The importance of “Human” in Human Resources
Ważność “Człowieka” w zasobach ludzkich

Streszczenie: Współczesny biznes jest zjawiskiem złożonym z teorii, praktyki, umiejętności, motywacji, celów, produktów, kupowania i sprzedawania, reklamy, limitów, PR, zysków, etyki korporacyjnej i społecznej odpowiedzialności, które oddziałują na siebie wzajemnie; jednakże przede wszystkim biznes jest miejscem interakcji i zaangażowania ludzi, a jego złożoność jest związana z tym, jak i kiedy to robią. Celem artykułu jest ukazanie pewnych aspektów tej skomplikowanej struktury.

Istota ludzka jest stworzona z wielu poziomów: fizycznego, emocjonalnego, psychologicznego, społecznego, duchowego, intelektualnego, behawioralnego, twórczego etc. Artykuł koncentruje się na pewnych kluczowych aspektach ludzkich interakcji, które są podstawowe zarówno kiedy chodzi o wymianę idei, jak i produktów i które stanowią kręgosłup każdego indywidualnego i społecznego działania zakończonego sukcesem. Wszystkie ludzkie interakcje są napędzane przez pewne kluczowe elementy i również sukces w biznesie zależy od ich reinterpretacji i znalezienia lepszej drogi wiązania teorii z praktyką.

Artykuł jest podzielony na trzy części. W pierwszej przedstawiona jest istota i mechanizmy ludzkich interakcji ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem interakcji udanych. W części drugiej ukazane są słabe i mocne strony postmodernistycznych sposobów interakcji. Czy współczesny fenomenalny rozwój światowej komunikacji pomaga, czy przeszkadza człowiekowi spełnić się i zrozumieć jego rolę w świecie? W ostatniej części autor przekonuje o potrzebie rewizji sposobu uprawiania biznesu z uwzględnieniem zaufania, sprawiedliwości, umiejętności interpersonalnych i przezwyciężania uprzedzeń.

Abstract: Modern business is a complex interchange of theories, practice, skills, motivation, targets, products, selling, buying, advertising, quotas, public relations, profit margins, corporate ethics and responsibility. But above all it is where people interact and engage – how they do it; when they do it; and that interaction is complex. The purpose of the article is to show some aspects of that complexity.

Human being is made up of many levels and strata – physical, emotional, psychological, social, spiritual, intellectual, behavioural, creative and so on. The paper focuses on certain key aspects of human interaction which are central to any exchange of ideas and products and which form the very back-bone of any successful human and social intercourse. All human interaction is fuelled by the presence of these key elements, and in any successful business adventure will have to be continually re-visited and re-interpreted to continue to find new and fruitful ways of bridging the gulf between theory and practice.
The paper is divided into three sections. Firstly, the essence and practice of human interaction is discussed tracing the mechanism which make it successful. Secondly, the strengths and weaknesses of post modern modes of interaction are shown. Has the recent phenomenal growth in world wide communications helped or hindered man’s desire for self fulfilment and self actualisation? Thirdly, the author argues for the need to revisit some of these modes of business, with reference to trust, justice, developing interpersonal skills and overcoming prejudices.

There is a story told\textsuperscript{1} about a particular man and a particular event that took place one particular Christmas. It is apt, I believe, coming up to Christmas, and especially in the light of this year’s conference – the human element in doing business.

This man was a kind and good man, but looked upon Christmas and the coming of the “baby Jesus”, as a lot of foolishness. “God becoming man” he said to his wife. “Why would he ever do that? It makes no sense to me”. One Christmas eve, while his wife and family as usual went to midnight mass, he, as usual, declined, and said he would wait up for them. It snowed heavily all that day, and now it seemed to get heavier, and the night much colder. He listened to the wind, and the faint chimes of the Church bells in the distance. Suddenly, he was startled by a thudding sound – then another one. He thought it could have been someone throwing snowballs at the window. On opening his front door to investigate he saw a flock of birds huddled miserably in the snow. They had been caught in the storm, and in a desper-ate search for shelter and warmth had tried to fly through his window.

