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Building an Ethical Small Group (Chapter 9 of Meeting the Ethical Challenges of Leadership)

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Abstract

This chapter examines ethical leadership in the small-group context. To help create groups that brighten rather than darken the lives of participants, leaders must foster individual ethical accountability among group members, ensure ethical group interaction, avoid moral pitfalls, and establish ethical relationships with other groups.

In his metaphor of the leader's light or shadow, Parker Palmer emphasizes that leaders shape the settings or contexts around them. According to Palmer, leaders are people who have "an unusual degree of power to create the conditions under which other people must live and move and have their being, conditions that can either be as illuminating as heaven or as shadowy as hell."¹ In this final section of the text, I'll describe some of the ways we can create conditions that illuminate the lives of followers in small-group, organizational, global, and crisis settings. Shedding light means both resisting and exerting influence. We must fend off pressures to engage in unethical behavior while actively seeking to create healthier moral environments.

Comments

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Craig E. Johnson takes a multidisciplinary approach to leadership ethics, drawing from many fields of research to help readers make moral decisions, lead in a moral manner, and create an ethical culture. Packed with real-world case studies, examples Ethical leadership is leadership within an organization centered around respect for ethics and values, as well as the rights and dignity of others. The concepts of honesty, integrity, trust and fairness are all critical to ethical leadership. Ethical leadership can provide value to businesses by inspiring employees to be motivated and live up to the company's values. Ethical leaders also work to create an ethical work culture. This means that a work environment is governed by a fair, clearly articulated set of rules, rather than by personality or politics. In an ethical work culture, an organization's management articulates a set of principles that are understood, and bought in to, by everyone in the organization. They will only initiate such decisions if the ethical criteria are met. Be aware of values.