

**Explain personal and organizational ethics (Personal & Organizational Ethics)**

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Personal ethics are developed over time and as you grow and change. I grew up in a survival environment where ethics was not a priority for most people. I have always believed that ethics are an extension of your conscience and moral behavior and because of that we learn and change through personal experiences (Sheppard, 2018). Memphis, Tennessee, has some rough parts, and I grew up on some of the meanest streets in the city. We learned that if you didn't lock it up, you would risk getting stolen, sometimes even if you did properly secure your items. This is exactly how I developed my personal code of ethics, derived from the environment I grew up in, which played a significant role in shaping my current identity. After high school and college, I worked on understanding company and group dynamics, and my views changed as more leadership opportunities became available. There is a correlation between ethics and your moral compass and how we interact with the rest of the world (*Moral Compass: Definition and How to Find Yours*, 2022). Learning to be an ethical leader is a process that requires growth and change and the development of ethical principles. Some examples are utilitarianism, doing what is right despite the consequences, as well as balancing freedom and equality (Johnson, 2018). When faced with a decision that could impact others, I strive to guarantee the optimal result for all parties concerned. While I understand the desire to accommodate everyone, there are occasions when it is simply not feasible. In such cases, I must make a judgment prioritizing the overall benefit.

Upon entering the workforce, I was still learning what was correct, and after joining the army and adopting the army values, I changed my moral compass. I have learned that there is a balancing act to maintain ethical leadership, ethical dilemmas during conflict, the law of armed

conflict, military codes of conduct, and war theory. The law of armed conflict is known as international humanitarian law (Kar, n.d.). We have violated this in the past, and the backlash was swift; it was the mistreatment of Iraqi prisoners at Abu Ghraib. The mistreatment was a setback for the United States and severely hurt our operations. We have military codes to keep non-combatants and citizens safe from unprovoked attacks and, therefore, bring a small slice of humanity during conflict. War theory and ethical leadership are critical when leading soldiers into a fight because they create a buffer and gain constituents' support. Ethics is crucial, especially during a time when cameras are everywhere. As a combat force with numbers and weapons, once the public loses trust in your ability to serve with fairness, it becomes harder to do the job. We saw what happened to the police in 2020; they lost the people's trust, and their ethical practices came under fire.

As a military leader, I want to maximize my team's performance and motivate them to move purposefully. I use ethics to define the environment, set expectations for success, and instill discipline. A military squad comprises many individuals who must come together to complete their mission. To ensure a cohesive message, we nest our themes and messages into one voice from the top down. This has become a way of life, and it is why my personal ethics and the ethical beliefs of my organization are so closely related. Also, as Army Officers, we are held to a higher standard than the lawmakers we work for. It is frustrating to watch our Congressmen and Representatives having DUIs, martial indiscretions, and drug offenses but are still able to keep their positions and jobs. If we do any of these, we will be removed and barred from future government employment due to dishonorable discharge. Regardless, I ensure to set the standard of arriving early, staying until the job is done, and ensuring that my team has buy-in to complete the mission ethically. I must be the model for my team to follow. Of the seven

leadership principles, I believe modeling the way is influenced by ethical behavior and principles. Actions that an effective and ethical leader should take require clear guiding principles when modeling the way for your team (Kouzes & Posner, 2017).

As a senior leader, it is paramount that we create an ethical environment and set the conditions for others to follow. As our values align globally, the realization of holistic leadership and ethics will continue to build on values-based leadership to create a more connected ethical culture (Kar, n.d.). A scandal during your leadership tenure, plagiarism, and abuses of power can and will destroy your leadership legacy. You could discover a cure for cancer but have your reputation marred due to ethical issues. We work hard not to be associated with names like Madoff, Epstein, and Enron, but one mistake can wipe away your entire legacy. Remembering your moral compass, building a culture of integrity, and aligning your personal and organizational ethics are vital to creating a solid foundation for ethical decision-making.

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