Being a very kind man, he thought immediately of the barn where the children’s pony was stabled. “That will keep them warm” he thought. He put his coat on, and rushed to the barn, opened the door wide, put on the li-ght – but the birds didn’t come in. He then decided that maybe food would lure them in. He got some bread crumbs from the house, which he then sprinkled on the snow to make a trail into the barn. The birds again ignored his signs of invitation and continued to flop helplessly in the snow.

He tried waving his arms and walking around the barn to bring them into the barn. “They will die from the cold if they don’t come in quickly” he thought. The waving motion frightened them and they scattered in every di-rection except into the warm, dry and safe barn. “They find me a strange creature” he said to himself “and I can’t seem to think of any way to let them know that they can trust me. If only I could be a bird myself, for a few minutes, perhaps I could lead them to safety”. For that moment he felt very re-moved from the dying birds, as they fluttered about in all directions. He lis-tened to the Church bells in the distance, pealing the glad tiding of Christmas. Then he sunk to his knees, looked up the sky. “Now I under-stand” he whispered, “Now I see why You had to do it”.

\textsuperscript{1} McCarthy, Flor. SDB. \textit{New Sunday and Holy Day Liturgies} (Dominican Publications, 2002, p. 98 ff. paraphrase of original story by Louis Cassel).
A simple story, but one with so many of the ingredients of any human interaction and engagement – needs, wants, communication, supply, demand, trust, connection, language, prejudices and so on. What did the birds want? What did the man want? Were any of the needs fulfilled at all? Could things have been done a different way?

Modern business is a complex interchange of theories, practice, skills, motivation, targets, products, selling, buying, advertising, quotas, public relations, profit margins, corporate ethics and responsibility. But above all it is where human beings interact and engage – how they do it; when they do it; and why that interaction is complex.

We are made up of so many levels and strata – physical, emotional, psychological, social, spiritual, intellectual, behavioural, creative and so on. I would like to focus on certain key aspects of human interaction which are central to any exchange of ideas and products and which form the very back-bone of any successful human and social intercourse. All human interaction is fuelled by the presence of these key elements, and in any successful business adventure will have to be continually re-visited and re-interpreted to continue to find new and fruitful ways of bridging the gulf between theory and practice.

I have divided the paper into three sections. Firstly I will discuss the essence and practice of human interaction. What happens when human beings interact? What are the mechanics of that engagement? Are there factors which make it successful? Secondly I will deal with the strengths and weaknesses of post modern modes of interaction. Has the recent phenomenal growth in worldwide communications helped or hindered man’s desire for self fulfilment and self actualisation? Thirdly we need to revisit some of these modes of business, in particular with reference to trust, justice, developing interpersonal skills and overcoming prejudices.

Essence and praxis of human interaction

The psychologist and philosopher, Eric Fromm, once stated that the deepest need of man is “to overcome his separateness; to leave the prison of his aloneness”. Man by nature, is a social being. In every human there is a most deep – seated need and desire to connect, to engage, to belong. It defines our very existence. From our earliest beginnings through the different stages of historical development – man has always sought to engage and connect with his environment and his fellow human being. Pre-historic man, the hunter and gatherer, the nomad, sedentary man, man the trader – stone age man, bronze age man, iron age man - all developed tools and skills and means of communication and ways to benefit and maximise on his own needs and wants, with his environment and his fellow man.

I have summarised some basic communication points to highlight the importance of the “human” in human resources – which form a backdrop for doing business. People doing business is about when they do it, why, where and how. The term man is used in an inclusive sense in this paper.
In this engagement, many ways of connection were tried and tested. Sedentary man, for example, learned that by settling in one place he could build up reservoirs of food and clothing – which could be bartered with other societies for the necessities which he lacked. Bronze age man found that bronze was more pliable, easier, and precise to work with than stone in making hunting weapons. Man “the trader” soon discovered he could make a profit on goods and store up that surplus, or use it to buy other goods.

Equally in interpersonal relationships, man found out different and better ways of doing things – of finding a wife; of burying and honouring the dead; of selling goats; of communicating ideas with his own tribe and negotiating with neighbouring tribes, Plato once said that “society is but man writ large” and any developments which took place in the individual life of man become mirrored in the socio-historical evolution of mankind. The child, for example, learns quite quickly that crying will be responded to by the parent giving food; a certain teenager perhaps learns that by excelling in certain sports may pave the way into third level education. In adult interaction there is a whole network of communication skills going on – a word here; a nod there; being positive here; pleading innocence there. What does my partner like or dislike? How best can I buy a new car at the cheapest price? What does emerge is that certain modes of communication are more effective than others, and to a large degree are determined by what is of value at that particular time, and in that particular culture.

