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ETHICS – A FRAMEWORK THAT RESULTS IN MAKING ETHICAL DECISIONS AND THEN ACTING UPON THEM

Further exploration and discussion of the above seven cornerstones of Ethics:

PARENTAL INFLUENCES: consciously or unconsciously we are the products of our past and our parents/ guardians played a role in shaping us. It's not about blame, finding fault or shifting focus, it's about understanding how we were shaped and moulded and then taking a leadership decision and deciding what we want and need to do about it. If there were unethical practices we need to decide when something has reached its sell by date and let it go.

Taking ownership over our decisions ensures that we will act in a more responsible manner.

VALUES: becoming conscious of what our values or core principles are and how we behave in order to demonstrate them is fundamental in us living a more ethical lifestyle. Stress is the result of not living what we truly know is not right. It is the moment that we practice the very opposite of our values. Hence, our values become a stake in the ground, a declaration to ourselves of who we are and a guide as to how we need to live.

Once we have our boundaries and have the capability to actively demonstrate them, making ethical decisions becomes easier.

BELIEFS: a belief in something that is pure, real and uplifting adds meaning to our lives. This may be realised in different forms or combinations: belief in spiritual meaning, belief in religion or a belief in self.

A belief in something perfect allows us to benchmark our thoughts and behaviours on that.

HEROES: from a young age we are exposed to heroes. Some are marketed in our face and some we may silently choose. Our choice is important and therefore hopefully as adults we are taking a more conscious decision as to what the next generation is identifying with. Heroes help us in reflecting on how they would respond to a decision that faces us.

Once ethical heroes have been identified, a person can reflect on their behaviours.

TEAM LEADER: when the team leader behaves in an ethical manner, it sets the tone for the establishment of the overall culture. Ethical leaders allow each team member to behave in an ethical manner and those that don't can be more easily identified.

When the team leader sets a high standard, everyone can aspire to uphold that standard. Set standards of greatness!

LAWS: the laws of the country outline what is right and wrong. When making decisions and acting upon these it is important to reflect on whether one is acting within the boundaries of the law.

The law of the country is a good framework to reflect on when deciding on ethical behaviours.

CODE OF CONDUCT: ethical behaviour is something that is lived in everyday life, in detail and in continuous debates. It should not become a theoretical exercise, however, for purpose of clarity, reducing the number of varying perceptions and as a guide, ethics needs to be laid out in black and white!

Once the team has agreed to the code of conduct, it becomes the silent guide that is used only when the need arises.

SUPPORT: being ethic, especially when there is pressure or the minority is trying to achieve an ethical outcome has it's challenges. In such cases support is very important: being able to share the scenario; get another point of view; discuss possible ethical solutions; be able then to act on agreed actions.

Support reduces the pressure and offers people to find ethical outcomes in a more objective framework.

THE ETHICS ACTION TEST!

	FOCUS AREA	DECISION	REASON
1	Laws – is it within the law?		
2	Code of Conduct – is it within the code of conduct?		
3	Support – is there the necessary support to act ethically?		
4	Team Leader – are my team leaders ethical and do my actions support theirs?		
5	Hero – what would my most ethical hero do in my situation?		
6	Parental Influences – was I influenced in an ethical manner?		
7	Values – will my action support my value system and uphold my boundaries?		
8	Beliefs – will I be proud of my actions and will I have a clear conscious?		

Going forward!

1. Adopt a principle!
2. Decide on the ideal decision and live it!
3. Grow support!

The Good leader, the people praise

The Bad Leader, the people blame

The Great Leader, the people say, "We did it ourselves."