

CRAIG E. JOHNSON

7<sup>th</sup> EDITION

*Meeting the*  
**ETHICAL  
CHALLENGES**  
*of* **LEADERSHIP**

*Casting Light or Shadow*



# Meeting the Ethical Challenges of Leadership

Seventh Edition

*To my students*

# Meeting the Ethical Challenges of Leadership

## Casting Light or Shadow

Seventh Edition

**Craig E. Johnson**

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# Preface

**Y**ou have chosen a critical moment to study ethical leadership. That's because the need for ethical leaders seems greater than ever with the constant drumbeat of White House and business scandals; the rise of authoritarianism in Poland, Hungary, China, Brazil, Poland, and the Philippines; and the displacement of over 65 million people around the world (an all-time high) through violence, war, and persecution. Fortunately, you have a rapidly growing body of knowledge to draw from in your efforts to become a more ethical leader and follower. Academic interest in the topic is greater than ever, generating a constant stream of new books, articles, and research studies as well as the creation of new leadership ethics units and courses. We are learning much more about the factors that make up ethical (and unethical) leadership, how leaders make moral choices, how leaders create ethical groups and organizations, how leaders can behave more ethically in a global society, and so on.

This edition of *Meeting the Ethical Challenges of Leadership* incorporates the latest developments in the field but, like previous versions, is guided by seven principles. First, there are few topics as important as leadership ethics. To highlight that fact, I've adopted Parker Palmer's metaphor of light and shadow as the book's central metaphor. Palmer reminds us that leaders have the power to do significant benefit or substantial harm. In extreme cases, leaders literally make the difference between life and death for their followers.

Second, we need to recognize the reality of bad leadership. Understanding why and how leaders cast shadows can help us prevent destructive behaviors and promote positive leadership. At the same time, we can also learn a great deal from the example of good leaders. Models of ethical and unethical leadership are found throughout the text.

Third, there are important ethical demands associated with the leadership role. Those who want to serve as leaders have a responsibility to exercise their authority on behalf of others. There are also ethical challenges associated with the follower role.

Fourth, the study of leadership ethics must draw from a wide variety of academic disciplines and traditions. Philosophers have been interested in the moral behavior of leaders for centuries. In the modern era, they have been joined by social scientists, resulting in significant advances in our understanding of moral and immoral leadership. This multidisciplinary approach introduces readers to (1) how moral decisions are made (what scholars describe as the descriptive perspective on ethics), and (2) how to lead in a moral manner (the prescriptive or normative perspective).

Fifth, both theory and practice are essential to learning. I try to balance presentation of important concepts and research findings with opportunities for application through self-assessments, case analyses, and exploration exercises.

Sixth, important insights come from multiple perspectives. I encourage you and apply a variety of theories and concepts. For example, when faced with an ethical dilemma, employ several ethical theories and decision-making formats to the problem. Consider what each normative leadership theory can contribute to your understanding and practice of ethical leadership.

Seventh, improvement is the bottom line. The ultimate goal of teaching and writing about ethics is to produce more ethical leaders. I believe that ethical development is part

of leadership (and followership) development. Leaders and followers can develop their ability to make and carry through on their moral decisions, just as they develop their other competencies. *Meeting the Ethical Challenges of Leadership* is designed to help students build their ethical expertise through theoretical understanding, skill development, case and film analysis, group and class discussions, personal assessment and reflection, research projects, and writing assignments.

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## KEY FEATURES

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### Examples and Case Studies

Whatever their specific contexts, leaders face similar kinds of ethical choices. For that reason, I draw examples from a wide variety of settings: business, medicine, sports, law enforcement, education, government, nonprofit organizations, and the military. Cases continue to play an important role in this edition. Discussion probes at the end of each case encourage readers to reflect on key ethics issues and concepts and to apply what they have learned from that chapter to these narratives.

### Self-Assessments

The self-assessments are designed to help readers measure their performance with respect to important behaviors, skills, or concepts discussed in the chapters. Two self-assessments are found at the end of each chapter.

### Focus on Follower Ethics

This feature addresses the ethical challenges facing followers. Followers are critical to the success of any enterprise. The “Focus on Follower Ethics” box in each chapter helps students recognize and master the ethical demands of the follower role.

### Implications and Applications

This section, found immediately after the body of each chapter, reviews key ideas and their ramifications for readers.

### For Further Exploration, Challenge, and Self-Assessment

This feature encourages interaction with chapter content. Activities include brainstorming exercises, small-group discussions, conversational dyads, debates, self-analysis, personal reflection, and application and research projects.

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## WHAT’S NEW TO THIS EDITION?

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Three quarters of the case studies from previous editions have been replaced. Some of the new cases in this edition involve Harvey Weinstein, the McKinsey Company, Scott

Pruitt, Dian Fossey, the Rohingya refugee crisis, Disney, global bribery, fraternity hazing, Mr. Rogers, the Parkland teens, the Thailand cave rescue, Nike, the Koch brothers, Starbucks, Chinese/African cultural tensions, Hurricane Maria, and leadership in Antarctica. Cases based on real-life events, held over from the sixth edition, have been updated. There are new self-assessments related to narcissism, grit, spirit at work, benevolent leadership, moral attentiveness, team emotional intelligence, inclusion, and personal resilience.

Here is a detailed breakdown of new/revised/expanded coverage in this edition:

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#### Chapter 1 The Leader's Light or Shadow

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Leadership by terror  
Cases: Harvey Weinstein  
3D guns  
EPA director Scott Pruitt

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#### Chapter 2 Stepping In and Out of the Shadows

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Dark side personality traits  
Unmet needs  
Follower moral disengagement  
Toxic triangle  
Cases: McKinsey Company in South Africa  
Recreational center  
NASA product branding  
*Self-Assessment*: Narcissistic Leader Scale

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#### Chapter 3 The Leader's Character

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Grit  
Character vices  
Schein's career anchors  
Cases: Character through hardship  
Dian Fossey  
Humble tech leaders

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#### Chapter 4 Combating Evil

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Evil as idealism  
Evil as ordinary  
Active bystanders  
Cases: Philippine death squads  
Rohingya refugee crisis  
*Self-Assessment*: Spirit at Work Scale

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#### Chapter 5 Ethical Perspectives

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Altruism  
Toxin handlers  
Cases: International bribery  
Tax transparency  
Mama Daktari

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## Chapter 6 Ethical Decision Making and Behavior

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Dual process decision making  
Moral attentiveness  
Four-Way Decision Method  
Five Timeless Questions  
Cases: Mortgage refinancing  
    School name change  
    Justice vs. ICE  
*Self-Assessment: Moral Attentiveness Scale*

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## Chapter 7 Exercising Ethical Influence

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Framing  
Moral symbols  
Negotiation  
Cases: Disney labor negotiations  
    Fraternity and sorority hazing

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## Chapter 8 Normative Leadership Theories

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Benevolent leadership  
Ethical leadership theory  
Self-sacrifice  
Cases: Mr. Rogers  
    Parkland teens  
*Self-Assessments: Benevolent Leadership Scale*  
    Ethical Leadership Scale (moved from Introduction)

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## Chapter 9 Building an Ethical Small Group

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Self-leadership  
The five dysfunctions of a team  
Group ethical voice  
Polythink  
Collaborative/integrative leadership  
Cases: Thai soccer team rescue  
*Self-Assessment: Team Emotional Intelligence Scale*

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## Chapter 10 Creating an Ethical, Inclusive Organizational Climate

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Inclusion  
Microaggressions  
Employee silence  
CEO activism  
Organizational stories  
Cases: Sexual harassment at Nike  
    Koch brothers on college campuses  
    Starbucks bias training  
*Self-Assessment: Climate for Inclusion-Exclusion Scale*

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## Chapter 11 Meeting the Ethical Challenges of Leadership in a Global Society

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The high costs of globalization  
World Values Survey  
Ethical upward influence across cultures  
A Global Ethic  
Metaethics Lens  
Cases: China in Africa  
    Female circumcision  
    Ethical diversity scenarios: Epidemic, petty theft policy, subcontractor workload

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## Chapter 12 Ethical Crisis Leadership

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First class noticers  
Heroic action  
Crisis Leadership Scorecard  
Building moral resilience  
Dealing with death  
Cases: Duck boat tragedy  
    Chef Andres and Hurricane Maria  
    Polar leadership  
*Self-Assessment: Resilience Scale*

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## DIGITAL RESOURCES

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### SAGE edge for Instructors

A password-protected instructor resource site at [www.edge.sagepub.com/johnsonmecl7e](http://www.edge.sagepub.com/johnsonmecl7e) supports teaching with high-quality content to help in creating a rich learning environment for students. The SAGE edge site for this book includes the following instructor resources:

- **Instructor's Manual** offers the author's insights on how to use this book most effectively in a course on leadership ethics.
- **Test banks** built on AACSB standards, the book's learning objectives, and Bloom's Taxonomy provide a diverse range of test items.
- **PowerPoint slides** capture key concepts and terms for each chapter for use in lectures and review.
- **Case Notes** designed to help instructors expand questions to students or initiate class discussion include a brief summary of each case and sample answers to case questions.

- **Leadership ethics at the movies cases** introduce films and documentaries that illustrate chapter principles and include questions to prompt discussion.
- **Course syllabi** provide suggested models for instructors to use when creating the syllabi for their courses.
- **SAGE journal articles** give access to full journal articles that instructors can use as further teaching tools in class.

### **SAGE edge for Students**

An open-access student study site can be found at [www.edge.sagepub.com/johnsonmecl7e](http://www.edge.sagepub.com/johnsonmecl7e). The site offers **learning from SAGE journal articles**, with access to recent, relevant, full-text articles from SAGE's leading research journals. Each article supports and expands on the concepts presented in the book. This feature also provides discussion questions to focus and guide student interpretation.

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# Acknowledgments

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Colleagues and students, past and present, provided practical and emotional support during the writing of this edition, just as they did for earlier versions. I am particularly grateful to instructors who adopted the first six editions of *Meeting the Ethical Challenges of Leadership*, which made this seventh edition possible. I also want to thank readers, both faculty and students, who have e-mailed me with comments and corrections. I've had the opportunity to meet some of you at International Leadership Association conferences, where you introduced yourselves and offered encouragement and feedback. Five reviewers provided insightful responses that guided my revisions for this edition. Editor Maggie Stanley ably picked up where her predecessors at SAGE left off, assisted by the rest of the SAGE staff. Finally, I want to once again thank my wife, Mary, who continues to encourage my writing efforts, though it often means less time together.

