

# **Ethical leadership: How morals influence your communication (and behavior)**

*Joan Marques, PhD, EdD, MBA*

# The retiring carpenter

Give your all at all times

Be fair and honest, even if it  
doesn't seem to matter

Consider your conscience



# How Ethical Are You?

1. Your friend is kind of lazy, but wants to work with you. You:
  - Totally recommend my friend. Hey, it's my boss's problem
  - Recommend my friend but am honest about their faults
2. You found out your boss is cheating on his wife. You:
  - Tell his boss
  - Confront him
  - Figure it's not my business
3. The cashier gave you more change than you were owed. You:
  - Give back the extra immediately
  - Think about it, feel guilty, give it back
  - Hang on to it. Hey, free money!
4. Your coworker left his email up on his computer screen and went to lunch. You:
  - Read as much of it as I can
  - Just skim the titles for something interesting
  - Avoid reading anything
5. You want that great job, but your resume isn't impressive. You:
  - Write a totally honest resume
  - Pad the details a little bit

# How Ethical Are You?

6. Oops! You broke a friend's expensive vase. You:

- Insist on paying for it
- Offer to pay for it, but don't insist
- Don't think I have to pay for accidents

7. An acquaintance said something totally racist in front of you. You:

- Speak up about it immediately
- Give them a disapproving look
- Agree with them so it's not awkward

8. You know that a coworker is stealing from the company. You:

- Let my boss find out on her own
- Tell my coworker to stop stealing or I'll tell the boss
- Report the situation to my boss

9. Your boss praises you for something a coworker did, you:

- Say I appreciate it
- Say I appreciate it but I had some help
- Say that the coworker actually did it

10. Finally, were you really honest with your answers?

- Of course!
- I might have stretched the truth a bit
- I picked the answers that made me look the best



# Moral considerations in Leadership Communication

Brevity

Appeal

Examples

Authenticity

Two ways

Inspiration

Responsibility

Simplicity

Truth telling



# Truth telling



The \$3 bln case

It's not easy!

It can compromise your career.

YET... It is the best long-term course of action.

*Binta Niambi Brown*, Founder, Fermata Entertainment Ltd. and Big Mouth Records LLC, a startup that is innovating a new business model for the music industry. Former corporate lawyer at Cravath, Swaine & Moore and Kirkland & Ellis (where she was a partner).

# Simplicity

*“Simplicity is  
the ultimate  
sophistication”*

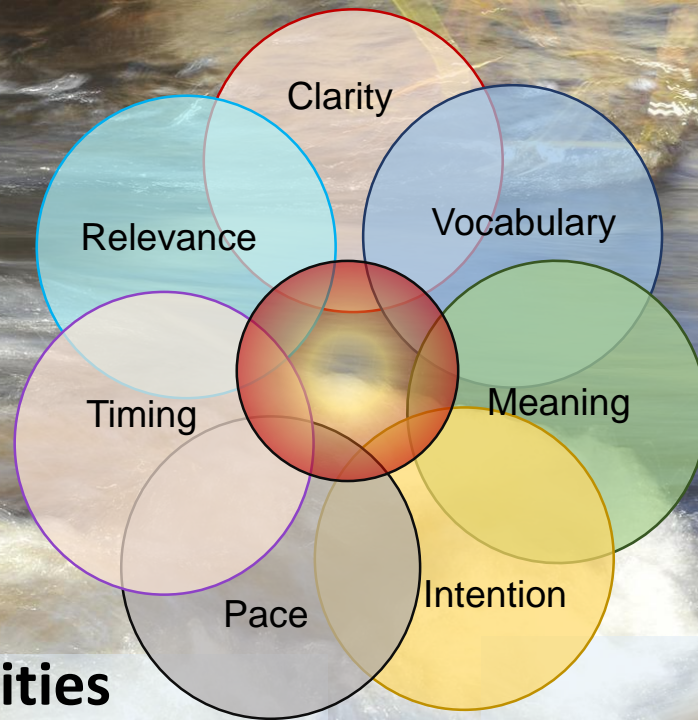


## Ethical leaders realize that:

- ✓ **Who** they are being is as important as what they are doing.
- ✓ It's **okay** to not know all the answers.
- ✓ People **know** (feel) when you stand behind your words.
- ✓ **Simplicity** -> **clarity** -> **focus**



# Responsibility



- 1. Keep your priorities straight.**
- 2. Seek first to understand.**
- 3. Think like a detective not a judge.**  
Ask open-ended questions.
- 4. Listen carefully and responsively.**

