

Chapter 45

Self-Awareness: A Way to Promote Ethical Management

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this chapter is to provide managers and employees with ways to internalize ethical behavior in a company. One of the ways to strengthen the effectiveness of management is to give managers the necessary tools that will enable employees of the post-modern age to internalize moral principles and ideas and to understand what is acceptable and what is prohibited. This theory relies on Wolf's (2008, 2013a) claim that man can be trained to be self-aware as the first step toward actual ethical conduct. Her approach is based on the principles of the humanist approach, which maintains that people are endowed with an "ethical sense" and wisdom as well as with the ability to correct their behavior and to choose their own course of action. This chapter utilizes the foundations and principles of this approach to explain what motivates a person to behave morally.

INTRODUCTION

What the superior person seeks is in themselves. What the average person seeks is in others. - Confucius

Much information exists regarding methods for moral training and education in the field of ethical education and business ethics as well. (Kohlberg & Turiel, 1971; Bull 1969 ; Kidweel, 2001; Bennis, & James, 2005; Budden & Budden, 2011 ; Falkenberg & Woicoshyn, 2007; Philips & Margolis, 1999 ; Boutmama, 1998 ; McCabe & Trevino, 1993, 1995; Ruitz & Valljos, 1999; Wolf, 2000, 2008, 2013a, 2013b ; Solomon, 1992 Schwarts, 1994) Ethical education is obviously a difficult task, especially because so many complex factors are involved, one of which is the complexity of an individual's personality. According to Freud, one of the dominant characteristics of man is the urge to destroy (Freud, 1931). If this is the case, then ethical guidance is indeed a challenging undertaking. This chapter offers a new way, based on the Logotherapeutic approach, to guide employees and managers in the direction of ethical behavior.

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Self-Awareness

Managers have been shown many ways to ensure ethical behavior amongst their employees. But ethical behavior, including both moral responsibility and moral principles, is often lacking in the workplace. (Coulomb, 1993; Holinger, 1986; Aidt, 2009, Anokhin & Schlze, 2009, Svensson, 2005, Gardiner, 2006) Managers are troubled by the dishonesty, violations of clear-cut company rules, and unwillingness to comply with ethical codes because such behavior will damage the company's reputation and may even lead to its demise.

Many researchers and pedagogical experts have written on how to train one for ethical maturity. Kohlberg and Turiel (1971) referred to this type of training amongst students and suggested that the method of debate within the framework of the group could accomplish this goal. Nisan (1991, 1966) referred to the feeling of commitment and the ethical identification which must be developed within the individual. A person who views himself as ethical will aspire to act accordingly. The development of one's ethical identity is an important parameter in the building of an ethical personality. Oser, (1996) the Swiss educationist, mentioned "Negative morality". According to him, one can learn from ethical violations what is right, what is wrong and can show how one should act. Regarding the intensification of business ethics, researchers point out the option of continuing educational programs using tools such as building scenarios. (Budden & Budden, 2011) These programs raise debates about ethical situations and dilemmas which can arise in the work place and in business.

Furthermore, Kidwell (2001) proposed an ethics code to enhance ethical behavior in companies and organizations. Wolf (2008, 2013a) also presented an outline for building a common ethical code between all the members of an organization. According to her, the ethical code is best composed by the interaction between all members of the organization, this strengthens the obligation of the members as well.

A substantial effect on ethical behavior is connected to the essence of culture, as Wolf (2010) already wrote about the influence of culture on ethical judgment and activity. Despite the wide spread practice of ethics and teaching ethics in the past couple of years, corruption and ethical conflicts still exist. Therefore this work presents an emphasis on internalizing ethics. This article presents a method which could help the individual adopt a thought process which gives ethical consideration before taking action. The focus is not on the teaching of ethics or values but on internalizing them completely until they are a part of one's being. As Everett et al. (2006) said: "Virtue ethics argues that morality is first and foremost an integral and embodied part of the person, and what is generally needed to make the world better place is not simply more ethical rules, but more inherently moral people" (p. 7)

It is important to say that despite the diverse literature that exists on the subject of moral education, especially the education and guidance of employees and managers, there has not been any dramatic improvement in the state of business ethics in recent years, or a significant decrease in the number of business transgression.

For example, in recent years in the United States, serious instances of corruption have been disclosed in companies such as Enron, World Com and others, which have come to be known informally as the "September 11" of the American economy. (Milles, 2002; Wolf, 2013a, 2008 Candler, 2009; Trevino & Brown, 2005; Gardiner 2006) These scandals raise questions regarding the correct and suitable way to guide proper behavior.

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