



Conducting a Personal Ethics Audit

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Conducting your own personal ethics audit is more than just lip service; it is a commitment to define what you are and what you will be as an ethical leader. Take some time to consider the questions under each of the virtues listed below. Which virtues are highly visible in your leadership every day? These are your strengths. For all the rest, choose a few that you would like to develop.

PERSONAL VIRTUES OF ETHICAL LEADERS

TEMPERATE:

- Do I react calmly, even in a crisis?
- Am I so self-driven that I exercise my will to get things done my way?
- Do people look to me to calm a situation or articulate a thoughtful approach to resolution?

PRUDENT:

- Am I wise in all my life dealings, so that I look at life from an ethical point of view?
- Am I aware of the ethical principles I am violating when I encounter problems in my life?
- Do I make rash decisions, which I later regret?
- Do my decisions frequently result in emotional turmoil for my family, my co-workers or myself?

NOT PUGNACIOUS:

- Am I inclined to make peace when a conflict begins rather than welcoming a fight?
- Have I ever hit someone?
- Do I sometimes kick a door or throw something when angry and frustrated?
- Do I verbally strike out at others because of angry feelings?

GENTLE:

- Am I blunt or brash when confronting someone who has erred?
- Am I tactless with people, finding out much later that I hurt them?
- Do I lose patience with people who have weaknesses?
- Do those who know me best, including my spouse; consider me a "gentleman or a gentlewoman"?
- Do I often react negatively without waiting to hear all the facts?
- Do I quickly jump to defend my rights?

NOT CONTENTIOUS:

- Do I have a cooperative spirit when working with others, or am I known to be quarrelsome and competitive?
- Do I enjoy taking opposite sides from others?
- Do people who formerly fought each other find it difficult to sustain their feud in my presence?
- Am I quickly attracted to someone else's battle?
- Am I a peacemaker striving to create harmony and unity?

FREE FROM THE LOVE OF MONEY:

- Do I relate success to the development of inner qualities rather than outward gain?
- When I have a need, do I always think money is the way to solve it?
- Do I let my job stifle time for personal and family life?
- Am I more excited by a promotion at work or by a new opportunity to serve others?
- Am I easily duped into get-rich-quick schemes?
- Am I generous and wise in responding to the financial needs of others?
- Do I think that if I just had a little more money I would really be content?

TESTED THROUGH EXPERIENCE:

- Have I faced a sufficient number of tests, which demonstrate the reality of my steadfastness as a leader?
- Can I handle a compliment without embarrassment and a rebuke without depression?
- Do I avoid activities that I know I will not do well in?
- Do I boast about my accomplishments?
- Do I look down on people whom I consider to be less educated or less important than myself?
- Do I refuse to ask directions when I need them?

PERSONAL VIRTUES OF ETHICAL LEADERS (CONTINUED)

NOT SELF-WILLED:

- Do I have flexibility when dealing with people and ideas?
- Do I stubbornly hold on to a wrong idea once I know it is wrong?
- Do I give the other person a fair and open hearing, in hopes of learning from him or her?
- Am I able to submit to the wishes and counsel of others, especially those who are older or my superior?
- Am I known as the man or woman who must have it “my way” if I’m going to play the game?

NOT QUICK TEMPERED:

- Do I find myself being angry often?
- Does that come on quickly?
- What about when I am driving my car?
- Am I quicker tempered at home or at work?
- Who provokes me and do I provoke in return?
- Does it take a lot to get me to “cross the line” or just a nudge?

PUBLIC VIRTUES OF ETHICAL LEADERS

SELF-CONTROLLED:

- Can I consciously keep cool when the situation is out of control?
- Do I just “let it go” when a situation threatens?
- Do I know or apply any personal techniques to quell my anger or outbursts?
- Would people say that I am the one they want standing with them in the face of conflict, or would they rather have me leave the room so they can deal with the issue peacefully?

ABOVE REPROACH:

- Do I evaluate my reputation and who gives me feedback?
- Do I get feedback from those closest to me and who really know me in private (e.g. my wife, my children, my friends)?
- Do people trust me with confidential information?
- Is my life a worthy example for others to follow?