The primary currency of communication is language – in its most ‘general’ form. Language becomes refined as it grasps the particular needs and wants; body language more advanced and defined. (It is estimated that in communication body language accounts for 50%, words 10%, and one’s particular tone 40%). Gestures, signs, silences, signals, how best to handle conflict – all become more developed into what is the most effective way of interacting and engaging. The effectiveness of these modes of interacting determine and shape the outcome and success or failure of each particular venture or transaction.

As man progressed – both in a historical sense and a socio-personal one, different needs replace previous needs. Maslow’s hierarchy of needs is a good reference point. Briefly stated, Maslow claims that once one basic need is fulfilled, we move on to another, then to another and so on. I have summarised his theory, as follows.

**Hierarchy of Needs - Maslow**

1st Need - *Physical Needs* – Food, water, air, sleep, exercise, shelter.
2nd Need - *Safety* – Freedom from fear, violence, anxiety, need for security, stability protection, orders, laws.
3rd Need - *To feel loved & wanted* – Affection & loving relationships. To give & receive love.
4th Need - *Self-Esteem* – To believe we are okay. Feeling of self-confidence, worth, dignity, achievement.
5th Need - Self Actualisation – To be true to yourself. To develop your full potential.

Though there are no strict defining boundaries between one need and another, it is reasonable to assume that there is a progression in the importance of each need. Thus, for example, feelings of self-confidence and self-worth supersede the basic need for food and shelter – though both may occur at the same time, as can be seen, for example in the case where I am hungry, I want food, but I will buy it at the ‘corner shop’ because those working there at least will talk to me and make me feel good. Each need is interwoven with the other.

This interconnection colours each human interaction and forms a backdrop to what motivates us in the first place; as the existentialists would have us say ‘whether life deserves to be lived’ in the first place. Behind each human interaction is the need to connect, to engage, to belong, to feel safe – in other words to feel life deserves to be lived. Part of the present chaos and confusion in post modernity is an erosion of confidence in the worthwhileness of life. It is, as it were, written into our very constitution as human beings to belong and to connect – and if that is not met at some level – then that erosion of confidence becomes more deeper. We need to love, and to be loved, to feel somehow that my presence in the cosmos is of some value.

The late Holy Father, Pope John Paul II continually made the point that without that “deep amazement at human worth and human dignity” then life is reduced to nihilism. That image of man had previously been echoed by the new current Pope Benedict XVI where he states that (without human respect and dignity) “the image of man that dominates in modern literature, in visual arts, in cinema and in theatre is primarily a gloomy one”. Underlying all human discussion are the age old questions of Who am I? Where do I come from? Where am I going? What is it all about? In modern business this factor plays an element, and more and more is coming to the fore in its advertising. The blonde woman advertising the latest sports car gives an illusory sense of love and happiness to the potential buyer; certain mobile phone companies promise that with their latest phone you will “be connected” and can “stay in touch”; the tanned bodies and slimmed physique of young couples in love advertise the pleasure of a sun holiday.

When human beings interact, it is a complex interplay of needs and wants, of language used-and not used, of an exchange and transaction; of a thesis, anti-thesis, and synthesis, and something desired, something supplied, something satisfied. What is the real need? How do I fulfill that need? What language do I use? What do I wear? Any successful business exchange requires answers to these questions. The key is language – in its broadest sense, in attaining success, because it is precisely the language we use which puts order on wants and needs and responds to them. The key is it puts order on the need to seek; to define; to express; and to communicate. Brendan Kennelly, a famous contemporary Irish poet, put it well

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3 Redemptor Hominis”, Encyclical John Paul II, No. 10.
once when he stated “All language is ultimately connection, both within oneself and with the world outside, with the living and the dead”5.

That language involves listening, being present, being positive, being personal, being very careful about the words, signs, the message that I use in responding to needs and wants. The man in our earlier story knew the needs – the birds were cold, but he did not have the language to “sell” the product of the warm barn. He had the goods, but they remained locked up because both parties could not communicate. One could paraphrase the essence and praxis of human interaction by saying: “I have a need. If you correctly identify it and supply it in a way that I want, then I am satisfied”. An exchange takes place. That is called successful business.