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# Introduction

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## LEADERS: THE NEWS ISN'T ALL BAD

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As I noted in the Preface, when it comes to leaders, there is plenty of bad news. Wherever we turn—politics, business, military, medicine, sports, education, or religion—we find leaders engaged in unethical and criminal behavior. Some have escaped punishment but many have sacrificed their positions of leadership and their reputations. They also face civil lawsuits, criminal charges, and jail time. The costs can be even greater for followers. Consider, for example, the following:

- Wells Fargo CEO John Stumpf and other bank executives admitted to creating millions of fake customer accounts, charging unfair mortgage fees, illegally repossessing service members' cars, and punishing whistle-blowers.
- Al Franken, Harvey Weinstein, Kevin Spacey, R. Kelly, Bill O'Reilly, Matt Lauer, and other prominent political, entertainment, and media figures were accused of sexual misconduct ranging from sexual harassment to sexual assault.
- Citizens protested police shootings of black suspects in Chicago, Memphis, Sacramento, Dallas, and other American cities.
- Goldman Sachs bankers were charged with defrauding investors out of \$6 billion in a financial scandal involving Malaysia's former prime minister.
- Executives at Nissan, Mitsubishi, Volkswagen, Suzuki, and other auto makers admitted to overstating fuel economy ratings or falsifying emissions test results.
- Administrators at Tokyo Medical University blocked female applicants from enrolling by lowering their entrance exam results.
- Philippines president Eduardo Duterte allegedly oversees death squads that murder drug suspects, political enemies, and ordinary citizens.
- The University of Maryland board of trustees came under intense criticism for recommending that the school president retain the head coach of its football team after the death of a player and reports of a "toxic" football culture.
- Top Saudi officials ordered the killing of *Washington Post* correspondent Jamal Khashoggi in its Turkish consulate and then disposed of the body and the evidence. A Saudi blockade has cut off food, medicine, and clean drinking water to Yemen, creating what the United Nations describes as the world's worst humanitarian crisis.
- Google and Facebook executives are under fire for the misuse of user data, privacy violations, and election interference.

- Nobel Laureate Ang San Suu Kyi refuses to intervene on behalf of Rohingyans forced to flee Myanmar in the face of brutal military repression.
- City officials in Los Angeles, Chicago, Atlanta, and Philadelphia face major federal corruption investigations.

The misery caused by unethical leaders drives home an important point: Ethics is at the heart of leadership.<sup>1</sup> When we assume the benefits of leadership, we also assume ethical burdens. I believe that as leaders, we must make every effort to act in such a way as to benefit rather than damage others, to cast light instead of shadow. Doing so will significantly reduce the likelihood that we will join the future ranks of fallen leaders.

Thankfully, the news isn't all bad. We can also find plenty of examples of leaders who brighten the lives of those around them. Consider these examples:

- Ashley Judd, Taylor Swift, and hundreds of other women from all walks of life were honored as *Time* magazine's people of the year for breaking the silence about male sexual misconduct and launching the #MeToo movement.
- Doctors Without Borders staff were first to respond to Ebola outbreaks in West Africa and later in the Congo.
- Former president Jimmy Carter, in his 90s, continues to work with Habitat for Humanity and his humanitarian Carter Center, even after a brain cancer diagnosis.
- Syria's "White Helmets" rush to the scene of shelling and bombings to dig out victims from the rubble during that country's civil war.
- Celebrity chef Jose Andres led efforts to provide 14 million meals to survivors of Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico.
- Winners of the CNN Hero Award are involved in helping others through a variety of community efforts ranging from rescuing survivors of sex trafficking to building beds for needy children to teaching English to immigrants.
- For over 30 years, Alberto Cairo has overseen a Red Cross physical rehabilitation program in war torn Afghanistan. Cairo and his colleagues have treated nearly 180,000 patients and built nearly 20,000 artificial limbs.
- Liberian peace activist Leymah Roberta Gbowee helped bring an end to the country's civil war and continues to develop young West African women leaders.
- Local authorities and volunteers searched for human remains in the ashes of Paradise, California, hoping to identify fire victims and bring closure to family members.

You should find this book helpful if you are a leader or an aspiring leader who (1) acknowledges that there are ethical consequences associated with the leadership role, (2) wants to exert positive influence over others, (3) seeks to make more informed ethical choices and to follow through on your decisions, and (4) desires to foster ethical behavior in

others. You will also find useful insights if you are a follower who wants to behave ethically and bring out the best in your leaders.

There is no guarantee that after reading this book you will act in a more ethical fashion in every situation. Nor can you be sure that others will reach the same conclusions as you do about what is the best answer to an ethical dilemma or that you will succeed in improving the ethical climate of your group or organization. Nevertheless, you can increase your ethical competence and encourage others to do the same. This book is dedicated to that end.

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## DEFINING TERMS

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Because this is a book about leadership ethics, we need to clarify what both of these terms mean. *Leadership* is the exercise of influence in a group context.<sup>2</sup> Want to know who the leaders are? Look for the people having the greatest impact on the group or organization. Leaders are change agents engaged in furthering the needs, wants, and goals of leaders and followers alike. They are found wherever humans associate with one another, whether in social movements, sports teams, task forces, nonprofit agencies, state legislatures, military units, or corporations.

No definition of leadership is complete without distinguishing between *leading* and *following*. Generally, leaders get the most press. The newfound success of a struggling college is a case in point. The university president gets most of the credit for turning the fortunes of the school around but the newfound success is really the result of the efforts of many followers. Admissions representatives boost enrollment by recruiting new students; development staff solicit donations for scholarships and new buildings; facilities personnel maintain the physical plant; faculty teach classes and publish research; and support staff ensure that registration, scheduling, graduation, and all other functions are carried out.

In truth, leaders and followers function collaboratively, working together toward shared objectives. They are relational partners who play complementary roles.<sup>3</sup> Whereas leaders exert a greater degree of influence and take more responsibility for the overall direction of the group, followers are more involved in implementing plans and doing the work. During the course of a day or week, we typically shift between leader and follower roles—heading up a project team at work, for example, while taking the position of follower as a student in a night class. As a result, we need to know how to behave ethically as both leaders and followers.

Moving from a follower role to a leadership role brings with it a shift in expectations. Important leader functions include establishing direction, organizing, coordinating activities and resources, motivating, and managing conflicts. Important follower functions include carrying out important group and organizational tasks (engineering, social work, teaching, accounting), generating new ideas about how to get jobs done, working in teams, and providing feedback.<sup>4</sup>

- Viewing leadership as a role should put to rest the notion that leaders are born, not made. The fact that nearly all of us will function as leaders at some point if we haven't already done so means that leadership is not limited to those with the proper genetic background, income level, or education. Ordinary people emerged as leaders during the mass shooting at a country music festival in Las Vegas. Crowd

members shielded spouses and family members from bullets, ushered strangers to safety, provided emergency first aid to the wounded, and hauled victims to local hospitals in pick-up trucks. Angela Merkel was a quiet East German scientist who went on to become Chancellor of the reunited Germany, serving Europe's most powerful leader (and the world's most powerful female leader) for 13 years. Ruth Bader Ginsburg overcame gender discrimination to become a leading advocate for women's rights and a member of the Supreme Court. Howard Schultz, from a humble Brooklyn family, went on to found Starbucks, the world's largest coffee company. (See Case Study 0.1 at the end of this introduction for another example of an unlikely leader.)

- Leadership should not be confused with position, although leaders often occupy positions of authority. Those designated as leaders, such as a disillusioned manager nearing retirement, don't always exert a great deal of influence. On the other hand, those without the benefit of a title on the organizational chart can have a significant impact. France's Yellow Vest protests, for instance, are led by those earning just enough to get by—truck drivers, small-business owners, farmers, home aides, independent contractors. The protestors successfully blocked a scheduled gas tax hike. They also forced French President Macron to conduct a series of town hall discussions on raising the minimum wage and lowering taxes.

Human leadership differs in important ways from the pattern of dominance and submission that characterizes animal societies. The dominant female hyena or male chimpanzee rules over the pack or troop through pure physical strength. Each maintains authority until some stronger rival (often seeking mates) comes along. Unlike other animals, which seem to be driven largely by instinct, humans consciously choose how they want to influence others. We can rely on persuasion, rewards, punishments, emotional appeals, rules, and a host of other means to get our way. Freedom of choice makes ethical considerations an important part of any discussion of leadership. The term *ethics* refers to judgments about whether human behavior is right or wrong. We may be repulsed by the idea that a male lion will kill the offspring of the previous dominant male when he takes control of the pride. Yet we cannot label his actions as unethical because he is driven by a genetic imperative to start his own bloodline. We can and do condemn the actions of leaders who decide to lie, belittle followers, and enrich themselves at the expense of the less fortunate.

Some philosophers distinguish between *ethics*, which they define as the systematic study of the principles of right and wrong behavior, and *morals*, which they describe as specific standards of right and wrong ("Thou shall not steal." "Do unto others as they would do unto you."). Just as many scholars appear to use these terms interchangeably. I will follow the latter course.

Scholars have identified a number of different elements of *ethical leadership*. For example, integrity, people orientation, fairness, power sharing, concern for sustainability, ethical guidance, role clarification, moral motives, communication of ethical values, consistent behavior, and altruism.<sup>5</sup> (Complete Self-Assessment 0.1 to determine how your leader rates on several of these factors.) However, the most influential research program groups the elements of ethical leadership in to two categories: personal moral behavior and moral



influence.<sup>6</sup> Ethical leaders earn that label when they act morally as they carry out their duties and shape the ethical contexts of their groups, organizations, and societies. Both components are essential. Leaders must demonstrate such character traits as justice, humility, optimism, courage, and compassion and master the ethical challenges of their roles. In addition, they are responsible for the ethical behavior of others. They draw attention to ethics, set ethical standards, reward those who meet the standards and punish those who don't, create just procedures, and make principled decisions. These dual responsibilities intertwine. Leaders act as role models for the rest of the organization. How followers behave depends in large part on the example set by leaders. Conversely, leaders become products of their own creations. Ethical climates promote the moral development of leaders as well as that of followers, fostering their character and improving their ability to make and follow through on ethical choices. Ethical organizational environments are marked by integrity, justice, trust, a concern for how goals are achieved, and a sense of social responsibility. They also have safeguards that keep both leaders and followers from engaging in destructive behaviors.

We'll take an in-depth look at what theorists have discovered about the dual nature of ethical leadership in Chapter 8. In the meantime, rest assured that you don't have to sacrifice your ethical standards in order to be a successful leader. Investigators report that ethical leaders are frequently more, not less, effective than their unethical colleagues. Ethical leaders are rated as more promotable and effective; their followers are more committed and satisfied (and less likely to engage in deviant behavior); and their organizations perform better.<sup>6</sup>

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## OVERVIEW OF THE BOOK

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Part I of this book, "The Shadow Side of Leadership," examines the important topic of leadership's dark side. Chapter 1 outlines common shadows cast by leaders: abuse of power and privilege, mismanagement of information, misplaced and broken loyalties, inconsistency, and irresponsibility. Chapter 2 explores the reasons leaders often cause more harm than good and then outlines strategies for stepping out of the shadows and into the light.

After identifying the factors that cause us to cast shadows as leaders, the discussion turns to mastering them. To do so, we will need to look inward. Part II, "Looking Inward," focuses on the inner dimension of leadership. Chapter 3 examines the role of character development in overcoming our internal enemies and faulty motivations, and Chapter 4 explores the nature of evil, forgiveness, apology, and spirituality.

Part III, "Ethical Standards and Strategies," addresses moral decision making and provides the theory and tactics we need to develop our ethical expertise. Chapter 5 surveys a wide range of ethical perspectives that can help us set moral priorities, while Chapter 6 describes the process of ethical decision making as well as formats that we can use to make better moral choices and follow through on our decisions. Chapter 7 examines ethical influence and resistance tactics. Chapter 8 introduces theories specifically developed to guide the ethical behavior of leaders.

Part IV, "Shaping Ethical Contexts," looks at ways in which leaders can shed light in a variety of situations. Chapter 9 examines ethical group decision making. Chapter 10 describes the creation of ethical organizational climates. Chapter 11 highlights the ethical

challenges of leadership in a global society. Chapter 12 provides an overview of ethical leadership in crisis situations and extreme settings.

