stands out for them in this pledge? What does it take to make and keep such a pledge? How do verbalized commitments, like a pledge, support a person’s values and social identity?
6. The City Year mantra is “Make Better Happen.” Have students look up links on the website that tell stories of how the CY workers are making a difference in students’ lives.
7. Show the video, City Year – A Day in the Life – in class (11 minutes):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kdt07yf-8Rk>

Discuss:

1. People’s different reasons for wanting to serve the community;
2. What people’s uncertainties are about their work and impact;
3. What the challenges are that they face;
4. Why it’s important to them to give a year of service to their country; and
5. How they come to view education inequality.

## Fact Check

During the 2016 presidential campaign, fact-checking became a popular practice. Have students periodically visit sites such as factcheck.org, Politifact, or the Washington Post’s Fact Checker, to check out the truthfulness of politicians’ statements and report back to class. Discuss how much a politician’s factual accuracy matters to the average citizen. Have students found any examples of false statements negatively impacting a politician’s favorability ratings? Is there a threshold for accuracy? Can one be 51% accurate or truthful and still be considered “honest”? Poll the class. Our textbook says, “More than any other quality, people want their leaders to be honest.” Do students agree? What are some examples of lying, misrepresentation, half-truths, lack of candor, and other less-than-fully-honest speech?