Post modern modes of interaction – strengths and weaknesses.

Has the recent phenomenal growth in world wide “communication” helped or hindered man’s desire for self fulfilment and happiness? We are all familiar with the ‘global village’, e-mail, e-bay, dot com, internet, a flick of a switch can sell so many thousand shares in a different country; pictures taken now can be developed hundreds of miles away at an instant. The list is endless. News, information, marketing ideas, sales promotions, business portfolios – all can literally be shifted from one place to another within seconds.

These are fast and efficient – global and informative. The fact that they are non personal for the most part can be a bonus. I want to communicate something to you – but I might not necessarily want to know your favourite food or sport. The fact of it being anonymous for the most part can, and does, make for better business on one level – a transaction is at stake – do we continue with it or not? It is likewise far easier to say “no” when less of our personal details or feelings are invested in the transaction. It is said for example, that many relationships are ended by mobile phones – I can text you, and I don’t have to engage fully with you on your response.

Public relations and marketing can be magnified simply by the fact of non personal one to one communication. The sales company can create whatever image it wishes while hiding behind glossy magazines or colourful billboard displays. Being impersonal or totally corporate can alter the truth of the product in question, and then corporate justice becomes a factor. How do I know, for example that the vegetables I buy in a multi-national shopping centre are fresh, or have they been watered and made to look good a few minutes earlier? Of course, with recent health and safety regulations, that is managed to some degree.

But is efficiency and globalisation the only way forward? We have stated that all communication is complex, and personal one-to-one interaction is vital – connection, engagement and a sense of corporate justice and fair-play all have a major part. Is a written letter from a loved one more fulfilling than an impersonal text? While the “corner shop” might be more expen-

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sive, are more of my needs as a human being fulfilled there? Do I feel listened to, do I feel safe, do I feel that my needs are being truthfully attended to? We have seemed to have entered an on-going transitional crisis. The symptoms are obvious. In spite of improved standards of living, health care and life expectancy, many people suffer from a growing sense of alienation, anxiety and anger. The incidence of mental illness, violent crimes and social unrest continues to increase.

Tony Humphreys states “over two thirds of office visits to doctors are due to stress related problems. The six leading causes of death – heart disease, cancer, cirrhosis of the liver, lung ailments, accidental injuries and suicide – are all indirectly caused by stress. The three best selling drugs are Valium (a tranquilliser) Idera (for hypertension) and Tagamet (for ulcers)”.

Despite such phenomenal growth in “communications” we have become a society with ever growing health problems – both physical and psychological. Of course the dilemma in this view of modern society is how is it with so much communication of offer, that we have never felt so alienated and lonely in our history on earth.

The weaknesses have to lie in the language and modes of communication. Are the various human aspects of needs being attended to? – physical, emotional, psychological, social, spiritual, intellectual, creative and behavioural. Without doubt, the ‘God is dead’ philosopher Nietzsche would be silent here. The neglect of the spiritual in any view of man, ultimately leads to nihilism – life loses its purpose. In any fruitful interpersonal exchange – the spiritual has to figure somewhere. Otherwise we are left with Marx’s alienation (or his view of religion as an ‘opiate’) or with Freud’s view of the ‘libido’ as being the only guiding force in the world. The only true philosophical problem then, according to Camus is “suicide”.

Meaningful modes of interaction need to take into account the entire person. While it is fair to say post modernity has excelled in communication on so many levels, why has it apparently failed in satisfying so many needs. These needs are in all of Maslows hierarchy – not merely physical, but the need to feel safe, to feel loved and wanted, to feel self worth and value, to be able to develop ones full potential in whatever form that may take. We are told that despite all the high tech communication artefacts in the corporate world – most business is worked out in no small part on the golf course or at the office water dispenser! A good insight! It is also a fact that accordingly as a society becomes more affluent and technologically empowered, that traditional values, like visiting neighbours or developing rural communities or religious worship, or keeping open rural post-offices or police stations take a back seat. In our next section we will examine these dilemmas.

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Humphries, Tony, A different kind of teacher.
Way forward – revisiting present modes of business in the light of trust, justice, interpersonal skills and overcoming prejudices.