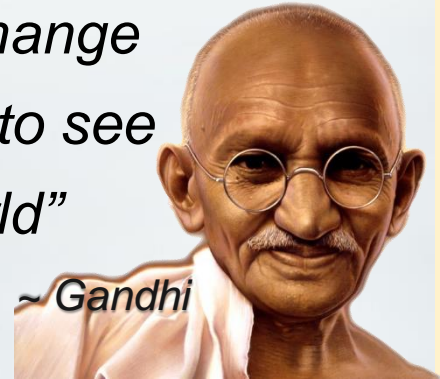
- 5. Listen attentively.**
- 6. Take responsibility for your message getting through.**  
Sending an email or leaving a voice message is just attempted communication.
- 7. Remain courteous and professional.**
- 8. Be forthright.**



# Inspiration



*“Be the change  
you want to see  
in the world”*



## Practice “Centeredness”

A state of mindfulness that keeps you calm under stress, helps you empathize, listen deeply, and remain present.

## Inspiring leaders:



Express  
gratitude

Listen

Are  
Trustworthy

Express  
Positivity

Are  
Visionaries

Communicate  
Clearly

Are  
Passionate

# Ethics Matters: Point to Ponder

We have all been in contact with a lot of different leaders over the years. Think about a leader you know that you consider most ethical and one you consider most unethical.

## ***Question/Discussion:***

Think about the way these two people were behaving and communicating.

- What were the most concerning behaviors or statements coming from the unethical leader?
- What were the most admirable behaviors or statements coming from the ethical leader?



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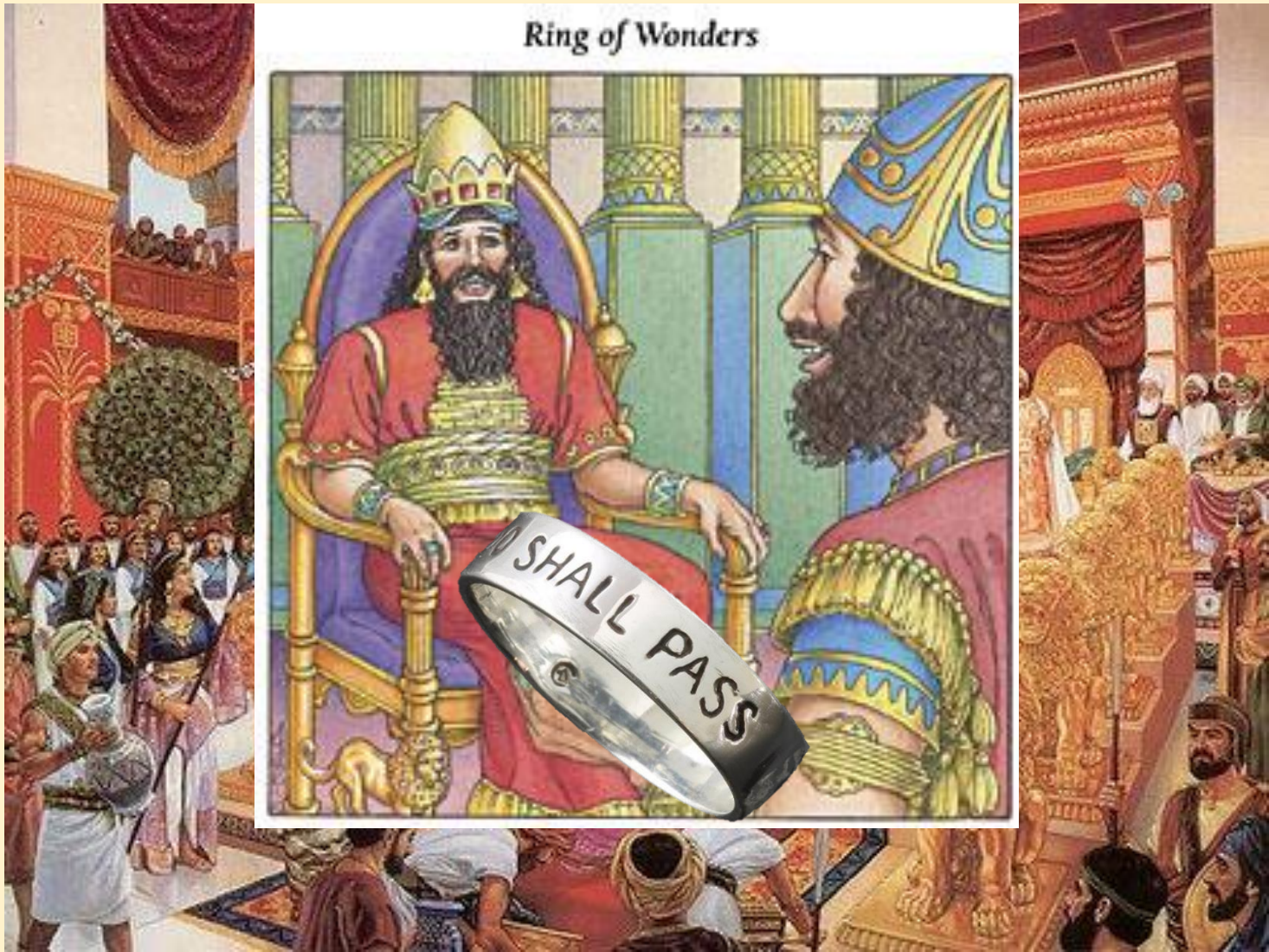


