

ethikos Volume 35, Number 1. January 01, 2021 Charting a new path: Setting your moral compass

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Our business culture tends to shy away from using the term “moral,” yet the research shows that the development of moral leadership is quickly becoming nonnegotiable in business.^[1]

The challenge is to create and instill a corporate culture where acting morally and ethically is the norm. Morally aware people will be attracted to these types of values-based, principle-driven companies. The morally unaware will be the minority.

In “The State of Moral Leadership in Business 2020,” the HOW Institute for Society found that people who have leaders who consistently exhibit moral leadership are five times more likely to report satisfied customers, seven times more likely to expect better business results in the coming year, and 13 times more likely to see their company as being adaptable to change.^[2]

The same study goes on to report:

- “Moral leadership is in high demand but short supply.”
- “CEO activism does not equal moral leadership.”
- “Moral leaders create conditions for others to excel.”
- “Moral leadership filters down into team behavior.”

I started to ask myself with this new challenge in moral thinking, where does one go for this focused training given the statistics for its need to be addressed?

James Rest, an American psychologist specializing in moral psychology, developed the four-component model of morality:^[3]

1. Moral sensitivity: Before taking moral action, one must be able to spot ethical issues.
2. Moral judgment: Once an ethical problem is recognized, one must decide what the correct course of action is.
3. Moral motivation: When one has decided how to make an ethical decision, two questions remain: Why do the right thing? How do you get yourself to do it?
4. Moral character and action: One must “have sufficient ego, strength and implementation skills” to implement the ethical decision they made.

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