HOSPITABLE:

- Do I display an openness to other people that causes me to value their company?
- Do I open up my office/life/budget only to those whom I know and like?
- Do the people who don’t like me think that I don’t welcome their input or opinions?
- Am I stingy with my money or time when I see someone in need?
- Do I find joy when something I own can be used by someone else, or do I like to “guard” my precious possessions?

LOVING WHAT IS GOOD:

- Do I long after and appreciate goodness and kindness, while discarding and avoiding those things that influence me or my family negatively?
- Do I have discernment from about what is good and evil?
- Have I made sacrifices, which show my commitment to stay “close” to what is good and wholesome?
- Am I so positively oriented toward good that I am known for it?

JUST:

- Am I known as a fair-minded person?
- Do I ever make judgments without hearing both sides of the story?
- Do people come to me for counsel, trusting that I will help them land on a fair point of view?
- Is my life in such shape that someone could say about me, “There is a wise and fair person in his or her own dealings with issues?”

OF GOOD REPUTATION:

- Do people in my world respect me as having high moral standards and impeccable ethics?
- Do I do all things without complaining?
- Do I make fair business deals?
- Do I honor my promises even if they were not put into writing?
- Do I show respect to co- workers and bosses?
- Am I often crude in my talk?
- Do I break my word?
- Are my possessions in good order?
- Do I keep on a schedule?

SOBER MINDED:

- Am I free from worldly excesses that tend to cloud my thinking?
- Do I have controlling habits, which blind me in one way or another?
- Do I get nervous when the conversation gets serious?
- What is my response to that – humor (class clown), quiet and non-responsive?

DIGNIFIED:

- Do other people ever apologize for swearing in my presence?
- Do evil words and behaviors of others cause me to grieve inside?
- Do I have a conscious regard for the right things to rule my life?
- Am I the kind of person whom others would comfortably put in a responsible position, knowing that I would be dependable and honorable?
- Is my inner and outer life respectable?

FAMILY VIRTUES OF ETHICAL LEADERS

FAITHFUL IN MARRIAGE:

- If I am married, do I have eyes only for my spouse?
- Do I have trouble with lusting after other women or men?
- Do I look twice, or once too long?
- Do I demand my “rights” from my spouse in a selfish way?
- Do my spouse and I have disharmony on important matters?
- Do I know how to meet the special needs of my spouse in a creative way?

GOOD MANAGER OF THEIR HOUSEHOLD:

- Would my family say we are “in order?” Or, would they say we are constantly running around trying to keep it together?
- What about our emotional life together – is it reliable or strained?
- Do we just look like an orderly family, but live in a different reality behind closed doors?
- Do we know what our schedules are?
- Have we planned for the present and the future financially?
- Do we bounce checks just because of lack of order or discipline in our finances?
- Does my spouse think highly of me and the role I have in the household?
- Do I carry my own load, or do I expect everyone else to serve me?

CHILDREN UNDER CONTROL WITH DIGNITY:

- Do I reflect wisdom and consistency in the care and discipline of my children so that they are well-behaved and well-adjusted, both at home and in public?
- Are my children dependable and polite, having a reputation of not being insubordinate to authorities or “wild” in their behavior?
- Do my children treat me with respect and obedience?
- Do I spend time regularly teaching my children the wisdom they need for life?
- Do I have trouble disciplining my children without anger?
- Do my older children who have left home seek and respect my counsel?
- Do I have a smooth-running household, which demonstrates the presence of love and respect for one another?

Based on your audit results, how would you answer the question, “Are you an ethical leader?” You have now identified those areas where you are strong and now need to accept that there are areas you need to work on. The good news is that growing as an ethical leader is about “direction, not perfection.” When you identify a virtue that you need to address, you are already pointed in the direction of change. Celebrate that and don’t worry about finding out that you aren’t perfect. Instead, be the leader who doesn’t stop growing.

**I meant what I said,
and I said what I meant.
A school business leader
is faithful, one hundred percent!**