

Values in Leadership: Lecturette

Values guide human action and are assumed to be positive and import to the person holding them. They may vary with culture, but some fundamental values such as honesty, credibility, and strength of character are enduring and fit all cultures uniformly. When they are perceived to be held by an individual, the individual is believed, respected, and followed willingly.

Values determine the importance an individual places on how he or she interacts with his or her environment. Demonstrating values through appropriate behavior enables leaders to build connections with followers and build bonds of trust and commitment to the processes the leader facilitates.

A leader is primarily a facilitator of processes that drive the business. Followers continue the processes through their own actions. Because followers are dependent on the leader, the effectiveness of their actions will be proportionate to the bonds they share with their leader. If a follower is not satisfied with the support provided by nor perceived values of a leader, he or she will not be very effective in his or her work and will not be optimally utilized.

To satisfy followers, a leader has to connect well with them. Values are the primary way a connection is made. Leaders have to ensure that his or own value system and those of followers are in sync.

Often an open and continuous dialogue will enable leaders and followers to see both their commonalities and differences. The relationship needs to be taken seriously and remain stable over time so that followers achieve optimum output.

All people are unique in the values they hold. It is incumbent on leaders to share theirs and know what values are important to their followers. When there is a major disconnect in expectations between an organization and an employee, it is appropriate to let the employee move on. If the disconnect is between a leader and employees, the issue is more serious. Unless the leader can get onboard, the organization may fail to perform effectively the processes that leader controls.