Expect to learn new terminology along with key principles, decision-making formats, and important elements of the ethical context. This information is drawn from a number of different fields of study—philosophy, psychology, communication, theology, history, business, neuroscience, sociology, political science, and organizational behavior—because we need insights from many different disciplines if we are to step out of the shadows. You can anticipate reading about and then practicing a variety of skills, ranging from information gathering to listening and conflict management.

With these preliminaries out of the way, let's begin with Chapter 1, which takes a closer look at some of the ethical hurdles faced by leaders.

## Case Study 0.1

### A Girl Takes On the Taliban (and World Leaders)

One of the world's most powerful advocates for children's education started as one of the youngest. Malala Yousafzai began her career as an activist in 2008, at age 11, in the remote Swat Valley of Pakistan. After the Taliban began attacking girls' schools in her region, she gave a radio interview in which she declared, "How dare the Taliban take away my basic right to education?"<sup>1</sup> The next year, she began blogging for the BBC, describing what it was like to live under Taliban rule. Malala wrote under an assumed name but her identity was revealed, making her a target for the Taliban. Despite the risk, she continued to speak out about the right of girls and women. Malala and her father, an educator and anti-Taliban activist, received death threats from the militant group. On October 12, 2012, a Taliban gunman boarded the bus she was taking home from school and shot her in the left side of the head. (Two other girls were also injured.) Yousafzai was transferred to a Birmingham, England, hospital after initially receiving treatment in a Pakistani military facility. The young advocate suffered no permanent brain damage,

though part of her skull had to be removed to relieve brain swelling. She still suffers partial paralysis on the left side of her face as well as loss of some hearing in her left ear.

The Taliban's attempt to silence Malala had the opposite result. More people than ever were drawn to her cause. Citizens from around the world expressed their support for her during her recovery. She gave a speech to the United Nations (UN) on her 16th birthday and became the youngest winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, at age 17, in 2014. (She shared the prize with Indian children's rights champion Kailash Satyarthi.) Yousafzai and her father created the Malala Fund, which promotes 12 years of free education for all the world's children, particularly girls. (An estimated 63 million children, over 5 million in Pakistan, don't receive an education and millions of others learn in substandard conditions.) The fund has received support from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and Apple Inc. for work in Afghanistan, Brazil, India, Lebanon, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Turkey. In one project, the Malala Fund covered the costs of opening up a

*(Continued)*

(Continued)

school for 200 Syrian girl refugees. In another, it supported the recruitment and training of teachers in Afghanistan. The fund helped secure a \$2.9 billion commitment for girls' education from countries making up the G7 (the United States, United Kingdom, France, Canada, Italy, Japan, Germany) and the World Bank.

Malala does not hesitate to take on world leaders in her fight for universal education. She faults the United Nations for only seeking to provide an elementary and middle school education to children. She told UN members to make 12 years of schooling their goal: "Your dreams were too small. Now it is time that you dream bigger."<sup>2</sup> Malala notes that just an 8-day halt to military spending would pay for "12 years of free, quality education to every child on the planet."<sup>3</sup> When she visited the White House, she told President Obama to stop drone warfare and to invest in education instead. She criticized the president of Nigeria for not doing enough to rescue schoolgirls kidnapped by Boko Haram.

Malala returned to Pakistan nearly six years after she was shot, proclaiming, "Today is the happiest day of my life."<sup>4</sup> The country's prime minister welcomed her but she was kept under tight security due to threats from the Taliban. In fact, many Pakistanis resent Malala, arguing that other children have suffered more than she. According to conspiracy theorists, she is a "stooge" of the West and her shooting was staged by the CIA. The Taliban has largely abandoned assaults on Pakistani schools after a 2014 attack in the city of Peshawar where gunmen murdered 140 teachers and children, most of them boys between the ages of 12 and 16.

### Discussion Probes

1. How do you account for the fact that a girl from rural Pakistan became a leading

spokesperson for worldwide childhood education?

2. Can you think of any other examples of leaders, like Malala, who overcame humble circumstances and significant barriers to become leaders?
3. What gives Malala Yousafzai the courage to speak boldly to world leaders?
4. Is Malala more effective as an advocate for children's education because she started so young?
5. Is Malala's goal of universal 12-year education too ambitious?

### Notes

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3. *Biography: Malala Yousafzai*. (2015, December 9). Biography.com.
4. Safi, M. (2018, March 29). "Happiest day of my life": Malala returns to Pakistan for first time since Taliban shooting. *The Guardian*.

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- Baker, A. (2013, December 19). Runner-up: Malala Yousafzai, the fighter. *Time.com*
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## SELF-ASSESSMENT 0.1

### Ethical Leadership Questionnaire (ELQ)

#### Instructions

The term *unit* refers to the team, department, division, or company for which your boss is the formal leader, and the term *members* refers to the people in the unit who report directly to your boss. Please indicate how well each of the following statements describes your current boss by selecting one of the following response choices. Write the number of the choice on the line provided. Leave the item blank if you do not know the answer.

1 = strongly disagree

2 = moderately disagree

3 = slightly disagree

4 = slightly agree

5 = moderately agree

6 = strongly agree

My boss

1. \_\_\_\_\_ shows a strong concern for ethical and moral values.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ communicates clear ethical standards for members.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ sets an example of ethical behavior in his or her decisions and actions.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ is honest and can be trusted to tell the truth.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ keeps his or her actions consistent with his or her stated values ("walks the talk").

6. \_\_\_\_\_ is fair and unbiased when assigning tasks to members.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ can be trusted to carry out promises and commitments.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ insists on doing what is fair and ethical even when it is not easy.
9. \_\_\_\_\_ acknowledges mistakes and takes responsibility for them.
10. \_\_\_\_\_ regards honesty and integrity as important personal values.
11. \_\_\_\_\_ sets an example of dedication and self-sacrifice for the organization.
12. \_\_\_\_\_ opposes the use of unethical practices to increase performance.
13. \_\_\_\_\_ is fair and objective when evaluating member performance and providing rewards.
14. \_\_\_\_\_ puts the needs of others above his/her own self-interest.
15. \_\_\_\_\_ holds members accountable for using ethical practices in their work.

#### Scoring

This scale measures your perceptions of your supervisor's (a) honesty and integrity (including the consistency of actions with values), (b) behavior designed to communicate or enforce ethical standards, (c) fairness of decisions and the distribution of rewards, and (d) behavior that is concerned for others rather than self-centered. Possible scores range from 15 to 90.

*Source:* Yukl, G., Mahsud, R., Hassan, S., & Russia, G. E. (2013). An improved measure of ethical leadership. *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies*, 20, 38–48.



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PART I

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# The Shadow Side of Leadership

Chapter 1. The Leader's Light or Shadow	2
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# The Leader's Light or Shadow

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- > Illustrate how leaders have the power to cast light or shadow.
- > Defend the importance of examining the dark side of leadership.
- > Categorize the types of negative leadership.
- > Describe the six ethical challenges faced by leaders.
- > Explain how leaders cast shadows when they fail to meet the six ethical challenges of leadership.

*Yet I have something in me  
dangerous, which let thy wisdom fear.*

—WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (*HAMLET*)

*We know where light is coming from  
by looking at the shadows.*

—HUMANITIES SCHOLAR PAUL  
WOODRUFF

## WHAT'S AHEAD

This chapter introduces the dark (bad, toxic) side of leadership as the first step in promoting good or ethical leadership. The metaphor of light and shadow dramatizes the differences between moral and immoral leaders. Leaders have the power to illuminate the lives of followers or to cover them in darkness. They cast light when they master ethical challenges of leadership. They cast shadows when they (1) abuse power, (2) hoard privileges, (3) mismanage information, (4) act inconsistently, (5) misplace or betray loyalties, and (6) fail to assume responsibilities.

## A DRAMATIC DIFFERENCE/THE DARK SIDE OF LEADERSHIP

In an influential essay titled “Leading From Within,” educational writer and consultant Parker Palmer introduces a powerful metaphor to dramatize the distinction between ethical and unethical leadership. According to Palmer, the difference between moral and immoral leaders is as sharp as the contrast between light and darkness, between heaven and hell:

A leader is a person who has an unusual degree of power to create the conditions under which other people must live and move and have their being, conditions that can be either as illuminating as heaven or as shadowy as hell. A leader must take special responsibility for what's going on inside his or her own self, inside his or her consciousness, lest the act of leadership create more harm than good.<sup>1</sup>

For most of us, *leadership* has a positive connotation. We have been fortunate enough to benefit from the guidance of teachers or coaches, for example, or we admire noteworthy

historical leaders. However, Palmer urges us to pay more attention to the shadow side of leadership. Political figures, parents, clergy, and business executives have the potential to cast as much shadow as they do light. The higher the position, the greater the leader's discretion or latitude to do harm.<sup>2</sup> Refusing to face the dark side of leadership makes abuse more likely. All too often, leaders "do not even know they are making a choice, let alone reflect on the process of choosing."<sup>3</sup>

Other scholars have joined Palmer in focusing on the dark or negative dimension of leadership. Claremont Graduate University professor Jean Lipman-Blumen uses the term *toxic leaders* to describe those who engage in destructive behaviors and who exhibit dysfunctional personal characteristics.<sup>4</sup> These behaviors and qualities (summarized in Table 1.1) cause significant harm to followers and organizations.

Harvard professor Barbara Kellerman believes that limiting our understanding of leadership solely to good leadership ignores the reality that a great many leaders engage in destructive behaviors.<sup>5</sup> Overlooking that fact, Kellerman says, undermines our attempts to promote good leadership:

I take it as a given that we promote good leadership not by ignoring bad leadership, nor by presuming that it is immutable, but rather by attacking it as we would a disease that is always pernicious and sometimes deadly.<sup>6</sup>

According to Kellerman, bad leaders can be ineffective, unethical, or ineffective and unethical. She identifies seven types of bad leaders:

**Incompetent.** These leaders don't have the motivation or the ability to sustain effective action. They may lack emotional or academic intelligence, for example, or be careless, distracted, or sloppy. Some cannot function under stress, and their communication and decisions suffer as a result. Former Hewlett Packard CEO Carly Fiorina failed as a leader because she isolated herself from employees, lacked operational skills, and battled board members.

**Rigid.** Rigid leaders may be competent, but they are unyielding, unable to accept new ideas, new information, or changing conditions. General George Armstrong Custer was one such leader. The headstrong general refused to listen to his scouts or to wait for the rest of his army. Instead, he attacked thousands of Sioux and Cheyenne warriors with a few hundred troops. Custer and those who charged with him were slaughtered.

**Intemperate.** Intemperate leaders lack self-control and are enabled by followers who don't want to intervene or can't. Former Maine governor Paul LePage demonstrates intemperate leadership in action. LePage gained national attention by comparing the Internal Revenue Service to the Gestapo, saying he wanted to tell President Obama "to go to hell," blaming people of color for the opioid crisis, and challenging a lawmaker to a duel in a vile voice mail message. LePage served two terms as governor despite his outrageous statements.

