



Leadership 101: The Honor Code

From The Best Foot Forward Series

By: George Earl Johnson, Jr.

Presented at the

Sarkeys Foundation's

Fifth Annual Southwest Regional Leadership Forum

Norman, Oklahoma

November 8, 2011



**So you are here for
Leadership 101: The Honor Code...**

This time will be spent discussing the character involved in:

- **Leadership** and the **Honor Code** that goes with it.
- Yes – The Honor Code.

When you can look at survey after survey across the nation and the majority of our students and young adults believe **it is okay to lie, cheat and steal** in order to achieve a desired result – that means we have trouble coming.

The Honor Code playbook has been left on the school bus or in the locker room. The players are no longer going to be good sportsmen, teammates or co-workers. We have collectively loss before we get on the field.

What do we know about **Faith, Hope and Love**?
Is there any honor in those words?

So what do we know about leadership?

Let's set a few ground rules:

There are **only two types of Leadership**.

And it really does not matter what your **latest leadership guru book** might state.

In Leadership, there is:

- 1. Good Leadership, and**
- 2. There is Bad Leadership.**

**That's it.
Case Closed.
The class is over.**

The rest of it is window dressing, but it does not change the size of the window.

I have a few words that I jotted down that should be a part of any Leadership conversation:

**Respect,
Loyalty,
Dependability,
Availability,
Humility,
Compassion,
Boldness,**



**Kindness,
Obedience,
Wisdom,
Virtue,
Generosity,
Discretion,
Fairness
Forgiveness, and
Courage.**

These 16 words and others in the character pool are all a part of the litmus test in measuring Leadership's character and performance. You use these words consciously and unconsciously daily. You make judgments about those in positions that you think of as leaders using these words. It's a test, a Litmus test we all use on others. You are even using them on me right now.

TWO BOOK READ RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1. Doing Virtuous Business by Theodore Roosevelt Malloch, Yale University and**
- 2. The Way We Will Be by John Zogby, The Zogby Report [One of America's chief Researchers].**

Both authors will give you a keen insight into what today's leadership is doing and what tomorrow's leadership will need to be doing to avoid chaos and disaster.

When I say –

Barak Obama, Herman Cain, Mary Fallin, Brad Henry, Ronald Reagan, Bob Stoops, Sherri Cole, Stalin, John F. Kennedy, Adolph Hitler, Martin Luther King, Judas, Mother Teresa, Carmon, Lady Gaga, Jesus, Mohammad, Mohammad Ali –

I have just intellectually and emotionally taken you across the vast sea of judgment and evaluation. For some of you, it was a good exercise and experience. For others, you are now judging me on one or more of the names I just mentioned that fell outside of your comfort zone.

Question:

How Gray is your Black & White?

Let me repeat that question:

I said, **How Gray is your Black & White?**

Stated another way:

Does your **“Yes” mean yes, or**

Does your “No” mean no?



By the way; the answer you give is the Honor Code test.

Too often, you go along to get along.

Don't try to deny it.

So, you are here looking for the Silver Bullet!

The Silver Bullet Leadership.

You know when you seek wisdom; Wisdom will find you.

But that's just it: **We don't ask for wisdom.**

We ask for answers –

We want the quick fix to the problems before us.

“We get an answer, not “The Answer.”

Then we move on to the next thing.

And we tell those on our teams:

“Let what is left behind be someone else's problem to fix.

We have done enough to get by, right? ”

Have I said anything thus far that sounds like anything you have been facing as a leader?

Don't raise your hands.

Or are these things you are facing from your leaders?

Well, I have an answer for you on **the Silver Bullet you are looking for**. But you are going to have to stick around for the answer.

You know that nagging question that someone always brings up when something needs to be done:

Why doesn't somebody do something?

I hope you are not the one that brings up the question all the time... Come on... Smile. It doesn't hurt so badly when you smile.

What is the most powerful word in the Holy Bible?

Okay, don't get bent out of shape.

Just answer the question.

In the **Judeo-Christian Faith** the most powerful single word is always the instruction given when someone wants something done.

The word is:

Are you ready for this –



The word is “Go!”

Go you say? Go!

Oh now you are disappointed.

You wanted it to be some highly sophisticated, multi-syllable word like **“Facilitation”** or **“Utilization”**.

Or better yet: It should have been:

Pneumonoultramicroscopicsilicovolcanoconiosis.

Now there’s a mouth-full for you.

Okay I will repeat it for the inquiring minds who want to know!!

Pneumono\ultra\microscopic\silico\valcano\coni\osis.

It’s a viral germ in the Pneumonia family. Believe me; you would not want to have one in your family.

Okay: Back to the lesson.

Whenever something needed to be done, God said Go!

At work when something needs to be done, the most powerful word is still – Go!

That’s right Go! You do it.

Nike made billions of dollars last year by saying “Just do it!”