Brendan Kennelly suggests in the society we have created “it is very difficult to give your full sustained attention to anything or anybody for long. We are compelled to half-do a lot of things; to have life our lives; to half-dream our dreams; to half-love our loves……..we have ensured that our lives will be half-lived. There is a sad refusal here – a rejection of the unique fragile gift (of life)” 7. There is a certain truth in Kennellys view. Profit, power, success, reaching quotas, selling at all costs seems to dominate the business landscape. Qualities such as being present, listening, affirming and correct language are appraised in theory – but not necessarily in practice.

Interpersonal skills are of course vital in communication – and the correct use of language. Correct communication determines our relationships. Virginia Stair notes “once a human being arrives on this earth, communication is the largest single factor determining what kinds of relationships he or she makes with others, and what happens to each in the world”. 8

To each communication process we all bring the same elements:

1) bodies – which move and have form and shape,
2) values – those concepts that represent each person’s way of trying to survive and live a “good” life,
3) expectations of the moment, gained from past experience,
4) sense organs – eyes, ears, nose, mouth and skin which enable us to see, hear, smell, taste, touch and be touched,
5) ability to talk – words and voice,
6) brains – the stoutness of our knowledge including what we have learned from past experience, what we have read and been taught and what has been recorded in our brains (See V. Satir; Chapter 6-The New Peoplemaking).

Correct use of these communication modes are central to good business. How do I speak? Am I pleasant? Well presented. Courteous. Affirmative. Assertive, but not aggressive. Do I build up trust by my presentation and follow up activities? Have I informed myself adequately of the different ethnic, religious, social, racial or personal background of the person/s I am engaging with? How do I handle conflict? There are no 100% answers to any of the above-they are just some questions to highlight the skills needed for good and successful communication skills, while at the whole time placing the person first – his/her needs, wants, fears, hopes, and so on. My perception of any situation will colour the way I deal with that situation.

Barriers to effective communication

Poor physical mental condition; No interested in speaker of topic; Prejudice about appearance, accent etc; Disagreement about topic in discussion; Physical noise and background distractions; Daydreaming & inability to understand; Speed of speaker, context, language vague; Short attention – time of day or night; Selective listening – pick and choose our hearing

Effective Communication

Remove or resist distractions; Make sure you can hear properly; Concentrate on content not delivery; Be patient; Hear the full message before judging; Give good feedback by asking questions; Keep an open mind – be objective; Acknowledge the speaker – emotional state; Keep conversation alive/fluid/internal questions.

Verbal Communication

Conversation more direct; Feedback is immediate; Messages can be adjusted with feedback; Speech can be supported with body language; Views can be exchanged quickly, no record; Impossible to undo & interaction is difficult.

Non-Verbal Communication

By behaviour rather than words; Body language – gestures, nod etc; Use of space, territory, dress & carriage; Quality of voice, pitch, tone, volume; Our type of home, style and decoration; First impressions at job interview; Understanding the effects = better communication; Relationships – sitting/standing, touching affectionately, high level of mutual eye contact; Dress. Posture, use of space, eye gaze helps us to draw conclusions about status power of individual

Functions of Non-Verbal Communication

Expressing emotion – foot tapping frowning, tears, dropping posture, a broad smile of happiness, nervous movements; Regulation conversation – changing eye contact, pitch and tone of voice; Leaning forward; Raising a finger; Shifting position and looking at watch can indicate the end of conversation

Getting Feedback

Good eye contact, nods. Clapping; Signs of boredom – yawning, moving etc; A need to examine a cluster of signs here; Metacommunication
– analysis what is said above and beyond words, additional communication, unhappiness – facial expression body language; Paralanguage – tone of voice, shrugging of shoulders, clapping, the language of silence.

Conclusion and way forward

We have examined some of the complexities that are involved in human resources and business. In dealing with the essence and praxis of human interaction we discussed the basic driving force in all human intercourse and transaction – namely the need to connect. That need of course is governed by our own hierarchy of needs and the language we use to express those needs. All transactions are precisely that – “trans” – “actions” – the interplay between something desired; something supplied; and something satisfied. Then we looked at the some post – modern modes of interaction, and their strengths and weaknesses, and we noted that, despite the phenomenal growth in world – wide communications, the basic contention still stands – people want and need to, interact with other people at some meaningful level. Finally we revisited some of the present modes of business, in the light of trust, justice, interpersonal skills and overcoming prejudices effective communication is the key point – and we discussed the different types of that communication.