**Callous.** The callous leader is uncaring or unkind, ignoring or downplaying the needs, wants, and wishes of followers. Venezuelan president Nicolas Maduro personifies the



**TABLE 1.1**  
**The Behaviors and Personal Characteristics of Toxic Leaders**

Destructive Behaviors	Toxic Qualities
Leaving followers worse off	Lack of integrity
Violating human rights	Insatiable ambition
Feeding followers’ illusions; creating dependence	Enormous egos
Playing to the basest fears and needs of followers	Arrogance
Stifling criticism; enforcing compliance	Amorality (inability to discern right from wrong)
Misleading followers	Avarice (greed)
Subverting ethical organizational structures and processes	Reckless disregard for the costs of their actions
Engaging in unethical, illegal, and criminal acts	Cowardice (refusal to make tough choices)
Building totalitarian regimes	Failure to understand problems
Failing to nurture followers, including successors	Incompetence in key leadership situations
Setting constituents against one another	
Encouraging followers to hate or destroy others	
Identifying scapegoats	
Making themselves indispensable	
Ignoring or promoting incompetence, cronyism, and corruption	

*Source:* Adapted from Lipman-Blumen, J. (2005). *The allure of toxic leaders: Why we follow destructive bosses and corrupt politicians—and how we can survive them*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, pp. 19–23.

callous leader. He refuses to accept food shipments from humanitarian organizations even as many of his citizens slowly starve.

**Corrupt.** These leaders (and at least some of their followers) lie, cheat, and steal. They put self-interest ahead of the public interest. Brazil’s ex-president Lula da Silva is an

example of this type of leader. At one time one of the most powerful people in Latin America, he is now serving prison time. He and his wife received over a million dollars in free home improvements from a construction company in exchange for contracts with Petrobras, Brazil's state-run oil company.

**Insular.** The insular leader draws a clear boundary between the welfare of his or her immediate group or organization and outsiders. Australian senator Fraser Anning expressed insular sentiments when he called for a ban on all immigrants of non-European descent. He singled out Muslims in particular, declaring that a vote to ban Muslims would be “the final solution to the immigration problem.” His words echoed that of the Nazis, whose plan to eliminate Jews was called “The Final Solution to the Jewish Question.”

**Evil.** Evil leaders commit atrocities, using their power to inflict severe physical or psychological harm. Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi is one example of an evil leader. He heads ISIS, the Middle Eastern terrorist group known for beheading male captives and turning female captives into sex slaves for ISIS soldiers. Al-Baghdadi told his followers that Muslim believers have the right to enslave all nonbelievers.

Lipman-Blumen and Kellerman developed their typologies based on case studies of prominent leaders. Other investigators focus on ordinary leaders, particularly in organizational settings. In one project, two researchers at Bond University in Australia (along with a colleague from the United States) asked employees to explain why they would label someone as a bad leader, describe how a bad leader made them feel, and describe the impact bad leaders had on them and the organization as a whole.<sup>7</sup> Respondents reported that bad leaders are incompetent (they are unable to use technology, for example, and can't work with subordinates or plan strategy) and unethical (they demonstrate poor ethics as well as poor personal and interpersonal behavior). Such leaders made respondents angry and frustrated while lowering their self-esteem. Individual and collective performance suffered as a result. Those working under bad leaders reported feeling more stress at home. They had trouble sleeping, for instance, and felt fatigued. Negative emotions toward their leaders consumed their thoughts and hurt their family relationships. According to the survey, bad leaders often go unpunished; instead, many are promoted or rewarded.

Using information generated by this study, the researchers developed a tool to measure destructive organizational leadership. They discovered that demonstrating just a couple of bad behaviors was enough to label a leader as destructive, even though he or she might also have lots of positive qualities. The Bond scholars identified seven clusters of destructive leader behaviors:<sup>8</sup>

*Cluster 1:* This type of leader makes poor decisions (often based on inadequate information), lies and engages in other unethical behavior, cannot deal with new technology, and typically fails to prioritize and delegate.

*Cluster 2:* This type of leader lacks critical skills. She or he is unable to negotiate or persuade and cannot develop or motivate subordinates.

*Cluster 3:* This type of leader makes good decisions and has the necessary leadership skills but is overly controlling and micromanages followers.

*Cluster 4:* This type of leader can't deal with conflict but plays favorites and behaves inconsistently.

*Cluster 5:* This type of leader isn't all that bad but isn't all that good either. Leaders in this category don't seek information from others, don't change their minds, and don't do a good job of coordinating followers.

*Cluster 6:* This type of leader isolates the group from the rest of the organization.

*Cluster 7:* This type of leader creates a situation of significant misery and despair. Leaders in this group are brutal and bullying, frequently lying and engaging in other unethical behavior.

Ståle Einarsen and his Norwegian colleagues offer an alternative classification of bad leadership based on its negative effects either on the organization or on followers. Destructive leaders can be antiorganization, antisubordinates, or both.<sup>9</sup> *Tyrannical leaders* reach organizational goals while abusing followers. *Supportive-disloyal leaders* care for the welfare of subordinates at the expense of organizational goals. They may tolerate loafing or stealing, for example. *Derailed leaders* act against the interests of both subordinates and the organization. As they bully, manipulate, deceive, and harass followers, they may also be stealing from the organization, engaging in fraudulent activities, and doing less than expected. *Laissez-faire leaders* engage in passive and indirect negative behavior. They occupy leadership positions but don't exercise leadership, therefore hurting followers and their organizations. *Constructive leaders*, on the other hand, care about subordinates and help the organization achieve its goals while using resources wisely. Einarsen and his fellow researchers found a high rate of bad leadership in Norwegian organizations, with 61% of respondents reporting that their immediate supervisors engaged in ongoing destructive behavior over the past six months. Laissez-faire behavior was by far the most common form of bad leadership, followed by supportive-disloyal leadership, derailed leadership, and tyrannical leadership.<sup>10</sup> (Turn to Self-Assessment 1.1 at the end of this chapter to determine whether your leader engages in destructive leadership behavior.) The negative effects of destructive leadership lasted longer than the positive effects of constructive leadership.<sup>11</sup>

Evidence that bad leaders can cause significant damage continues to grow. In an analysis of the results of 57 studies, investigators found that destructive leader behavior is linked to a wide range of negative outcomes.<sup>12</sup> Those serving under destructive leaders have negative attitudes toward their superiors, resist their leaders' influence attempts, and engage more frequently in counterproductive work behaviors. In addition, these followers have negative attitudes toward their jobs and their organizations. Their personal well-being also suffers as they experience negative emotions and stress.

In sum, Palmer was right to emphasize the importance of the shadow side of leadership. Followers from around the world have lots of firsthand experience with bad leaders and report that such leaders cause significant, long-lasting damage. When it comes to leadership, "the bad overcomes the good."<sup>13</sup> It apparently takes only a few destructive behaviors to overcome a leader's positive qualities. In addition, the shadows cast by destructive leaders extend beyond the workplace; the home lives of followers are damaged as well.

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## THE LEADER'S SHADOWS

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When we function as leaders, we take on a unique set of ethical burdens in addition to a set of expectations and tasks. These involve issues of power, privilege, information,

consistency, loyalty, and responsibility. How we handle the challenges of leadership determines whether we cause more harm than good or, to return to Palmer's metaphor, whether we cast light or shadow. Unless we're careful, we're likely to cast one or more of the shadows described in this section. (See the Focus on Followers box for more information on the ethical challenges facing followers.)

## The Shadow of Power

Power is the foundation for influence attempts. The more power we have, the more likely others are to comply with our wishes. Power comes from a variety of sources. One typology, for example, divides power into two categories: hard and soft.<sup>14</sup> *Hard power* uses inducements (bonuses, raises) and threats (arrests, firings) to get people to go along. *Soft power* is based on attracting others rather than forcing them or inducing them to comply. Leaders use soft power when they set a worthy example, create an inspiring vision, and build positive relationships with subordinates. Typically, those without formal authority rely more heavily on soft power, but even those in formal leadership positions, such as military officers, try to attract followers by acting as role models and emphasizing the group's mission. Effective leaders combine hard and soft power into *smart power* to achieve their goals. For instance, a manager may try to persuade an employee to follow a new policy while at the same time outlining the penalties the subordinate will face if he or she does not comply.

The most popular power classification system identifies five power bases.<sup>15</sup> *Coercive power* is based on penalties or punishments such as physical force, salary reductions, student suspensions, or embargoes against national enemies. *Reward power* depends on being able to deliver something of value to others, whether tangible (bonuses, health insurance, grades) or intangible (praise, trust, cooperation). *Legitimate power* resides in the position, not the person. Supervisors, judges, police officers, drill sergeants, instructors, and parents have the right to control our behavior within certain limits. A boss can require us to carry out certain tasks at work, for example, but in most cases, he or she has no say in what we do in our free time. In contrast to legitimate power, *expert power* is based on the characteristics of the individual regardless of that person's official position. Knowledge, skills, education, and certification all build expert power. *Referent (role model) power* rests on the admiration one person has for another. We're more likely to do favors for a supervisor we admire or to buy a product promoted by our favorite sports hero.

Leaders typically draw on more than one power source. The manager who is appointed to lead a task force is granted legitimate power that enables her to reward or punish. Yet in order to be successful, she'll have to demonstrate her knowledge of the topic, skillfully direct the group process, and earn the respect of task force members through hard work and commitment to the group.

The use of each power type has advantages and disadvantages. For instance, the dispensing of rewards is widely accepted in Western culture but can be counterproductive if the rewards promote the wrong behaviors (see Chapter 10) or go to the wrong people. U.S. workers are more satisfied and productive when their leaders rely on forms of power that are tied to the person (expert and referent) rather than forms of power that are linked to the position (coercive, reward, and legitimate).<sup>16</sup> In addition, positional power is more susceptible to abuse. Coercive tactics have the potential to do the most damage,

threatening the dignity as well as the physical and mental health of followers. Leaders, then, have important decisions to make about the types of power they use and when. (Complete Self-Assessment 1.2 to determine the types of power you prefer to use.)

## Focus on Follower Ethics

### The Ethical Challenges of Followership

Followers, like leaders, face their own set of ethical challenges. Followers walk on the dark side when they fail to meet the moral responsibilities of their roles. Important ethical challenges confronted by followers include those described below.

**The Challenge of Obligation.** Followers contribute to a shadowy atmosphere when they fail to fulfill their minimal responsibilities by coming to work late, taking extended breaks, not carrying out assignments, undermining the authority of their leaders, stealing supplies, and so on. However, they can also contribute to an unethical climate by taking on too many obligations. Employees forced to work mandatory overtime and salaried staff at many technology and consulting firms work 70 to 80 hours a week, leaving little time for family and personal interests. They experience stress and burnout, and their family relationships suffer.

Followers also have ethical duties to outsiders. Carpenters and other tradespeople involved in home construction have an obligation to buyers to build high-quality houses and to meet deadlines, for example. Government employees owe it to taxpayers to spend their money wisely by working hard while keeping expenses down.

These questions can help us sort out the obligations we owe as followers:

- Am I doing all I reasonably can to carry out my tasks and further the mission of my organization? What more could I do?

- Am I fulfilling my obligations to outsiders (clients, neighbors, community, customers)? Are there any additional steps I should take?
- Am I giving back to the group or organization as much as I am taking from it?
- Am I carrying my fair share of the workload?
- Am I serving the needs of my leaders?
- Am I earning the salary and benefits I receive?
- Can I fulfill my organizational obligations and, at the same time, maintain a healthy personal life and productive relationships? If not, what can I do to bring my work and personal life into balance?

**The Challenge of Obedience.** Groups and organizations couldn't function if members refused to obey orders or adhere to policies, even the ones they don't like. As a result, followers have an ethical duty to obey. However, blindly following authority can drive followers to engage in illegal and immoral activities that they would never participate in on their own. Obeying orders is no excuse for unethical behavior. Therefore, deciding when to disobey is critical. To make this determination, consider the following factors: Does this order appear

to call for unethical behavior? Would I engage in this course of action if I weren't ordered to? What are the potential consequences for others, and for myself, if these directions are followed? Does obedience threaten the mission and health of the organization as a whole? What steps should I take if I decide to disobey?

