Fortifying Workplace Respect Through Balanced Experiential Inquiry

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Terrorism Rages

- **Brutality** that can be disguised in the name of Islam
- **Distorted** Muslim beliefs that are often extreme or maligned
- **Horrific** and distressing for everyone, especially for those who have lost loved ones, *but also*
- **Painful** for the Muslim community who bear feelings of shame and guilt, distress and fear as a result of barbarous acts
Media Fuels Fear and Anger
Intolerance is Intolerable

I am a Muslim
Please don't HATE me!
Agenda

1. Motivation
2. Terms and Framework
3. Balanced Experiential Inquiry
4. Implications
Changing Face of “Community”
Pew Research

- Muslims are 24% of the world’s population (1.8B)
- Muslims are 1% of the U.S. population (3.3M)
- 59% of U.S. citizens believe discrimination against Muslims is increasing
- 76% of U.S. citizens believe Muslims are more likely to encourage violence than any other group
Motivation for this Work

- **Awareness** of phobic biases and prejudicial attitudes towards Muslims
- **Support** a desire to role-model moral courage that helps foster respect in every day task actions
- **Develop moral competencies**, skills that support ethical strength
- **Encourage civility** and prevent employees from demeaning the value and values of Muslims
Elements of Islamophobia

- Monolithic
- Inferior
- Irrational, primitive, inferior
- Clash of civilizations, isolated, violent
- Ideology used to promote political and military interests
- Intolerant to criticism
- Deserving of discrimination
## Building Ethical Strength

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unethical Action</th>
<th>Ethical Action</th>
<th>Ethical Strength</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does harm</td>
<td>Does no harm</td>
<td>Reduces harm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-adherence to regulation</td>
<td>Adherence to regulation</td>
<td>Supersedes regulation</td>
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<td>Avoidance orientation</td>
<td>Prevention orientation</td>
<td>Promotion orientation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Punishment Disobedience and noncompliance</td>
<td>Control Obedience and compliance</td>
<td>Empowerment Growth and development</td>
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<tr>
<th>Moral Weakness</th>
<th>Moral Minimum</th>
<th>Moral Courage</th>
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<td>Closed/Control</td>
<td>Open/Discovery</td>
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Moral Courage

**Moral Agency**: a predisposition to be a moral agent;

**Multiple Values**: use of multiple value sets to determine moral action;

**Endures Threat**: despite risk, pursues moral action;

**Supersedes Compliance**: apply rules, but goes beyond compliance to achieve what is right, just, and/or good; and

**Moral Goal**: complete tasks with the application of moral principles to achieve moral outcomes.
Building Moral Courage via Competencies

- More than personal traits, competencies are aggregates of capabilities that bear sustainable value and broad applicability.
- An underlying characteristic that can be a skill, one that is harmonized, intentional and can be further developed.
Moral Competencies

**Emotional Signaling:** Uses emotional cues to fuel moral awareness

**Reflective Pause:** Self-imposed time-out for insight and deliberation, regardless of time constraints

**Self-regulation:** Manage desires that may run counter to internal or external demands

**Moral Preparation:** Preconceived intention to act ethically, even before one faces an ethical challenge
Balanced Experiential Inquiry (BEI)

- Blends problem- and strength-based development processes
- Provides employees with a structured venue where they can build ethical strength
- Focuses on personal and collective challenges and strengths
- An experiential-based method of conducting ethics training
- Strengthens awareness of moral courage and exercises the moral competencies
What’s your ethical challenge?

Think back to a time when you experienced, faced, or observed an ethical issue of discrimination in your organization. The situation may have involved you or another person experiencing exclusion, unfair treatment, a lack of respect, bullying, or the use of words and/or actions that seemed to harass or intimidate a person or group.

For example, perhaps you observed a situation where someone in the workplace engaged in anti-Muslim or Islamophobic behavior. Regardless of whether the discrimination was implicit or explicit, the situation may have presented a conflict between your personal values and those being demonstrated in the circumstance. Perhaps the situation was a conflict between others, based upon differences in personal beliefs, traditions, or cultural values. Perhaps the values of other employees or the organization itself ran counter to your own beliefs, traditions, or cultural values.

Regardless of who was being discriminated against, it was likely difficult for you to act, to know what to do, or to determine how to resolve the issue. As you think back on your organizational experiences, this is a time when you may have been unsure how to act or did not initially know what to do. The situation was probably undesirable, based upon the risks involved in your taking action. The experience seemed to present an ethical or moral issue and, at the time, none of your options seemed particularly favorable.
Step 1
Reflect (5 mins, see handout)

Step 2
Share (15 mins, see handout)
Step 3
Report out & Discussion

- Share examples and describe thoughts, feelings, and responses.
- What role do emotions play in the ability to engage in moral action?
- What supports or curtails the ability to proceed with morally courageous action in the workplace?
- What actions can you and your organization take to foster respect for others; especially for those with religious values or perspectives considered to be different from your own or what’s perceived to be the norm?
- Does the organization value a moral strength-based approach, as a performance goal?
Link to Moral Competencies

*Emotional Signaling:* Use of emotional cues to fuel moral awareness.

*Reflective Pause:* Self-imposed time-out for insight and deliberation, regardless of time constraints.

*Self-regulation:* Manage desires that may run counter to internal or external demands.

*Moral Preparation:* Preconceived intention to act ethically, even before one faces an ethical challenge.
Your Role

- Create a safe space, unpacking issues without judgment;
- Reveal emotions, motives, and intentions, to find out what supports or blocks moral action;
- Consider individual and organizational level strengths/weakness;
- Elevate positive aspects, creating trust that encourages respect, inclusion, and openness;
- Underscore responsibility for building moral competency and build ownership for moral strength from the inside-out; and
- Target learning at the individual, group, and collective levels.
Implications

• Prevent Islamophobia and other forms of discrimination by going beyond compliance, using a strength-based approach to addressing workplace ethics
• Build and measure moral competency, skills that fortify the ability to address ethical issues with moral courage
• Recognize that check-in-the box or quick fix solutions do not resolve systemic issues
• Leadership must emerge at every level, taking responsibility for shaping the social narrative, one that encourages and bolsters respect for one another
Supplements

Ethics is a Daily Deal
Choosing to Build Moral Strength as a Practice
Leslie E. Sekerka

BEING A BETTER BEAR
What it Means to be Ethical
Leslie E. Sekerka
With Illustrations & Graphics by
Willison, John, and Leonard Jenkins

ETHICS TRAINING IN ACTION
An Examination of Issues, Techniques, and Development
edited by
Leslie E. Sekerka
References