In conclusion, I would like to offer what has been traditionally referred to as the six pillars of character, which underlay every single human and business interaction. Ultimately, without some ethical base and moral reference point in our dealings with one another – that interaction ultimately fails. Modern business is a complex interchange of theories, practice and skills – but it is essentially where human beings engage and interact – how they do it; when and where they do it.

Trustworthiness. Respect. Responsibility. Fairness. Caring. Citizenship. The Six Pillars of Character are ethical values to guide our choices. The standards of conduct that arise out of those values constitute the ground rules of ethics, and therefore of ethical decision-making.

There is nothing sacrosanct about the number six. We might reasonably have eight or 10, or more. But most universal virtues fold easily into these six. The number is not unwieldy and the Six Pillars of Character can provide a common lexicon. Why is a common lexicon necessary? So that people can see what unites our diverse and fractured society. So we can communicate more easily about core values. So we can understand ethical decisions better, our own and those of others.

The Six Pillars acts as a multi-level filter through which to process decisions. So, being trustworthy is not enough – we must also be caring. Adhering to the letter of the law is not enough – we must accept responsibility for our action or inaction.

The Pillars can help us detect situations where we focus so hard on upholding one moral principle that we sacrifice another - where, intent on
holding others accountable, we ignore the duty to be compassionate; where, intent on getting a job done, we ignore how.

In short, the Six Pillars can dramatically improve the ethical quality of our decisions, and thus our character and lives.

**TRUSTWORTHINESS**

When others trust us, they give us greater leeway because they feel we don’t need monitoring to assure that we’ll meet our obligations. They believe in us and hold us in higher esteem. That’s satisfying. At the same time, we must constantly live up to the expectations of others and refrain from even small lies or self-serving behaviour that can quickly destroy our relationships.

Simply refraining from deception is not enough. Trustworthiness is the most complicated of the six core ethical values and concerns a variety of qualities like honesty, integrity, reliability and loyalty.

**Honesty**

There is no more fundamental ethical value than honesty. We associate honesty with people of honour, and we admire and rely on those who are honest. But honesty is a broader concept than many may realize. It involves both communications and conduct.

_Honesty_ in communications is expressing the truth as best we know it and not conveying it in a way likely to mislead or deceive. There are three dimensions:

- **Truthfulness.** Truthfulness is presenting the facts to the best of our knowledge. Intent is the crucial distinction between truthfulness and truth itself. Being wrong is not the same thing as lying, although honest mistakes can still damage trust insofar as they may show sloppy judgment.

- **Sincerity.** Sincerity is genuineness, being without trickery or duplicity. It precludes all acts, including half-truths, out-of-context statements, and even silence, that are intended to create beliefs or leave impressions that are untrue or misleading.

- **Candor.** In relationships involving legitimate expectations of trust, honesty may also require candor, forthrightness and frankness, imposing the obligation to volunteer information that another person needs to know.

Honesty in conduct is playing by the rules, without stealing, cheating, fraud, subterfuge and other trickery. Cheating is a particularly foul form of dishonesty because one not only seeks to deceive but to take advantage of those who are not cheating. It’s a two-fer: a violation of both trust and fairness.

Not all lies are unethical, even though all lies are dishonest. Huh? That’s right, honesty is not an inviolate principle. Occasionally, dishonesty is ethically justifiable, as when the police lie in undercover operations or when one lies to criminals or terrorists to save lives. But don’t kid yourself: occa-
sions for ethically sanctioned lying are rare and require serving a very high purpose indeed, such as saving a life – not hitting a management-pleasing sales target or winning a game or avoiding a confrontation.

Integrity

The word integrity comes from the same Latin root as “integer”, or whole number. Like a whole number, a person of integrity is undivided and complete. This means that the ethical person acts according to her beliefs, not according to expediency. She is also consistent. There is no difference in the way she makes decisions from situation to situation, her principles don’t vary at work or at home, in public or alone.