**The Challenge of Cynicism.** There is a difference between healthy skepticism, which prevents followers from being exploited, and unhealthy cynicism, which undermines individual and group performance. Followers darken the atmosphere when they become organizational cynics. That's because cynicism destroys commitment and undermines trust. Collective performance suffers as a result. Few give their best effort when they are disillusioned with the group. Cynical employees feel less identification with and commitment to their employers while being more resistant to change; they are less likely to go beyond their job duties to help their colleagues and their organizations. The greater the degree of cynicism, the more effort is directed toward attacking the organization at the expense of completing the task at hand.

**The Challenge of Dissent.** Expressing disagreement is an important ethical duty of followership. Followers should take issue with policies and procedures that are inefficient, harmful, or costly and with leaders who harm others or put the organization at risk. Doing so serves the mission of the organization while protecting the rights of its members and the larger community. Although followers contribute to a shadowy environment when they fail to speak up, they can go too far by generating a constant stream of complaints. Ethical followers know when to speak up (not every issue

is worth contesting) and when to wait until a more important issue comes along. They must also determine whether the problem is significant enough to justify going outside the organization (becoming a whistle-blower) if leaders don't respond.

**The Challenge of Bad News.** Delivering bad news is risky business. Followers who tell their bosses that the project is over budget, that sales are down, or that the software doesn't work as promised may be verbally abused, demoted, or fired. Organizations and leaders pay a high price when followers hide or cover up bad news, deny responsibility, or shift blame. Leaders can't correct problems they don't know exist. Failure to address serious deficiencies such as accounting fraud, cost overruns, and product contamination can destroy an organization. Leaders who don't get feedback about their ineffective habits—micromanaging, poor listening skills, indecisiveness—can't address those behaviors. When leaders deny accountability and shift blame, this undermines trust and diverts people's focus from solving problems to defending themselves.

To avoid contributing to a shadowy environment, followers must deliver bad news and accept responsibility for their actions. They also need to pay close attention to how they deliver bad tidings, selecting the right time, place, and message channel. Significant problems should be brought to the leader's attention immediately, when he or she is most receptive, and delivered face-to-face whenever possible, not through e-mail, faxes, and other, less personal channels.

**Source:** Adapted from Johnson, C. E. (2015). *Organizational ethics: A practical approach* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, Ch. 9.

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The fact that leadership cannot exist without power makes some Americans uncomfortable. We admire powerful leaders who act decisively but can be reluctant to admit that we have and use power. Sadly, our refusal to face up to the reality of power can make us more vulnerable to the shadow side of leadership. Cult leader Jim Jones presided over the suicide–murder of 909 followers in the jungles of Guyana. Perhaps this tragedy could have been avoided if cult members and outside observers had challenged Jones’s abuse of power.<sup>17</sup> Conversely, ignoring the topic of power prevents the attainment of worthy objectives, leaving followers in darkness. Consider the case of the community activist who wants to build a new shelter for homeless families. He can’t help these families unless he skillfully wields power to enlist the support of local groups, overcome resistance of opponents, raise funds, and secure building permits.

I suspect that we are suspicious of power because we recognize that power has a corrosive effect on those who possess it. We’ve seen how U.S. president Richard Nixon used the power of his office to order illegal acts against his enemies and how Russian president Vladimir Putin used military force to take over part of the neighboring country of Ukraine while, at the same time, he allegedly ordered the killing of opposition figures and journalists. Many corporate leaders have been intoxicated by their power, using their positions to abuse their subordinates. One such boss wouldn’t grant time off so an employee could be with her dying grandmother, saying, “Well she’s not dead yet so I don’t have to grant your leave.” Another called the paramedics when an employee had a heart attack and then ordered everyone else to go back to work even as the victim was still lying on the floor. Another wouldn’t let an injured employee get treatment for a broken ankle until she had first finished processing invoices. Yet another berated and humiliated a subordinate who suffered an emotional breakdown and had to be hospitalized. His response? “I can’t help it if she is overly sensitive.”<sup>18</sup> (Case Study 1.1 describes a corporate leader who used his power to cover up sexual abuse.)



Unfortunately, abuse of power is an all-too-common fact of life in modern organizations. A survey commissioned by the Workplace Bullying Institute found that 1 out of every 5 Americans have been targets of bullying. In another survey, nearly 75% of respondents had either been a target or a witness of such behavior. According to one estimate, workplace bullying costs the U.S. economy \$360 billion in lost productivity every year.<sup>19</sup> “Brutal” bosses regularly engage in the following behaviors, some of which will be discussed in more detail later in the chapter:<sup>20</sup>

- *Deceit*: lying and giving false or misleading information
- *Constraint*: restricting followers’ activities outside work, such as telling them whom they can befriend, where they can live, with whom they can live, and the civic activities they can participate in
- *Coercion*: making inappropriate or excessive threats for not complying with the leader’s directives
- *Selfishness*: blaming subordinates and making them scapegoats
- *Inequity*: supplying unequal benefits or punishments based on favoritism or criteria unrelated to the job
- *Cruelty*: harming subordinates in such illegitimate ways as name-calling or public humiliation
- *Disregard*: ignoring normal standards of politeness, obvious disregard for what is happening in the lives of followers
- *Deification*: creating a master–servant relationship in which bosses can do whatever they want because they feel superior

The cost of the petty tyranny of bad bosses is high. Victims suffer low self-esteem, psychological distress and poorer health; are less satisfied with their jobs and lives; are less productive; and are more likely to quit. The work unit as a whole is less trusting and cohesive, reducing collective performance.<sup>21</sup> Researchers have yet to report any positive outcomes of abusive supervision. Instead, studies conducted in a several different countries link oppressive supervision to depression, emotional exhaustion, counterproductive work behavior, job tension, and feelings of injustice.<sup>22</sup> Workers respond to tyranny by surrendering their personal beliefs, keeping a low profile, engaging in revenge fantasies, taking indirect revenge (i.e., not supporting the boss at a critical moment), challenging the supervisor directly, or bringing in outsiders (such as the human resources department or the boss’s boss) to get help in dealing with the abusive leader.<sup>23</sup> They also spend a lot of time bemoaning how they are being treated. The majority of employees in one project reported spending 10 or more hours every month complaining about abusive and other kinds of bad bosses or listening to the complaints of fellow workers.<sup>24</sup>

The greater a leader’s power, the greater the potential for abuse. This prompted Britain’s Lord Acton to observe that “power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely.” The long shadow cast by absolute power, as in the case of North Korea’s Kim Jong-Il, can be seen in censorship, repression, torture, imprisonment, murder, and starvation. (Box 1.1



describes another leader who ruled by terror.) Businesses and other organizations foster centralization of power through top-down structures that emphasize status differences, loyalty, dependence, fear, and obedience while celebrating “tough” bosses and business practices like hard bargaining and aggressive marketing tactics.<sup>25</sup>

Psychologists offer several explanations for why concentrated power is so dangerous.<sup>26</sup> First, power prompts people to pursue their goals without considering the needs of others. They are likely to justify their actions by claiming that their personal rights and interests take priority over obligations to others. Second, those in power protect their positions by attacking those they perceive as threats. Third, powerful leaders tend to make biased judgments.<sup>27</sup> Because they generally make little attempt to find out how followers think and feel, they’re prone to hold and act on faulty stereotypes that justify their authority. Powerful people believe that they deserve their high status because powerless people aren’t as capable as they are. They are also more likely to believe that others like them (even when they don’t). Fourth, possessing power makes individuals more resistant to feedback from others.

Power deprivation exerts its own brand of corruptive influence. Followers with little power become fixated on what minimal influence they have, becoming cautious, defensive, and critical of others and new ideas. In extreme cases, they may engage in sabotage, such as when one group of fast-food restaurant employees took out their frustrations by spitting and urinating into the drinks they served customers.

To wield power wisely, leaders have to wrestle with all the issues outlined here. They have to consider what types of power they should use and when and for what purposes. In particular, they have to meet social, not personal needs, when exercising power. Destructive leaders want power *over* followers to meet their selfish interests. Ethical leaders desire power in order to work *through* followers to help the group achieve its collective goals.<sup>28</sup> They also have to determine how much power to keep and how much to give away. Finally, leaders must recognize and resist the dangers posed by possessing too much power while making sure that followers aren’t corrupted by having too little.

Fortunately, there is evidence, when it comes to power, that a number of leaders are casting light rather than shadow. They recognize that sharing power prevents power abuses and improves organizational performance. Executives at Zappos, Johnsonville Sausage, Patagonia, food processor Morning Star, and other successful organizations have relinquished much of their legitimate, coercive, award, and expert power bases to lower-level leaders. At a great many other companies, self-directed work teams have taken over functions—hiring, scheduling, quality control—that used to be the province of mid- and lower-level managers.

## Box 1.1

### Leadership by Terror

Leaders ruling through terror cast the darkest shadows. Clinical psychologist and leadership scholar Manfred Kets de Vries set out to discover what makes despotic leaders like Robert Mugabe, Kim Jong-un, and Bashar al-Assad “tick” by examining the life of

Shaka Zulu. Between 1817 and 1824, Shaka Zulu conquered much of southern Africa through military genius and ruthless brutality, creating a kingdom that spread over 100,000 miles. Anyone who opposed his army, including married couples, children, and even

dogs, were slaughtered. The victorious warrior then made himself the center of absolute power as king and created his own secret service to eliminate possible enemies. He would randomly select victims for execution and order the deaths of the elderly and the sick. Shaka's rule ended when he was assassinated by his half-brothers in 1828.

Kets de Vries attributes Shaka Zulu's brutal behavior to a number of related personality disorders that were magnified as he gained power. Shaka was a malignant narcissist who fought off feelings of low self-worth and depression through the belief that he was someone special. Narcissism became an addiction once he took total command of the kingdom. He demanded constant adoration and claimed to be all powerful and invincible. Shaka was paranoid, constantly seeing threats when none existed. He was also a sociopath who lacked empathy for others and took sadistic pleasure in such acts as burning elderly women prisoners, putting out eyes,

and killing those who offended him by what they wore or how they looked. His ruthless, unpredictable violence broke the will of his followers who knew that no one was safe from his wrath.

Professor Kets de Vries concludes his study by noting that Shaka should serve as a warning to all would-be leaders. All of us have a shadow side that can spring to life when we are given access to power.

*[W]e all have a Shaka Zulu in the attic.*

We all have a darker side, a violent streak ready to erupt as circumstances dictate. Shaka is not just a quaint illustration of perverted leadership of bygone years. He is a reminder of what every leader, every individual, can become. (p. 166)

Kets, de Vries, M. F. R. (2004). *Lessons on leadership by terror: Finding Shaka Zulu in the attic*. Cheltenham, England: Edward Elgar.

## The Shadow of Privilege

Leaders almost always enjoy greater privileges than followers do. The greater the leader's power, generally the greater the rewards he or she receives. Consider the earnings of corporate CEOs, for example. Top business leaders in the United States are the highest paid in the world. The average pay for chief executives of large U.S. firms skyrocketed to \$13.9 million (including salary, bonuses, stock, and stock option grants), up 1000% since the 1950s.<sup>29</sup> In a recent salary survey, the highest-paid CEOs were Discovery Communications David Zaslav (\$156.1 million), followed by Google's Sundar Pichai (\$150 million), Michael Fries of Liberty Global (\$111.9 million), and Nick Woodman of GoPro (\$77.4 million). Amazon founder Jeff Bezos became the richest person in world history, with a net worth of nearly \$110 billion.