# Two Way Communication



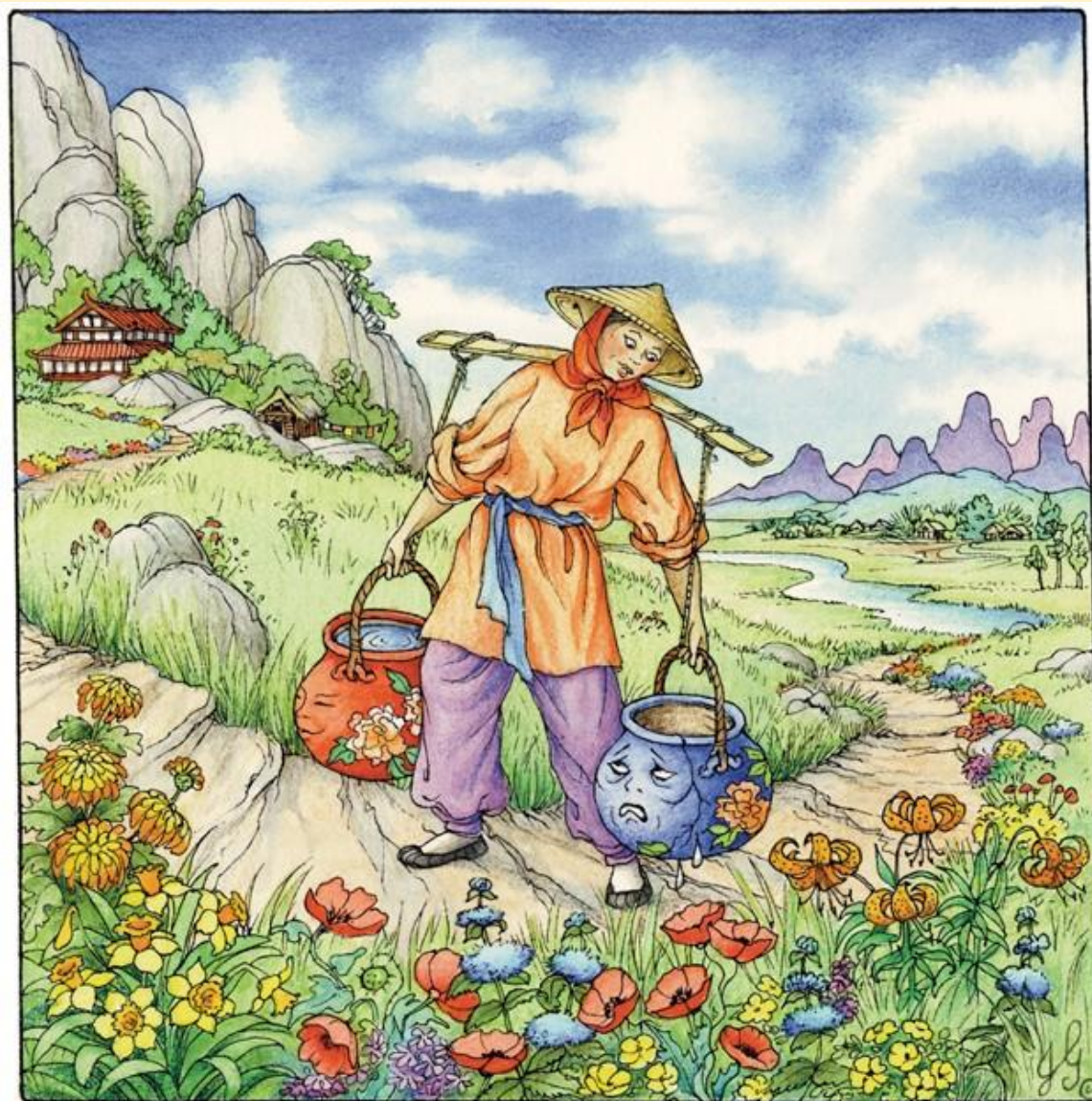


# Authenticity





# Examples (stories)



Everything and everyone has a purpose

The key is to understand yours

Empowering



# Ethics Matters: Point to Ponder

I assume everyone here is ethical and also wants to be perceived that way. However, research shows that just because you are ethical doesn't mean you are *perceived* that way. As leaders, there are several ways we can increase our credibility by demonstrating to others that we think ethics is important. You need to talk the talk and walk the walk.

