



"The greatest mistake you can make in life is to be continually fearing you will make one."

Elbert Hubbard

THE VALUE EQUATION of FEAR

We know that organizational integrity must necessarily begin with personal integrity. However, too often an individual's actions conflict with their stated commitments and values. The effect on others is experienced on a very personal and often, emotional level. Individuals place trust with others on good faith - faith in words being kept, trust respected. When that trust is broken, people and organizations suffer.

Destructive behaviors spread a disease in organizations that impair its ability to optimize performance, retain employees and satisfy stakeholders. The symptoms are a lack of focus on vision, values, morals and ethics. The name of the disease that places our organizations in jeopardy is *Fear*. Not always a conscious, intentional act, fear often causes followers to compromise on process and results, to lack the motivation to surpass quality measures, to build and maintain respect for their leaders.

When leaders and employees lack awareness of, and discipline toward, their personal actions, they negatively affect performance and bottom-line profits. It's that simple. And the irony is that the simplicity of it seems to be shrouded in complexities of competing goals, egos and infra-structural designs.

We tolerate conflicting words and actions and far too often, reward people for it. In doing so, we sacrifice our personal integrity, become victims of our own behavior, and we leave victims in our wake. We have a serious need to learn new skills for collaborating, communicating and dealing with conflict in ways that are respectful and dignified. Most importantly, we have a serious need to discontinue complacently accepting our unacceptable behavior.

Holding people accountable for their actions is one of the most critical decisions an organization - and every human being in it - can make today. As a prerequisite to building integrity into our organizations, we *all* must begin by first looking in the mirror.

Organizational integrity requires individuals to adopt a fear-less focus. We must decide to be disciplined in aligning our actions with our personal and organizational values, to live to the value proposition that adds up to: "I mean what I say, I do what I say, and I hold myself accountable for what happens - *always*."