A number of CEOs receive generous payouts when they retire, are fired, or if their companies are taken over. AT&T's Ed Whitacre retired with a \$230 million package along with such perks as use of the company jet and payment of his home security and country club fees. Pfizer CEO Hank McKinnel, who was forced to step down, walked away with over \$188 million even though the company lost \$140 billion under his leadership. CVS CEO Tom Ryan took home over \$185 million after his firm combined with Caremark. As the pay of top leaders soared, the paycheck of the average American was left in the dust. The wages of typical U.S. workers have stagnated since the 1970s. The top 1% of Americans now averages 40 times more income than the bottom 90% of the population.

Nonprofit leaders can also abuse the perks that come from their positions of influence. According to a report in *The Wall Street Journal*, 2,700 nonprofit executives earned

over \$1 million, up over one third in a three-year period. The highest paying nonprofits were largely in health care, followed by private colleges and universities. Five nonprofits, including the organization managing Harvard University's endowment, paid executives \$10 million or more.<sup>30</sup>

Most of us would agree that leaders deserve more rewards than followers do because leaders assume greater risks and responsibilities; many would also agree that some leaders get more than they deserve. Beyond this point, however, our opinions are likely to diverge. Americans are divided over questions such as these: How many additional privileges should leaders have? What should be the relative difference in pay and benefits between workers and top management? How do we close the large gap between the haves and the have-nots? We will never reach complete agreement on these issues, but the fact remains that privilege is a significant ethical burden associated with leadership. Leaders must give questions of privilege the same careful consideration as questions of power. The shadow cast by the abuse of privilege can be as long and dark as that cast by the misuse of power. (Turn to the Leadership Ethics at the Movies case in the student study site for evidence of the dangers of privilege.) Conversely, sharing privilege can cast significant light. Every year, for example, thousands of Americans (often members of religious congregations) leave their comfortable homes to spend their vacations serving in developing nations. There they build schools and homes, dig wells, and provide medical care. Some of the world's richest people, including Warren Buffet, Bill and Melinda Gates, Sheryl Sandberg, and Mark Zuckerberg, have pledged to give the vast majority of their wealth to philanthropic causes.

## The Shadow of Mismanaged Information

Leaders have more access to information than do others in an organization. They are more likely to participate in decision-making processes, network with managers in other units, review personnel files, and formulate long-term plans. Knowledge is a mixed blessing. Leaders must be in the information loop in order to carry out their tasks, but possessing knowledge makes life more complicated. Do they reveal that they are in the know? When should they release information and to whom? How much do they tell? Is it ever right for them to lie?

No wonder leaders are tempted to think ignorance is bliss! If all these challenges weren't enough, leaders face the very real temptation to lie. For instance, Ohio State football coach Urban Meyer publicly denied he knew about domestic violence allegations against an assistant coach. Later he admitted that he was aware of the possible abuse but kept the assistant on his staff. Managers at the Veterans Administration falsified patient access records to disguise the long wait times facing veterans seeking medical treatment.<sup>31</sup> At other times, leaders are eager to hide the truth. The Panama Papers, a massive data leak, revealed that political leaders and wealthy individuals from around the world are secretly sheltering billions in assets in offshore companies. Other leaders don't want to reveal that their judgment might be clouded by conflicts of interest. President Trump refuses to entirely divest himself from his real estate business and reports little about income generated by foreign customers. As a result, there are concerns that he might favor countries who stay at Trump hotels and golf clubs when visiting the United States.<sup>32</sup>

The issues surrounding access to information are broader than deciding whether to lie, to hide the truth, or to tell the truth. Although leaders often decide between lying and truth telling, they are just as likely to be faced with questions related to the release of information. Take the case of a middle manager who has learned about an upcoming merger that will mean layoffs. Her superiors have asked her to keep this information to herself for a couple of weeks until the deal is completed. In the interim, employees may make financial commitments—such as home and car purchases—that they would postpone if they knew that major changes were in the works. Should the manager voluntarily share information about the merger with such employees despite her orders? What happens when a member of her department asks her to confirm or deny the rumor that the company is about to merge? (Turn to Case Study 1.2 to see how leaders disagree about how much information to release.)

Privacy issues raise additional ethical concerns. Ancestry.com, 23andMe, and other DNA-testing companies are building databases that can be accessed by drug companies and law enforcement. (The suspected Golden State killer was identified through genetic profiles housed at GEDmatch.) Information collected from high school students on college-planning surveys is sold to colleges and those marketing educational programs.<sup>33</sup> Hundreds of thousands of cameras track our movements at automated teller machines, in parking lots, at stores, and in other public places (and even in not-so-public places, such as high school bathrooms and hospital rooms). Drones now make it possible for law enforcement officials and private citizens to secretly film our homes and backyards from the sky. Our interactions with police officers are likely to be recorded now that body cameras are becoming standard equipment for many police departments. The Transportation Safety Administration employs air marshals to secretly monitor airline passengers who are not on any terrorist database, looking for suspicious behaviors—excessive sweating and nervousness, frequent bathroom visits—that could signal that someone poses a danger.<sup>34</sup>

Employers are also gathering more and more information about employee behavior both on and off the job. Technology allows supervisors to monitor computer keystrokes and computer screens, phone calls, website use, voice mail, and e-mail. According to one survey, at least 66% of U.S. companies track employee Internet use, 45% log keystrokes, and 43% track employee e-mails.<sup>35</sup> One digital program tracks every move of every waiter and every order at restaurants. Sociometric Solutions conducts research in the banking, pharmaceutical, health care, and technology industries using sensors embedded in ID badges. These microphones, location sensors, and accelerometers track the communication behaviors of workers—tone of voice, posture, body language, and which employees talk to other employees and for how long. Employers also monitor worker behavior outside the workplace. Employees have been fired for posting offensive comments and pictures on blogs and social networking sites. Employers use personal information on Facebook and other social networking sites to screen out job applicants.

Companies have a right to gather information in order to improve performance and eliminate waste and theft. Organizations are also liable for the inappropriate behavior of members, such as when they send sexist or racist messages using their companies' e-mail systems. Investigators discovered that the restaurant monitoring not only reduced employee theft but increased revenue substantially as staff, knowing they were being observed, encouraged more patrons to order drinks and dessert. Truck sensors enabled

UPS to deliver 1.4 million additional packages a day with 1,000 fewer drivers. And monitoring can also lead to better working conditions. Bank of America added a 15-minute shared coffee break after a Sociometric Solutions study revealed that employees who took breaks together were more productive and less likely to quit.<sup>36</sup> However, efforts to monitor employee behavior are sometimes done without the knowledge of workers and are inconsistent with organizational values such as trust and community. Invading privacy takes away the right of employees to determine what they reveal about themselves; unwanted intrusion devalues their worth as individuals.<sup>37</sup>

In conclusion, leaders cast shadows not only when they lie but also when they mismanage information and engage in deceptive practices. Unethical leaders

- deny having knowledge that is in their possession,
- hide the truth,
- fail to reveal conflicts of interest,
- withhold information that followers need,
- use information solely for personal benefit,
- violate the privacy rights of followers,
- release information to the wrong people, and
- put followers in ethical binds by preventing them from releasing information that others have a legitimate right to know.

Patterns of deception, whether they take the form of outright lies or the hiding or distortion of information, destroy the trust that binds leaders and followers together. Consider the popularity of conspiracy theories, for example. Many Americans are convinced that the U.S. Air Force is hiding the fact that aliens landed in Roswell, New Mexico. Many also believe that law enforcement officials are deliberately ignoring evidence that John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King Jr. were the victims of elaborate assassination plots. Conspiracy theorist Alex Jones drew millions of visitors monthly to his website and radio show before they were shut down. He accused federal officials of faking mass shootings and bombings at Oklahoma City, the Boston Marathon, Sandy Hook Elementary, and Columbine. These theories are farfetched, but they flourish in part because government leaders have created a shadow atmosphere through deceit. Consider all the falsehoods surrounding the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, for instance. It wasn't until after the first Gulf War that we learned that our "smart bombs" weren't really so smart and missed their targets. The president and other cabinet officials overstated the danger posed by Saddam Hussein in order to rally support for the second Gulf War. The military covered up the fact that NFL star Pat Tillman was killed by friendly, not enemy, fire.

University of California, Davis history professor Kathryn Olmsted argues that many Americans believe that the government is out to get them in large part because government officials have previously engaged in secret conspiracies.<sup>38</sup> In 1962, for example, the Joint Chiefs of Staff cooked up a plan to get citizens to support a war on Fidel Castro's Cuba by sending a drone plane painted to look like a passenger airliner over the island to be shot

down. Fortunately, this plot (dubbed “Operation Northwoods”) never went into effect. However, many others were implemented. According to Olmsted,

By the height of the Cold War, government agents had consorted with mobsters to kill a foreign leader, dropped hallucinogenic drugs into the drinks of unsuspecting Americans in random bars, and considered launching fake terrorist attacks on Americans in the United States. Public officials had denied potentially life-saving treatment to African American men in medical experiments, sold arms to terrorists in return for American hostages, and faked documents to frame past presidents for crimes they had not committed. . . . Later, as industrious congressmen and journalists revealed these actual conspiracies by the government, many Americans came to believe that the most outrageous conspiracy theories about the government could be plausible.<sup>39</sup>

Leaders must also consider ethical issues related to the image they hope to project to followers. In order to earn their positions and to achieve their objectives, leaders carefully manage the impressions they make on others. Impression management can be compared to a performance on a stage.<sup>40</sup> Leader-actors carefully manage everything from the setting to their words and nonverbal behaviors in order to have the desired effects on their follower audiences. For example, presidential staffers make sure that the chief executive is framed by visual images (Mount Rushmore, the Oval Office, enthusiastic crowds of supporters) that reinforce his (or her) messages, popularity and presidential standing. Like politicians, leaders in charge of such high-risk activities as mountain climbing and whitewater kayaking also work hard to project the desired impressions. In order to appear confident and competent, they stand up straight, look others in the eye, and use an authoritative tone of voice.

Impression management is integral to effective leadership because followers have images of ideal leaders called *prototypes*.<sup>41</sup> We expect that the mountain climbing guide will be confident (otherwise, we would cancel the trip!), that the small-group leader will be active in group discussions, and that the military leader will stay calm under fire. The closer the person is to the ideal, the more likely it is that we will select that person as leader and accept her or his influence. Nonetheless, some people (including a number of students) find the concept of impression management ethically troubling. They particularly value integrity and see such role-playing as insincere because a leader may have to disguise his or her true feelings in order to be successful.

There is no doubt that impression management can be used to reach immoral ends. Disgraced financier Bernie Madoff, for example, convinced investors that he was a financial genius even as he was stealing their money in a gigantic fraud scheme. Careerists who are skilled at promoting themselves at the expense of others are all too common.<sup>42</sup> It would be impossible to eliminate this form of influence, however. For one thing, others form impressions of us whether we are conscious of that fact or not. They judge our personality and values by what we wear, for instance, even if we don't give much thought to what we put on in the morning. Most of us use impression management to convey our identities accurately, not to conceal them or to manipulate others.

