

# SKIDMORE

C O L L E G E

Office of Leadership Activities

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## Skill Building – Ethical Leadership

Ethical leadership involves both acting and leading ethically over time, all the time.

### The “Why?”

Traditionally, the view of leadership has been that the main goal of the leader is to improve the production of a group. Today, the definition of leadership has expanded greatly, with modern definitions asserting that leaders have the responsibility for ensuring standards of treatment and interaction. Good leadership refers not only to competence, but to ethics and transforming people as well. Leaders have the ability to nurture aspects of organizational culture and interpersonal values to high levels of ethical concern. Ethical leadership requires ethical leaders. If leaders are ethical, they can ensure that ethical practices are carried out throughout the organization.

Ethical leadership builds trust, brings credibility and respect, and leads to collaboration. It creates a positive working environment, affords self-respect and allows leaders to occupy the moral high ground.

### How?

General guidelines:

- Ethical leadership requires a clear and coherent ethical framework on which the leader can draw in making decisions and taking action.
- Your ethical framework should agree with the vision, and mission of the organization or initiative.
- Ethics should be a topic of discussion – out in the open
- Ethical thought must be connected to action
- Ethical leadership is a shared process
- Put the general good before your own interests and ego
- Institutionalize ways for people to question your authority/leadership
- Don't take yourself too seriously
- Consider the consequences to others of your decisions, and look for ways to minimize harm
- Treat everyone with fairness, honesty, and respect all the time
- Collaborate inside and outside the organization
- Communicate
- Work to become increasingly culturally and interpersonally competent
- Take cultural sensitivity and cultural competence seriously
- Don't outstay your usefulness.
- Never stop reexamining your ethics and your leadership

Adapted from online resources maintained by The Community Tool Box

To learn more go to <http://ctb.ku.edu/en/default.aspx>.

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