Because she must know who she is and what she values, the person of integrity takes time for self-reflection, so that the events, crises and seeming necessities of the day do not determine the course of her moral life. She stays in control. She may be courteous, even charming, but she is never duplicitous. She never demeans herself with obsequious behaviour toward those she thinks might see her some good. She is trusted because you know who she is: what you see is what you get.

People without integrity are called “hypocrites” or “two-faced.”

Reliability (Promise-Keeping)

When we make promises or other commitment that create a legitimate basis for another person to rely upon us, we undertake special moral duties. We accept the responsibility of making all reasonable efforts to fulfill our commitments. Because promise-keeping is such an important aspect of trustworthiness, it is important to:

- Avoid bad-faith excuses. Interpret your promises fairly and honestly.
- Don’t try to rationalize non-compliance.
- Avoid unwise commitments. Before making a promise consider carefully whether you are willing and likely to keep it. Think about unknown or future events that could make it difficult, undesirable or impossible. Sometimes, all we can promise is to do our best.
- Avoid unclear commitments. Be sure that, when you make a promise, the other person understands what you are committing to do.

Loyalty

Some relationships – husband-wife, employer-employee, citizen-country – create an expectation of allegiance, fidelity and devotion. Loyalty is a responsibility to promote the interests of certain people, organizations or affiliations. This duty goes beyond the normal obligation we all share to care for others.
Limitations to loyalty. Loyalty is a tricky thing. Friends, employers, co-workers and others may demand that we rank their interests above ethical considerations. But no one has the right to ask another to sacrifice ethical principles in the name of a special relationship. Indeed, one forfeits a claim of loyalty when he or she asks so high a price for maintaining the relationship.

Prioritizing loyalties. So many individuals and groups make loyalty claims on us that we must rank our loyalty obligations in some rational fashion. For example, it's perfectly reasonable, and ethical, to look out for the interests of our children, parents and spouses even if we have to subordinate our obligations to other children, neighbours or co-workers in doing so.

Safeguarding confidential information. Loyalty requires us to keep some information confidential. When keeping a secret breaks the law or threatens others, however, we may have a responsibility to “blow the whistle”.

Avoiding conflicting interests. Employees and public servants have a duty to make all professional decisions on merit, unimpeded by conflicting personal interests. They owe ultimate loyalty to the public.

RESPECT

People are not things, and everyone has a right to be treated with dignity. We certainly have no ethical duty to hold all people in high esteem, but we should treat everyone with respect, regardless of who they are and what they have done. We have a responsibility to be the best we can be in all situations, even when dealing with unpleasant people.

The Golden Rule – do unto others as you would have them do unto you – nicely illustrates the Pillar of respect. Respect prohibits violence, humiliation, manipulation and exploitation. It reflects notions such as civility, courtesy, decency, dignity, autonomy, tolerance and acceptance.

Civility, Courtesy and Decency

A respectful person is an attentive listener, although his patience with the boorish need not be endless (respect works both ways). Nevertheless, the respectful person treats others with consideration, and doesn’t resort to intimidation, coercion or violence except in extraordinary and limited situations to defend others, teach discipline, maintain order or achieve social justice. Punishment is used in moderation and only to advance important social goals and purposes.

Dignity and Autonomy

People need to make informed decisions about their own lives. Don’t withhold the information they need to do so. Allow all individuals, including maturing children, to have a say in the decisions that affect them.
Tolerance and Acceptance

Accept individual differences and beliefs without prejudice. Judge others only on their character, abilities and conduct.

RESPONSIBILITY

Life is full of choices. Being responsible means being in charge of our choices and, thus, our lives. It means being accountable for what we do and who we are. It also means recognizing that our actions matter and we are morally on the hook for the consequences. Our capacity to reason and our freedom to choose make us morally autonomous and, therefore, answerable for whether we honour or degrade the ethical principles that give life meaning and purpose. Ethical people show responsibility by being accountable, pursuing excellence and exercising self-restraint. They exhibit the ability to respond to expectations.

Accountability

An accountable person is not a victim and doesn’t shift blame or claim credit for the work of others. He considers the likely consequences of his behaviour and associations. He recognizes the common complicity in the triumph of evil when nothing is done to stop it. He leads by example.

Pursuit of Excellence

The pursuit of excellence has an ethical dimension when other rely upon our knowledge, ability or willingness to perform tasks safely and effectively.