When considering the morality of impression management, we need to consider its end products. Ethical impression managers meet group wants and needs, not just the needs of the leaders. They spur followers toward highly moral ends. These leaders use impression



management to convey accurate information, to build positive interpersonal relationships, and to facilitate good decisions. Unethical impression managers produce the opposite effects, subverting group wishes and lowering purpose and aspiration. These leaders use dysfunctional impression management to send deceptive messages, to undermine relationships, and to distort information, which leads to poor conclusions and decisions.<sup>43</sup>

## The Shadow of Inconsistency

Leaders deal with a variety of constituencies, each with its own set of abilities, needs, and interests. In addition, they like some followers better than others. Leader–member exchange (LMX) theory is based on the notion that a leader develops a closer relationship with one group of followers than with others.<sup>44</sup> Members of the “in-group” become the leader’s advisers, assistants, and lieutenants. High levels of trust, mutual influence, and support characterize their exchanges with the leader. Members of the “out-group” are expected to carry out the basic requirements of their jobs. Their communication with the leader is not as trusting and supportive. Not surprisingly, members of in-groups are more satisfied and productive than members of out-groups. For that reason, LMX theorists encourage leaders to develop close relationships with as many of their followers as possible.

Situational variables also complicate leader–follower interactions. Guidelines that work in ordinary times may break down under stressful conditions. A professor may state in a syllabus that five absences will result in a student’s flunking the class, for instance. However, she may have to loosen that standard if a flu epidemic strikes the campus.

Diverse followers, varying levels of relationships, and elements of the situation make consistency an ethical burden of leadership. Should we, as leaders, treat all followers equally even if some are more skilled and committed or closer to us than others? When should we bend the rules and for whom? Shadows arise when leaders appear to act arbitrarily and unfairly when faced with questions such as these, as in the case of a resident assistant who enforces dormitory rules for some students but ignores infractions committed by friends. Of course, determining whether a leader is casting light or shadow may depend on where you stand as a follower. If you are the star player on your team, you may feel justified taking it easy during practices. If you are less talented, you probably resent the fact that the team’s star doesn’t have to work as hard as you.

Too often, inconsistency arises between what a leader advocates and how he or she behaves, such as when rabbis and pastors have affairs at the same time they are encouraging members of their congregations to build strong marriages. Managers at Britain’s EDF energy company sparked a union strike after installing meters in employee company cars to track their location and performance. The issue wasn’t so much the meters as the refusal of managers to put the same tracking devices in their own company vehicles. Duncan Selbie, head of Britain’s National Health Service, was criticized for hiring a taxi to travel less than a mile after giving a lecture on the importance of exercise (particularly brisk walking).<sup>45</sup>

In recent years, a number of prominent figures seem to have taken inconsistency to a new level. Former Speaker of the House Dennis Hastert advocated for stronger punishment for sex crimes and sexual abuse of children while paying hush money to a man he molested when working as a high school wrestling coach. Comedian Bill Cosby criticized fellow African Americans for not taking personal responsibility and bad parenting even as he was allegedly drugging and raping a series of women. (He was convicted on three counts of sexual assault.)

Issues of inconsistency can also arise in a leader's relationships with those outside the immediate group or organization. Misgivings about the current system of financing political elections stem from the fact that large donors can buy access to elected officials and influence their votes. Take the rollback of banking regulations, for example. Congress passed the Dodd-Frank Act in 2010 to curb the excesses that caused the global financial crash. Eight years later, the House and Senate eliminated many of the provisions of Dodd-Frank, reducing regulation of the banking industry. Banks and credit unions gave twice as much to senators supporting the rollback than to those opposing the bill.<sup>46</sup>

## The Shadow of Misplaced and Broken Loyalties

Leaders must weigh a host of loyalties or duties when making choices. In addition to their duties to employees and stockholders, they must consider their obligations to their families, their local communities, their professions, the larger society, and the environment. Noteworthy leaders put the needs of the larger community above selfish interest. For example, outdoor clothing manufacturer Timberland receives praise for its commitment to community service and social responsibility. Company leaders pay employees for volunteer service, partner with community groups, and support nonprofit organizations through the sale of selected products. In contrast, those leaders who appear to put their own interests first (see Case Study 1.3) are worthy of condemnation.

Loyalties can be broken as well as misplaced. If anything, we heap more scorn on those who betray our trust than on those who misplace their loyalties. Many of history's villains are traitors: Judas Iscariot, Benedict Arnold, Vidkun Quisling (he sold out his fellow Norwegians to the Nazis), and Tokyo Rose, a U.S. citizen who broadcast to American troops on behalf of the Japanese during World War II. More recent examples of leaders who violated the trust of followers include the leaders of Lehman Brothers, who told investors that the firm was strong even as it was struggling to raise money to stave off bankruptcy during the financial crisis, and cyclist Lance Armstrong. Armstrong betrayed his team sponsors, fans, and fellow cancer survivors by doping (and then vehemently denying he had done so) in order to win seven Tour de France races.

Employees are often victimized by corporate betrayal motivated by the bottom line. Individuals commonly develop deep loyalties to their coworkers and to their employers. As a consequence, they may do more than is required in their job descriptions, turn down attractive job offers from other employers, and decide to invest their savings in company stock.<sup>47</sup> Unfortunately, companies and their leaders often fail to respond in kind. During economic downturns, they are quick to slash salaries and benefits and to lay off even the most loyal workers. Even if business is good, they don't hesitate to merge with other firms, eliminating positions, or to shut down domestic plants and research facilities in order to move their operations overseas, where labor costs are lower. Organizational leaders admit that their organizations aren't as loyal as they used to be. One survey of senior level North American managers found that only 13% believe that their organizations are more loyal than they were five years ago.<sup>48</sup> In response growing corporate disloyalty, many younger workers limit the length of their commitment to their employers, with over 40% expecting to leave in two years or less.

The most egregious cases of betrayal are cases where adults take advantage of children. Catholic priests in the United States, Brazil, Chile, Australia, Ireland, Germany, and



elsewhere used their positions as respected spiritual authorities to gain access to young parishioners for sexual gratification.<sup>49</sup> Church leaders failed to stop the abusers or themselves engaged in abuse. In far too many instances, they let offending priests continue to minister and to have contact with children. Often, church officials transferred pedophile priests without warning their new congregations about these men's troubled pasts. Officials at Michigan State, USA Gymnastics, and the United States Olympic Committee turned a blind eye to complaints that team doctor Larry Nassar was sexually molesting young female gymnasts. Over 300 girls and young women were victimized.<sup>50</sup>

Philosopher George Fletcher argues that we define ourselves through our loyalties to families, sports franchises, companies, and other groups and organizations.<sup>51</sup> Fellow philosopher Josiah Royce contends that loyalty to the right cause produces admirable character traits like justice, wisdom, and compassion.<sup>52</sup> Loyalty is a significant burden placed on leaders. In fact, well-placed loyalty can make a significant moral statement. Such was the case with Pee Wee Reese. The Brooklyn Dodger never wavered in his loyalty to Jackie Robinson, the first black player in baseball's major leagues. In front of one especially hostile crowd in Cincinnati, Ohio, Reese put his arm around Robinson's shoulders in a display of support.<sup>53</sup>

## The Shadow of Irresponsibility

Earlier, we observed that breadth of responsibility is one of the factors distinguishing between the role of leader and that of follower. Followers are largely responsible for their own actions or, in the case of a self-directed work team, for those of their peers. This is not the case for leaders. They are held accountable for the performance of entire departments or other units. However, determining the extent of a leader's responsibility is far from easy. Can we blame a college coach for the misdeeds of team members during the off-season or for the excesses of the university's athletic booster club? Are clothing executives responsible for the actions of their overseas contractors who force workers to labor in sweatshops? Do employers owe employees a minimum wage level, a certain degree of job security, and safe working conditions? If military personnel are punished for following unethical orders, should those who issue those orders receive the same or harsher penalties?

Leaders act irresponsibly when they fail to make reasonable efforts to prevent misdeeds on the part of their followers, ignore or deny ethical problems, don't shoulder responsibility for the consequences of their directives, deny their duties to followers, or try to deflect blame onto others. We don't hold coaches responsible for everything their players do. Nonetheless, we want them to encourage their athletes to obey the law and to punish any misbehavior. Most of us expect Gap, Nike, JC Penney, Walmart, and Banana Republic to make every effort to treat their overseas labor force fairly, convinced that the companies owe their workers (even the ones employed by subcontractors) decent wages and working conditions. When an organization's employees break the law or make mistakes, we want the group's leader to take accountability. Penny Lawrence, a top Oxfam executive, accepted blame for failing to stop sexual misconduct by the charity's staff in Chad and Haiti. "I am ashamed that this happened on my watch," she said in her resignation statement, "and I take full responsibility."<sup>54</sup>

Unfortunately, far too many leaders try to pin the blame on others for their misdeeds or the unethical behavior of their organizations. Richard Sackler, president and part owner of Purdue Pharma, tried to deny responsibility for his company's role in the opioid crisis. The firm aggressively marketed OxyContin, encouraged doctors to prescribe the

highest amounts of the powerful painkiller, and failed to alert authorities that the drug was being abused and sold on the street. Instead of accepting accountability, Sackler pushed the blame onto addicts. In a company e-mail he said, “We have to hammer on abusers in every way possible. They are the culprits and the problem. They are reckless criminals.”<sup>55</sup> Facebook’s Sheryl Sandberg also deflected blame by hiring a public relations firm to attack critics of the company.<sup>56</sup>

Many corporate scandals demonstrate what can happen when boards of directors fail to live up to their responsibilities. Far too many boards in the past functioned only as rubber stamps. Made up largely of friends of the CEO and those doing business with the firm, they were quick to approve executive pay increases and other management proposals. Some board members appeared interested only in collecting their fees and made little effort to understand the operations or finances of the companies they were supposed to be directing. Other members were well intentioned but lacked expertise. Now federal regulations require that the chair of a corporation’s audit committee be a financial expert. The compensation, audit, and nominating committees must be made up of people who have no financial ties to the organization. These requirements should help prevent future abuses, but only if board members take their responsibilities seriously. (I’ll have more to say about effective corporate governance in Chapter 10.)

These, then, are some of the common shadows cast by leaders faced with the ethical challenges of leadership. Identifying these shadows raises two important questions: (1) *Why is it that, when faced with the same ethical challenges, some leaders cast light and others cast shadows?* (2) *What steps can we take as leaders to cast more light than shadow?* In the next chapter, we will explore the forces that contribute to the shadow side of leadership and outline ways to meet those challenges.

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## IMPLICATIONS AND APPLICATIONS

- Understanding the dark (bad, toxic) side of leadership is the first step in promoting good or ethical leadership.
- The contrast between ethical and unethical leadership is as dramatic as the contrast between light and darkness.
- Toxic or bad leaders engage in destructive behaviors. They may be ineffective, unethical, or both. Common types of bad leaders include incompetent, rigid, intemperate, callous, corrupt, insular, and evil.
- Certain ethical challenges or dilemmas are inherent in the leadership role. If you choose to become a leader, recognize that you accept ethical burdens along with new tasks, expectations, and rewards.
- Followers face their own set of ethical challenges. When filling a follower role, you will need to determine the extent of your obligations to the group, decide when to obey or disobey, combat cynicism, offer dissent, and deliver bad news to your leaders.
- Power can have a corrosive effect on values and behavior. You must determine how much power to accumulate, what forms of power to use, and how much power to give to followers.
- If you abuse power, you will generally overlook the needs of followers as you take advantage of the perks that come with your position.
- Leaders have access to more information than do followers. In addition to deciding whether or not to hide or tell the truth, as a leader,

you'll have to determine when to reveal what you know and to whom, how to gather and use information, and so on.