I'd like to take a couple of minutes, as a group, to come up with some words and phrases we might say which communicate that ethics matters to us. For some people using this language comes naturally, but for many of us it's difficult. Our goal is to listen to each other using these phrases and to practice communicating directly that ethics is important.

We're going to focus on general things you may say about ethics, not specific behaviors you think may or may not be ethical.

## ***Question/Discussion:***

What could you say to communicate ethics is important?

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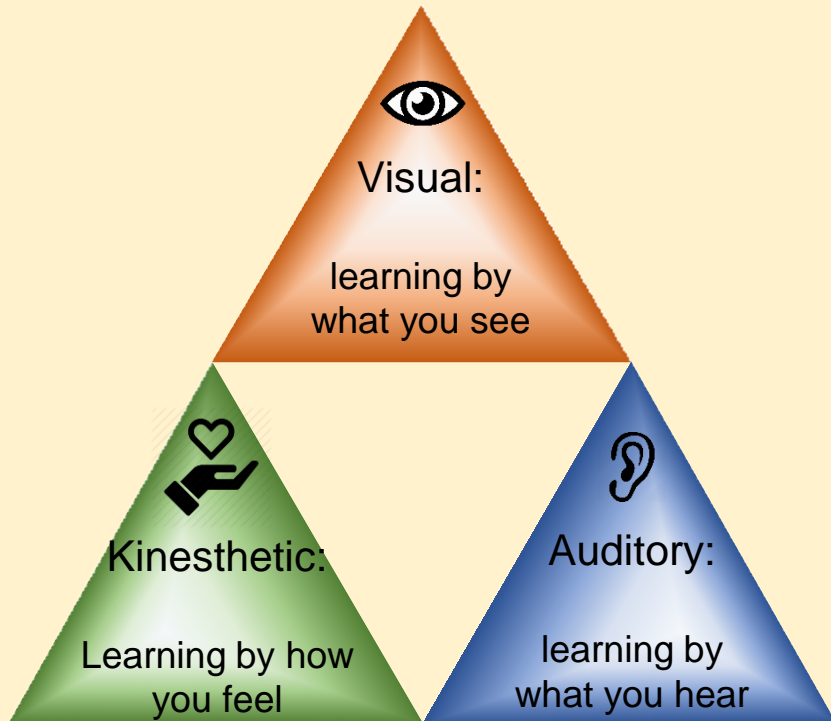
Responsibility

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# Appeal



Appealing Communication means:

- ✓ Considering your audience and their preferred communication style
- ✓ Considering the type of message you plan to convey
- ✓ Considering your own quality of communication with people who may learn differently from you.

**Some ways to enhance appeal in communication:**

- **Straight Sell.** “We need to do this, and this is how it will benefit us.
- **Educational.** When explanations are needed to convince the other(s).
- **Testimonial.** Presenting your viewpoint on basis of past successes with this approach/strategy.
- **Humorous.** Throwing in some good natured humor to win allies.
- **Dramatization.** Bringing demonstrations into the scope to prove your point.

# Brevity

*“If I need to prepare a 10-minute speech, it takes me all of two weeks to prepare it; if it is a half-hour speech, it takes me a week; if I can talk as long as I want to, it requires no preparation at all. I am ready now.”*

~Woodrow Wilson  
(1856 – 1924)

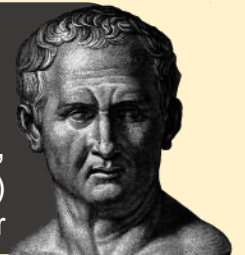
28th President of the United States



*“Brevity is the best recommendation of speech, whether in a senator or an orator.”*

~Marcus Tullius Cicero,  
(106-43 BC)

Roman lawyer, writer and philosopher



*“Be sincere. Be brief. Be seated.”*

~Franklin D. Roosevelt  
(1882 – 1945)

32<sup>nd</sup> President of the United States



# Thank You!



Questions?



Comments?



Suggestions?