

## ethikos Volume 34, Number 8. August 01, 2020 On ethics: Lisa Gross

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An interview by **Adam Turteltaub**, CHC, CCEP, Vice President of Strategic Initiatives & International Programs, SCCE & HCCA.

**AT: At your session at the 2019 Compliance & Ethics Institute, you pointed out something that is subtle but important: There is a difference between a leader and a manager. Can you describe what you meant?**

**LG:** Understanding the distinction between managing and leading is essential. Managers provide direction, and they establish structure and systems to get results. Their main focus is meeting an established objective. Often, they achieve results through an autocratic and direct approach. Effective leaders, on the other hand, are not only responsible for results, but typically focus on virtues such as trust, honesty, integrity, and a good work ethic, as well as people. The most successful leaders are those that possess strong leadership traits and know how and when to manage their teams to reach their objectives and vision.

Effective leadership means being self-aware and understanding one's strengths, limitations, and continually seeking feedback. Leaders understand their importance to the team and, most importantly, that without an energized team, the goals cannot be achieved. Good leaders communicate and connect well with people. They promote values and define goals. Authentic leaders have earned the trust of those that work with and for them. Understanding this is a powerful motivator.

**AT: The ethical equation may not change, but the stakes certainly grow higher. How should someone approach ethics differently if they are seeking to be a leader?**

**LG:** Employees should always view ethics as a vital part of their behavior and vital to the business. Every decision they make, every communication, and every interaction should be aligned to the ethical values of the company. If they do not demonstrate these values as an employee, they will not be respected as a leader who can and will create and sustain an ethical culture. Think about it: If an employee does not demonstrate ethical behavior today, will they be viewed as ethical just because they are now a leader? Will their coworkers stand up and cheer and want to work for them? We don't wake up one day as a leader and all of a sudden become an ethical individual. Embracing ethical conviction at every stage in one's career is crucial. As employees, we need to know the difference between right and wrong. We need to know when to speak up—and have the courage to do so—when something does not seem right. It's this behavior that will be recognized by others and will be carried over into a leadership position. If one does not possess these characteristics today, they will not be taken seriously when trying to instill these same messages in their employees.

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