- A certain degree of inconsistency is probably inevitable in leadership roles, but you will cast shadows if you are seen as acting arbitrarily and unfairly. You must also attempt to match your behavior with your words and values—to “walk your talk.”
- As a leader, you'll have to balance your needs and the needs of your small group or organization

with loyalties or duties to broader communities. Expect condemnation if you put narrow, selfish concerns first.

- Leadership brings a broader range of responsibility, but determining the limits of accountability may be difficult. You will cast a shadow if you fail to make a reasonable attempt to prevent abuse or to shoulder the blame, deny that you have a duty to followers, or deflect blame onto others.

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### FOR FURTHER EXPLORATION, CHALLENGE, AND SELF-ASSESSMENT

1. Create an ethics journal. In it, describe the ethical dilemmas you encounter as a leader and as a follower, how you resolve them, how you feel about the outcomes, and what you learn that will transfer to future ethical decisions. You may also want to include your observations about the moral choices made by public figures. Make periodic entries as you continue to read this text.
2. Harvard professor Rosabeth Kanter argues that “powerlessness corrupts and absolute powerlessness corrupts absolutely.” Do you agree? What are some of the symptoms of powerlessness?
3. What does your score on the Destructive Leader Behavior Scale (Self-Assessment 1.1) reveal about your leader? How can you use this information to become a more effective follower? As an alternative, reflect on your Personal Power Profile (Self-Assessment 1.2). What do your scores reveal about your attitude toward power and the ethical issues you might face in exercising power? Would you like to change your power profile? How can you do so?
4. What factors do you consider when determining the extent of your loyalty to an individual, a group, or an organization?
5. Debate the following propositions in class:
  - The federal government should set limits on executive compensation.
  - Coaches should be held accountable for the actions of their players in the off-season.
  - Corporate leaders have an obligation to be loyal to their employees.
  - Married politicians and religious figures who have extramarital affairs should be forced to resign.
  - Employers have the right to monitor the behavior of workers when the workers are not on the job.
6. Evaluate the work of a corporate or nonprofit board of directors. Is the board made up largely of outside members? Are the members qualified? Does the board fulfill its leadership responsibilities? Write up your findings.
7. Write a research paper on the privacy issues surrounding drones, police body cameras, or the use of DNA databases in criminal investigations. Conclude with a set of recommendations on how these issues should be resolved.
8. Look for examples of unethical leadership behavior in the news and classify them according to the six shadows. What patterns do you note?

As an alternative, look for examples of ethical leadership. How do these leaders cast light instead of shadow?

9. What is the toughest ethical challenge of being a follower? How do you meet that challenge?

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## STUDENT STUDY SITE

Visit the student study site at <https://study.sagepub.com/johnsonmecl7e> to access full SAGE journal articles for further research and information on key chapter topics.

### Case Study 1.1

#### Keeping Harvey Weinstein's Dark Secrets

Powerful leaders are not only more tempted to abuse their power; they have the means to cover up their abuse when they do. For decades, there were rumors that movie mogul Harvey Weinstein was a sexual predator. In fact, Seth MacFarlane joked with the Best Supporting Actress nominees at the 2013 Oscar nomination ceremony, telling the women, "Congratulations, you five ladies no longer have to pretend to be attracted to Harvey Weinstein."<sup>1</sup> Weinstein, the co-founder of Miramax and Weinstein pictures, allegedly would pressure young actresses into sexual encounters in return for casting them in his movies. Victims included Gwyneth Paltrow, Angelina Jolie, Ashley Judd, and Rose McGowan. Weinstein's abuses came to light in *New York Times* and *New Yorker* articles. Multiple accusers claim that the producer made constant sexual propositions, exposed himself, masturbated in front of them, and forced them into sex. Weinstein apologized for his behavior and was removed from his company.

Producer Weinstein used his wealth and influence as a Hollywood superstar to silence his accusers. In some cases, complainants reached nondisclosure agreements (NDAs) where, in return for a cash payment, they

agreed to not further pursue or even to discuss their cases. If they did talk about their settlements, they would have to repay the money they received. In other instances, Weinstein hired private security companies to dig up dirt about the women to use against them. In the case of model Ambra Battilana Gutierrez, false information (i.e., charges she was a prostitute) from these investigations was published in the *New York Post* tabloid. Investigators, some of them former Mossad agents, also investigated reporters and tried to identify their sources with the goal of stopping the *New Yorker* and *New York Times* stories. The producer also enlisted the help of former employees to gather information and to stop possible press stories.

Weinstein's position as a Hollywood gatekeeper made it hard for his victims to speak up. Challenging him could mean being blackballed from the movie industry. On the other hand, "Everyone knew if you were in a Harvey movie, chances are you were going to win or be nominated for an Oscar."<sup>2</sup> Miramax earned best picture awards for *The English Patient*, *Shakespeare in Love*, and *Chicago*; the studio notched 58 Oscar wins in all, grossing over \$3 billion. The Weinstein Company, founded in

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2005, produced *The King's Speech*, *Inglorious Bastards*, *The Fighter*, *The Artist*, *The Iron Lady*, and *Undeclared*, all which took home awards.

Many were complicit in keeping Weinstein's dark secrets. His staff—assistants, drivers, and executives—kept quiet in order to keep their jobs. Politicians like Hilary Clinton (who was reportedly warned about Weinstein) apparently looked the other way because he was a major donor and recruited other celebrity contributors. Prosecutors may have decided not to file charges because they received information and donations from Weinstein's legal team. Journalists didn't actively pursue leads because they had book deals and other business dealings with Weinstein. Ronan Farrow, who helped break the story, reports that he received push-back from many news outlets for revealing the allegations. Commenting on how the press self-censored when it came to Weinstein, one editor noted, "People don't want to report on the table; they want a seat at the table."<sup>3</sup>

The Weinstein scandal prompted California and New York legislators to introduce legislation banning nondisclosure settlements. Other states could challenge these settlements given that these agreements might hide "public hazards." Zelda Perkins, a former assistant to Harvey Weinstein, decided to speak up despite signing an NDA. (The producer wanted her in the room while he bathed and often tried to pull her into his bed.) Perkins hopes to draw attention to the harm done by these settlements:

Unless somebody does this there won't be a debate about how egregious these agreements are and the amount of duress that victims are put under. My entire world fell in because I thought the law was there to protect those who abided by it. I discovered that it had nothing to do with right and wrong and everything to do with money and power.<sup>4</sup>

There are victims' advocates who defend NDAs, however. They believe that some women will be more reluctant to come forward if their cases are publicized. Victims may fear negative publicity and retaliation; settlement amounts may drop.

The Weinstein scandal could mark the beginning of a dramatic change in film industry culture. In the past, sexual misbehavior was tolerated. Polish director Roman Polanski received an academy award for *The Pianist* even though he fled the United States after being convicted of having sex with a 13-year-old. Until recently, major actors would work for reduced rates in Woody Allen films even though Allen had an affair with, and then married, the adopted daughter of ex-partner Mia Farrow and is accused of molesting another stepdaughter. The Weinstein revelations set off a tsunami of other sexual misconduct complaints in the movie industry, involving Amazon producer Ray Price and actors Kevin Spacey, Dustin Hoffman, Casey Affleck, Jeremy Piven, and others. Former Weinstein assistant Perkins hopes that the focus will shift from the producer's misbehavior to reforming the system: "Money and power enabled, and the legal system has enabled. Ultimately, the reason Harvey Weinstein followed the route he did is because he was allowed to, and that's our fault. As a culture, that's our fault."<sup>5</sup>

### Discussion Probes

1. How can we keep superstars in any field from abusing their power and covering up their actions? How can we protect the powerless?
2. Should nondisclosure agreements be banned? Why or why not?
3. Do you think that the Weinstein scandal marks a significant shift in Hollywood culture?
4. Do you consider the reputation of actors, directors, and producers when deciding which movies or television shows to view?

Would you refuse to go to a movie or watch a television show if you knew that an important actor, director, or producer was a sexual harasser or predator?

5. How much responsibility do we, as entertainment consumers, have for empowering the bad behavior of movie and television stars and recording artists?

### Notes

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## Case Study 1.2

### Do-It-Yourself Guns

In 2013, Cory Wilson of the group Defense Distributed ignited a protracted legal battle. After test firing a plastic gun made with a 3-D printer, he posted the blueprints for making the gun online. The plans were downloaded 100,000 times before the State Department forced Wilson to remove the blueprints, claiming that he violated U.S. law forbidding Americans from exporting sensitive military technology. Wilson then sued the federal government for infringing on his free speech rights. In 2018, the State Department settled the suit and paid a portion of Wilson's legal expenses. State department officials withdrew their objections because they no longer believed that the blueprints posed a security threat.

Wilson's legal victory was short lived. The attorneys general from 19 states and Washington, D.C., quickly sought to keep the plans offline. Federal judge Robert Lasnik ruled in their favor by issuing a temporary restraining order. In his ruling, Judge Lasnik declared that Wilson's First Amendment free speech rights "are dwarfed by the irreparable harms the states are likely to suffer if the existing restrictions are withdrawn."<sup>1</sup> But the judge's ruling didn't stop dissemination of the blueprints. Defense Distributed made the files available for purchase to customers in states not covered by the ban. Wilson urged others who had the plans to submit their own files to his platform and receive half of the sales price. While Wilson

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resigned from Defense Distributed after being charged with having sex with a minor, the new director vows to continue the legal fight.

Those who support the release of 3-D gun plans argue that “code is speech.”<sup>2</sup> They compare computer code to the words in books, arguing that the Internet is like a library. Banning the blueprints, then, is a form of censorship. Utah Senator Mike Lee notes that publishing a design for a gun is not the same as possessing such a gun and that plastic guns are already banned by the Undetectable Firearms Act of 1988. Others point out that making a 3-D gun is expensive and time consuming. A good 3-D printer can cost \$10,000 or more and manufacturing a gun can take hours or even days. Criminals who want to arm themselves will likely find it much cheaper and easier to buy illegal weapons. Then, too, current 3-D plastic guns are unreliable because the plastic can’t handle the pressure generated when firing a bullet: “Without technical expertise on how 3D printers work, you’re more likely to end up with an exploding gun than a working one.”<sup>3</sup> Even if the gun fires, it is unlikely to shoot a second time.

Those who oppose the release of the plans point to the dangers of 3-D guns. Not only are such weapons hard for security devices to detect but they are untraceable, making it impossible for law enforcement to identify their owners. Terrorists could use printers to make weapons to use in their attacks. Gun printers don’t have to go through the background checks required of other gun owners. Bills were introduced in both houses of Congress to ban 3-D guns nationwide. California Senator Dianne Feinstein and three colleagues asked Internet firms to stop hosting 3-D gun blueprints because “doing so will make all of our communities safer.”<sup>4</sup> 3-D weapons are already illegal in Australia, the United Kingdom, and Japan.

The longer the legal battle continues, the higher the stakes. That’s because printer technology continues to evolve. The cost of 3-D printers

is likely to drop, making them more affordable. 3-D guns are becoming increasingly durable with the use of metal parts and stronger plastic that enable them to be fired multiple times.

### Discussion Probes

1. Do you think that computer code is a form of free speech? Why or why not?
2. What should take priority—freedom of speech or public safety?
3. Should plans for 3-D guns be banned from all websites? Why or why not?
4. Is it too late for any ban to be effective?
5. What kind of information (if any) should be kept off the Internet?

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3. Duan, C., & Westling, J. (2018, August 30). The judge in the latest 3D-printed gun case got 3D printing totally wrong. *Slate*.
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