









divergent opinions and beliefs of their followers. They do not denigrate or abase others, but affirm the individuality of each person, while inspiring harmonious relationships among those they lead (Drucker, 1998). Winston and Patterson (2006) have noted that the “great” or ethical leader “recognizes the diversity of the follower(s) and achieves unity of common values and directions without destroying the uniqueness of the person” (p. 8).

## Teachers as Ethical Leaders

Inspirational teachers and educators have played important roles as ethical leaders at crucial periods throughout history. By inspiring others to think creatively about life and to develop new ideas and a fresh perspective on the world, they have generated a revolution of ideas that has had positive effects on humankind. Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Anwar Sadat, the Dalai Lama, and numerous other teachers and gurus have made a significant difference in the lives of their students and have also provided the impetus for broad social movements that have advanced human rights issues for multitudes of people.

In summary, Gandz (2007) has described great leaders as possessing a combination of seemingly opposite personality traits. A truly great leader is “confident *and* humble, assertive *and* patient, analytical *and* intuitive, deliberate *and* decisive, principled *and* pragmatic” (Good as effective section, para. 3). “Principled and pragmatic” are two significant criteria that the authors have used to evaluate leaders along the lines of their adherence to ethical principles and their effectiveness.

## Conclusion

The effectiveness and the ethics of a particular leadership may be evaluated by examining the positive or negative impact that the leader has on the overall enterprise and on the individuals involved. In analyzing the personality traits of a leader, one needs to apply both pragmatic and ethical standards. An effective leader who utilizes harmful methods to accomplish his or her goals is still destructive and therefore unethical. An ineffective leader, even though compassionate and humanitarian, would still be likely to have a damaging effect on his/her constituents and on the overall enterprise or government.

There are many reasons why people seek leadership positions. Some wish to become leaders as a way of asserting themselves, as a method for self-transcendence, or as a means of serving others. Some seek leadership out of a defensive need to compensate for feelings of inadequacy. Toxic or unethical leaders often use their positions to bolster an inflated self-image, to defend against feelings of insecurity and inferiority, or to deny their vulnerability to death. Their charismatic, narcissistic leadership styles resonate with and exacerbate feelings of fear, inferiority, and insecurity in their followers, especially during times of crisis and uncertainty.

The authors believe that insight into the dynamics operating in leadership-followership interactions is critical to understanding social and political issues in contemporary society. The role played by psychological defenses in fostering the political agendas of toxic leaders is an important and timely topic that compels our attention and concern.

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