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Cultural Values and Personal Ethics
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In a 2003 study published in the Journal of Business Ethics respondents from 3 separate countries listed “Greed and Desire for Personal gain” and “Lack of personal Integrity” at or near the top of their list as factors influencing unethical decisions? One of the results of the study was that business manager’s general attitudes toward personal ethics are related to their personal integrity (Christie, 2003). Other studies have concluded that personal values did not have a significant influence on the importance of corporate social responsibilities. The level of economic development of the culture was attributed as the major contributing factor (Egri, 2004). I would agree that the cultural advantages of living in a wealthy nation has afforded me more luxury, then those born in a third world nation and has had an impact on the values and ethics I have formed. I would dispute that economical impact is a bigger influence on responsibility then values and ethics. I believe that values and ethics are rules or a code that one lives by and contributes to the decisions one makes on a conscious and subconscious level. The major professional and personal decisions one makes in life are influenced my individual personal ethics.

For a variety of reasons people with ethics sometimes do unethical things, which can lead to emotional stress. My personal ethics and values are routinely used in my day-to-day decisions making, and when I make decisions that go against my values or ethics that decision haunts me beyond belief. Outside factors can even cause one to modify his or her values and/or develop new ones. Over the course of a 80 year life span I would not think it uncommon for anyone to have two to three changes in the way he or she live his or her lives. “Ethics is a function of time and cultures. As time passes, cultures evolve and individuals in these cultures develop different perspectives on behaviors values and moral positions” (Svensson, 2003).

My values and ethics are founded in my parental up bring and southern Baptist religious teachings. I was raised in a large family and we were taught to always stand together regardless of the circumstance. You do not have to always agree with a family member or even like what they say or do but we love and support each other in all aspects of life. This does not mean to sit silent as one commits err, but just the opposite. If you truly care for someone you are obligated to confront that person and acknowledge bad behavior and assist with corrective measures.

Although I am not active in the church anymore, I have found throughout my life that I fall back on my spiritual teaching in time of crisis. The spiritual lessons I learned keep me grounded in life and are a large part of the moral fiber that guides me. Because of the cultural diversity that exist in today’s work environment I keep my religious belief personal and do not attempt to force my beliefs on others or show contempt for difference views or opinions. When making decisions that require spiritual motivation, sympathy, or empathy I will use my spiritual values to help me



make that decision. If an employee or coworker suffers an enormous personal loss or crisis like a death or illness, I will use these values to convey words of comfort.

When making decisions about job tasks I generally feel that "I would not ask someone to do something, I would not be willing to do". In judging others I hold my own work ethic up as the standard. I am not exactly sure how I formed such a strong work ethic. I have been working since I was 13 years old maybe it's just habit. Could it be watching my Father go to work daily, no matter what? Could it be being born in poverty and climbing my way out? Maybe it is all the military training and experience, I am not sure. Most likely the work ethic I have formed is a combination of all my life experiences. One thing I am sure of is that I have a strong desire to be successful in my professional career. I have not always had jobs I enjoyed but since age 24 I have been focused on not being average at any job I do.

In every job I have had I have always enjoyed working in teams. This I attribute to my strong family values. A close family functions much like a team. Families and teams attributes include caring for others, contributing to the team, sacrificing for the team, shared goals and objectives and dealing with team conflict. These are some of the core values that affect my decision-making in my professional life. When I have to terminate an employee I often reflect on how the decision I make will impact the personal life of the team members. I try not to let the answer to the previous question cloud my judgment, and make the decision that is best for the organization. I prefer a casual, people-oriented management style to the strict standoff autocratic approach. I am definitely a people person and I enjoy giving personal and professional advice to anyone who solicits my help. I see this behavior as a result of the family values I have grown to embrace.

My personal values and ethics have influenced my decision-making in the past and I expect that they will always be an integral part of what I say and do. I do not necessarily see this as a negative trait for I believe that most everyone has some form of code that he or she lives by that plays a major role in their interactions within society.

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