Diligence. It is hardly unethical to make mistakes or to be less than “excellent,” but there is a moral obligation to do one’s best, to be diligent, reliable, careful, prepared and informed.

Perseverance. Responsible people finish what they start, overcoming rather than surrendering to obstacles. They avoid excuse such as, “That’s just the way I am,” or “It’s not my job,” or “It was legal.”

Continuous improvement. Responsible people always look for ways to do their work better.

Self-Restraint

Responsible people exercise self-control, restraining passions and appetites (such as lust, hatred, gluttony, greed and fear) for the sake of longer-term vision and better judgment. They delay gratification if necessary.
and never feel it’s necessary to “win at any cost.” They realize they are as they choose to be, every day.

FAIRNESS

What is fairness? Most would agree it involves issues of equality, impartiality, proportionality, openness and due process. Most would agree that it is unfair to handle similar matters inconsistently. Most would agree that it is unfair to impose punishment that is to commensurate with the offence. The basic concept seems simple, even intuitive, yet applying it in daily life can be surprisingly difficult. Fairness is another tricky concept, probably more subject to legitimate debate and interpretation than any other ethical value. Disagreeing parties tend to maintain that there is only one fair position (their own, naturally). But essentially fairness implies adherence to a balanced standard of justice without relevance to one’s own feelings or inclinations.

Process

Process is crucial in settling disputes, both to reach the fairest results and to minimize complaints. A fair person scrupulously employs open and impartial processes for gathering and evaluating information necessary to make decisions. Fair people do not wait for the truth to come to them; they seek out relevant information and conflicting perspectives before making important judgments.

Impartiality

Decisions should be made without favouritism or prejudice.

Equity

An individual, company or society should correct mistakes, promptly and voluntarily. It is improper to take advantage of the weakness or ignorance of others.

CARING

If you existed alone in the universe, there would be no need for ethics and your heart could be a cold, hard stone. Caring is the heart of ethics, and ethical decision-making. It is scarcely possible to be truly ethical and yet unconcerned with the welfare of others. That is because ethics is ultimately about good relations with other people.

It is easier to love “humanity” than to love people. People who consider themselves ethical and yet lack a caring attitude toward individuals tend to treat others as instruments of their will. They rarely feel an obligation to be
honest, loyal, fair or respectful except insofar as it is prudent for them to do so, a disposition which itself hints at duplicity and a lack of integrity. A person who rarely feel an obligation to be honest, loyal, fair respectful except insofar as it is prudent for them to do so, a disposition which itself hints at duplicity and a lack of integrity. A person who really cares feels an emotional response to both the pain and pleasure of others.

Of course, sometimes we must hurt those we truly care for, and some decisions, while quite ethical, do cause pain. But one should consciously cause no more harm than is reasonably necessary to perform one's duties.

The highest form of caring is the honest expression of benevolence, of altruism. This is not to be confused with strategic charity. Gifts to charities to advance personal interests are a fraud. That is, they aren't gifts at all. They're investment or tax write-offs.

CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship includes civic virtues and duties that prescribe how we ought to behave as part of a community. The good citizen knows the laws and obeys them, yes, but that's not all. She volunteers and stays informed on the issues of the day, the better to execute her duties and privileges as a member of a self-governing democratic society. She does more than her "fair" share to make society work, now and for future generations. Such a commitment to the public sphere can have many expressions, such as conserving resources, recycling, using public transportation and cleaning up litter. The good citizen gives more than she takes.

We finish where we began with the story of the man and the hungry and cold birds.

"They find me a strange creature" he said to himself "and I can't seem to think of any way to let them know that they can trust me. If only I could be a bird myself, for a few minutes, perhaps I could lead them to safety". For that moment he felt very removed from the dying birds, as they fluttered about in all directions. He listened to the Church bells in the distance, pealing the glad tiding of Christmas. Then he sunk to his knees, looked up the sky. "Now I understand" he whispered, "Now I see why You had to do it".

A simple story, but one with so many of the ingredients of any human interaction and engagement – needs, wants, communication, supply, demand, trust, connection, language, prejudices and so on. What did the birds want? What did the man want? Were any of the needs fulfilled at all? Could things have been done a different way?

Bibliography


**General Booklist on Interpersonal Communication**


**Highly Recommended**
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