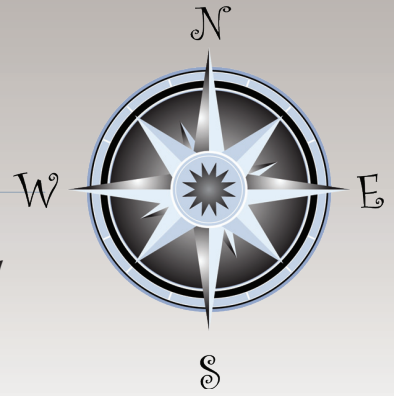


# The Courage Principle of ETHICS



*“The influence of good citizens makes society prosper; moral decay destroys it.”*

## PRINCIPLE OF THE WEEK

Ethics are the standards that govern the conduct of a person. “Ethics (or morality) refers to well-founded standards of right and wrong that prescribe what humans ought to do, usually in terms of rights, obligations, benefits to society, fairness, or specific virtues.” (Manuel Velasquez, Claire Andre, Thomas Shanks, S.J., and Michael J. Meyers) Ethics are the boundaries we set as a society that oblige us to refrain from things like assault, murder, rape, stealing and fraud. They also include the moral codes to practice honesty, compassion, forgiveness and loyalty.

Morality is a key component in the success of any society. Webster defines it as principles, standards, or habits with respect to right or wrong conduct. Without a moral guide that regulates behavior, individual self-control will not exist and we will live in chaos. A society without ethics cannot function properly.

Everything created has a DNA and within it is its code of behavior and purpose. In the case of animals, they have definite behavior patterns that help them fulfill their purposes; it is their instinct. People are different than animals because they possess a conscience and the gift of reasoning. This allows them to know, understand and follow values thereby determining the consequences of their actions.

Every person is born with a conscience – the ability to discern good from bad. We know by nature that it is wrong to kill, steal or destroy that which belongs to others - that is our conscience. That is why people do bad things in the dark or when no one is watching. Our conscience also reinforces the rights and

wrongs or ethics that we learn. It is often our conscience that provokes second thoughts before making a decision or the guilt that ensues after making a bad decision.

There are many solid and foundational reasons for the ethics or rules we have in society. They are formed to protect, maintain order and encourage fairness and trust. Because people have the ability to reason, they need rules. Rules become codes for proper functioning (moral or ethical codes). We need them because our ability to reason may steer us away from right and wrong by allowing us to justify our actions. It can be easy to find a reason for bad behavior if there are no absolutes. As Albert Einstein once said, “Relativity applies to physics, not ethics.” When we fill ourselves with human justifications and ego, we make immoral decisions. Our mind is self-regulated and we have the choice to adhere to universal principles and the code of proper conduct or we can choose not to. Our forefathers understood this. That is why our constitution and system of laws are structured around universal principles of right and wrong.

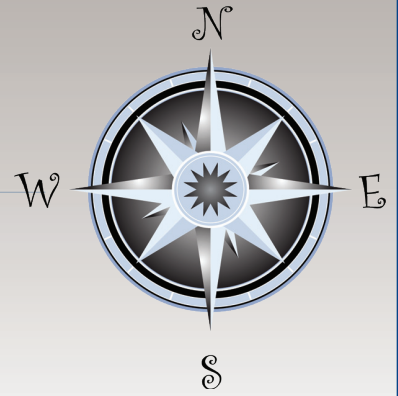
### Benefits

You will gain many benefits by conducting yourself using good ethics:

1. You will be trusted by others because you have proven you are trustworthy.
2. You will not have to face or live with negative consequences from your actions.
3. Your conscience will be clear and you will be guilt free.

# Action Plan for

# ETHICS



4. You will contribute to a more healthy society and reinforce the standards of good ethics.

## Characteristics

When you act according to good ethics:

- You are transparent. You have no problem looking people in the eye because you have nothing to hide or of which to be ashamed.
- You are comfortable discussing a code of ethics or morality.
- You value life and respect your fellow man.
- You treat others as you would like to be treated.

## Steps to Follow

1. Be sincere and honest with your intentions and compare them to the principles you will be studying.
2. Follow a code of ethics that includes justice for everyone concerned. The clearest concept to be just is to not do to others what you would not like others to do to you. Treat them as you would like to be treated.
3. Discern the difference between what is legal and what is ethical. Just because you can legally do something does not mean you should do it. Again, it is good to go back to the question “would I want someone else to do that to me?”
4. Use your reasoning skills to understand why we need universal principles (ethics or morals). This is what is commonly referred to as common sense. Teach others and especially children how to use common sense.

5. Be careful not to distort the principles and values. If our minds are lined up with universal principles and good ethics, then our actions will be moral. Do not justify your actions or begin reasoning why it is ok for you to act in a manner that you would not think is ok for someone else.

*Remember... Thoughts become actions. Actions become habits. Habits become our destiny.*

## Reflect and respond

1. Do you think our nation has made any errors when it comes to morals?
2. What will the impact and effect be on society if we do not operate with good ethics?
3. What will the impact and effect be on society if we do choose to operate with good ethics?

Evaluate yourself from 1 to 10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Why did you give yourself this rating										
What benefits will you obtain by raising your rating?										
What specific action can you put into practice to test the benefits of this principle?										
Check list for the daily reading of this principle	M	T	W	T	F	S	S			

Completed

Not completed