

Introduction

Normative Leadership: The Definitive Edition

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*How long, O Lord? I cry for help, but you do not listen.
I cry out to you, "Violence!", but you do not intervene.
Why do you let me see ruin; why must I look at misery?
Destruction and violence are before me; there is strife and clamorous discord.
Then the Lord answered me and said:
Write down the vision clearly upon the tablets, so that one can read it readily,
for the vision still has its time.
Press on to fulfillment, and will not disappoint;
if it delays, wait for it, it will surely come, it will not be late.
The rash one has no integrity; but the just one, because of his faith, shall live.*

Passages From the Book of the Prophet Habakkuk

If you studied history, you would know the story of mankind offers endless examples of the repetitive cycle of man's inability to understand and internalize the timeless principles that were given to us by God, through our ancestors, that enable us to live in peace and harmony with our fellow human beings. The God-like principles such as goodness and righteousness represent the blueprint for the way mankind is supposed to evolve. These principles have been passed down from generation to generation by parents and grandparents to their children and grandchildren. They continue to be reinforced by formal institutions such as schools and religions. And, while these principles have been taught, what really happens is that man chooses to ignore them and continually succumbs to the worldly trappings of power, politics, and profit. This, in turn, has led to the "*destruction and violence . . . strife and clamorous discord*" of which Habakkuk writes because we consciously turn away from God's ways. It reinforces the fact that life is simply a timeless struggle between good and evil — with evil ironically, seeming to always have the advantage. For this reason, I believe that the above passage from the Prophet Habakkuk, written between 610-605 BC, is an appropriate preview for your life as a NORMATIVE Leader.

I trust it is safe to assume that since you are reading this book, you have an interest in both leadership and normative behavior. After 46 years in the field of organizational culture change, I have seen many trends in leadership training and organizational development programs that have failed, over time, to live up to the marketing hype that surrounded them. They eventually gave way to the next trend that was basically the same concepts, but a different package. So, what makes this book (program) different? Several things:

- 1) All of the other books that I have read tell you *what* you have to do in order to be a better leader or make your organization better. This book tells you *how to* do it!
- 2) Normative Leadership provides you with a simple, but powerful, *operating system* that is universally applicable to any group, team, or organization.
- 3) It is simple to understand, easy to use, full of common sense, and timeless — it will never go out of style!
- 4) Its focus is on the real culprit that can help your group, team, or organization to reach the pinnacle of success, or cause it to self-implode. That culprit is *the organizational or “normative” culture*.
- 5) But most importantly, *it works!*

My college football coach applied the Normative Leadership concepts intuitively to turn around a losing program into a national champion in four short years. My normative mentor revolutionized the field of residential treatment within juvenile corrections by taking a private, nonprofit residential school for male juvenile offenders from the verge of declaring bankruptcy and turning it around. At the end of my tenure there, six and one-half years later, we were a financially solvent, 10 mil operation, with 420 students, (mostly from inner-city Philadelphia) and had earned the reputation of being an international model for the rehabilitation of at-risk youth, and organizational culture change. One of my normative colleagues used the model to turn a struggling high school football team into a state champion. He also applied it successfully in his role as a high school assistant principal. As a normative practitioner, trainer, and consultant, I have taught the normative model to thousands of individuals in organizations within the fields of business, education, human services, team sports, and the residence life area within the college and university setting. I have seen many other examples of individuals who achieved various levels of success after applying the model within their chosen field. This book is a culmination of my education, experience, and on-going improvements that I made to the model over the past 46 years. It is my definitive work that will be my legacy for others to use and build upon in the future.

Initially, I self-published this book in 2004. My clients have used it as a resource to help them to apply the normative concepts within their organizations after attending my professional development programs. Although the system is geared specifically towards organizational culture change, components of it are easily adapted for use in leadership programs, peer pressure programs for kids, classroom management skills for teachers, management development programs, team building, etc. It's all applicable. You just have to be a bit creative. In this updated version, I take a more comprehensive look, in chapters 8 through 13, into how *human nature* serves as the one key variable that makes the difference in how the system is implemented, which in turn, affects the cultures we create.

Ultimately, being a NORMATIVE Leader will prove to be both a blessing and a curse, for you will see things that need to be changed, and you will have developed the knowledge and skills to do so. However, others with selfish motives may desire to maintain the status quo and oppose you — even though they know you are doing what is right. And so, as you read and hopefully, internalize the NORMATIVE Leadership philosophy, create a vision for yourself on how you can use your leadership skills to apply what you have learned to make your group, team, and/or organization, and perhaps the world, a better place. It won't be easy, but it can be done.

■ THE CHALLENGE ■

After 46 years of forging my own “normative” path, I, too, feel like Habakkuk. The excitement and optimism I have always had in trying to make a difference in the world, has given way to the harsh realities I experienced in my struggles on the Path of the NORMATIVE Leader. I have met and/or worked with many individuals over the years who have spoken passionately of doing the right thing and using the Normative Leadership concepts in changing *their world*. However, in time, their actions eventually exposed their true purpose — that of fulfilling their own self-serving agendas versus following the precepts of the model. By doing this, they lost the purity of the model which gave birth to a dysfunctional culture within their group/organization, causing them to operate at a level far below their potential, or implode. And, then there were some who legitimately tried to implement the model within their group or organization, but failed due to a lack of support from their leader and strong opposition from the group and/or other outside influences.

So, now, having begun our ascent into the 21st century, we as human beings, a society, a world, are at a crossroads. Our world is in a critical norms crisis and today, we are paying the price for the out of balance cultures we have created over the years in our groups and organizations. In his perceptive brilliance, Walt Kelly identified both the cause and solution to the problems we face in society today when he said, “*We have met the enemy. He is us.*”

Yes, we as human beings, are our own worst enemy. Our history shows that leaders in every generation have made decisions that have both enabled mankind to move forward with advancements in all fields while simultaneously, destroying certain aspects of our progress by succumbing to the trappings of profit, power, and politics. This is the proverbial struggle that is timeless within our humanity, and it makes one wonder, *when will we finally get it?*

There is nothing new or earth-shattering in this book. The NORMATIVE Leadership system is an enigma in that it is *very simple* to understand, *yet very difficult* to apply correctly. While this system is simple, it is timeless, very powerful, and will serve you well throughout your personal and professional life – as long as principles guide your purpose.

We can't change the past, but we can change the present and influence our future by our actions as hopefully, *more enlightened leaders*. As we continue down the path of self-destruction in our world, we can no longer afford to turn a blind eye to the dysfunctional cultures we have created.

The normative parameters for acceptable behavior have expanded tremendously over the past 50+ years. Dysfunctional behavior is, in many ways, rewarded instead of being frowned upon.

We need to learn how to transcend these issues and evolve into the next level of our humanity in order to create a sense of balance within ourselves and in our relationships with others. So, instead of judging situations and people from our own biases and beliefs, we should apply a more universal standard that everyone, regardless of race, color, religion, etc., can use in assessing situations and behavior. We can do this by viewing events from a *normative perspective*. This book provides the *missing link* that can show you how to do it.

If you undertake this challenge, be advised that history has not been kind to the righteous individual — the NORMATIVE Leader who seeks to make the world a better place ... a more just and God-like place. And know that if you embrace the life of a NORMATIVE Leader, you are, indeed, guaranteed a very difficult path to forge. However, as you press forward in pursuing your vision as a NORMATIVE Leader, always remember God's words to Habakkuk:

*. . . Write down the vision clearly upon the tablets, so that one can read it readily,
for the vision still has its time.
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Are *you* ready for the challenge?