

INTEGRITY AND GREATNESS

BY ED MORLER, M.B.A., PH.D.

Excerpt from THE LEADERSHIP INTEGRITY CHALLENGE

Gandhi, Hitler, Martin Luther King, Jr., Lincoln, Pol Pot, Stalin all were leaders who motivated others to do things they normally would not do. All shared some common characteristics: all had a vision; all were determined, persistent, and successful in overcoming many obstacles; all had a big impact that dramatically changed the world in their lifetime.

Yet today, the world acknowledges Gandhi, King, and Lincoln as models of great leadership, while vilifying Hitler, Pol Pot, and Stalin as extreme abusers of power. Momentary popularity is seldom a measure of greatness. There was a time when millions revered Hitler and a period when many despised Lincoln. What is the fundamental difference?

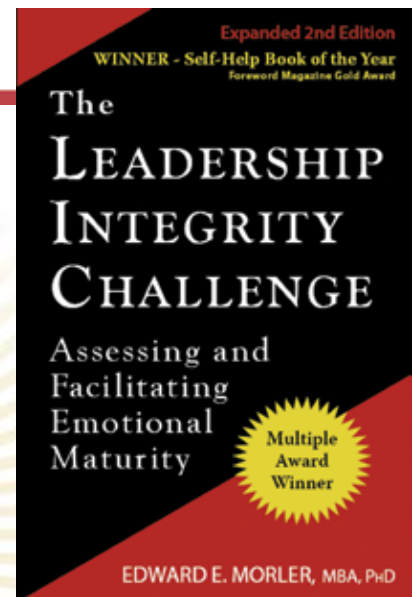
Those readily acknowledged as great—Lincoln, Gandhi, and King—lived and acted from essence values; love, caring, compassion, authenticity, responsibility, allowance, inclusion, and so on. Hitler, Stalin, and Pol Pot violated them all, reacting instead out of self-centered fear and rage. For Lincoln, Gandhi, and King, essence values were their starting point; they responded from a position of caring and compassion. That foundation and perspective allowed them to stand tall against considerable social pressure as well as their own human foibles.



Today's and tomorrow's leaders may want to bear this in mind when they find themselves reacting to momentary pressures such as stock prices and popularity polls rather than responding to fundamental needs. Doing so skews priorities, misallocates resources, and is always limiting and rationalized.

Using ends to justify questionable means is a sure sign of a narrowed, frightened perspective and a corresponding lack of integrity. Former Commander in Chief of the Strategic Air Command General Jack Chain said it with bottom-line clarity, "When integrity is lacking, bad things happen!" *When we ignore essence values, we inevitably invite their opposites: hatred, indifference, pretense, dishonesty, irresponsibility, and exclusion.* We cannot and do not create happy conclusions using means that lack integrity. Ends and means must be in alignment. Only by using responsible means will we achieve responsible ends. The irresponsible use of power (ignoring essence values), no matter how rationalized, is inevitably abusive. *Power used responsibly is the essence of greatness.* (See "What Makes Leadership Positive?" chapter 8, page 276.)

Greatness emerges from living essence values. Great leadership motivates others to be increasingly present, authentic, compassionate, generous—in other words to live and model



essence values. That is Integrity with a capital I. That is Leadership with a capital L.

Greatness is not found in possessions, power, position, or prestige. It is discovered in goodness, humility, service, and character.

—Author unknown

Happiness is a by-product.

—Robert Tracy



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Morler is president of Morler International, a management training and development firm specializing in integrity-based interpersonal effectiveness. His focus is the custom design and delivery of bottom-line, functional skill enhancement programs that simultaneously integrate the principles and dynamics of integrity, emotional maturity, motivation, and leadership. Examples are negotiation, client relations, and leadership development. Dr. Morler conducts trainings for corporations and government agencies worldwide.



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