Just do it.

Yes, Just Do It!

For the record, that was first said by King David to his son Solomon in the Eighth Century BC.

Don’t believe me, go find it yourself. Just do It!

Leadership requires a **sturdy hand** that has **Vision**.

Today, you are here at a place a time in Norman America because of the Vision of one man **S.J. Sarkeys**.



Sarkeys, the salesman and oil man, went about building something against the odds. More than 600,000 oil land leases later, he had something going for himself and the company he would build. He built his company well enough that the over abundance created the foundation which is hosting this conference.

His visionary leadership is affording each of you an opportunity to become better educated and informed today as working professionals.

His vision was large enough to serve his state and nation well nearly a half century after his death.

So today, we are talking **Leadership 101: The Honor Code**.

The questions for you are:

How big is your vision?

How long will your vision continue to serve humanity?

Have you written your vision down on tablets or paper?

When men or women read your vision, is it powerful enough to cause them to run to you or flee from you?

Will your vision cause them to faint or faint not?

My friend **Jim Gibbons** has great vision. It serves him well and it serves those around him well, too.

Jim happens to be blind. Don't feel sorry. Jim doesn't.

Today, Jim is President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Goodwill International. The organization is the collective focal point for 165 Independent, Community-led Goodwill organizations, located around the world. It's a little group that had annual revenues north of \$4 billion last year [2010] –

It's just a little small nonprofit operation.

Jim's parents made no excuses for him as his sight began to degenerate as a child. The challenge did not stop him from getting an engineering degree and working as an engineer for ATT for 10 years. It did not stop Jim from becoming the first person without sight to earn a Master's of Business Administration degree from the Harvard University School of Business.

I did not say without vision – right?

I said **without sight**.

There is a BIG difference.



His vision has carried him and others a long way.

How far is your vision carrying those around you?

How far can you see without sight?

This is a session in PONDERING. That's what real Leaders do...
They PONDER... They PONDER A Lot!!!

In the 4th grade, my teacher and classmates attempted to steal my dreams – my vision.
“Sit down George. You don't know how to read. You are never going to amount to anything” – so said my teacher.

Oh yea; my teacher. What an encourager. For the next six years, I became an expert at poor reading and spelling. Can you imagine what the teachers after her said about me in the teacher's lounge?

They almost got away with it.

But they did not know **Emma Stacker** was coming on duty.

Mrs. Stacker was as career educator and assistant principal at Hyde Park High. She was an English teacher who as an administrator never left the classroom.

In the summer of 1963, she got a hold of me and refused to let the flicker of my dim vision die on her watch.

When my poorly-written, tattered story came back, **Mrs. Stacker** had put a double graded on it. In the upper right-hand corner, written in “RED,” there was a BIG “A” over an “F.” What is an A over a F grade mean. When she passed the papers out, she told me to come see her after class. I knew I was in trouble then.

I asked her what did the A over F grade mean. She told me I wrote a good story, but the spelling and sentence structure needed some work.

She was right or was she write?

She went on to explain to me what I had done and what I could do to make the paper better. She told me to work on the story some more and give it back to her later. She said again that it was good work.



That **A over an F** and a few moments of positive comments sent a spark of hope back into the dimly-lit corner of my soul.

The spirit of the Lord makes one rich and adds no sorrow.

What does any of that have to do with Leadership, you say?

Without Emma Stacker's intervention with a split grade and a few kind words, who would be talking to you right now? Surely it would not be me. I would have gone the way of all the other failures you have never heard of...

What do Leaders do?

They become Emma Stacker.

They offer encouragement to those around them.

How much encouragement have you offered to an undeserving soul:

Today?

In the last 24 hours?

This week?

This month?

This year?

EVER?

Do what leaders do:

Be encouraged!

Be an encourager!

I said:

Be Encouraged!

Be an encourager!!!!

Come...

Take a trip with me to a distance Star System!

You are a **Punk Kid** living out your life in a desert wasteland with your mother.

You know of your father, but you don't know your father.

Does any of this sound familiar?



Through a series of events you are called into action when you find out that people you don't know want to kill you. What have you done but go around in the desert shooting a few desert rats with your rusty old laser pistol you got for the intergalactic pond shop.

You're a dreamer.

You have visions of space travel.

You see yourself as a member and leader in a mighty army.

But how do you get there from this remote outpost – located nowhere in the universe?

Oh **Luke Skywalker** –

“Let the Force be with you.”

So through and series of events – too long to go into here – you are off across the galaxy in a rusty old X-Wing Fighter looking for the galaxy's best known **Jedi Master – Yoda**.

The Force is with you, but you don't even know what the Force is.

So you crash your X-Wing Fighter in the middle of a swamp on a planet that is unmarked and even more remote than where you lived. It's not even in a charted Star system.

You were lost when there were landmarks. Now you are beyond lost.

You find yourself face-to-face with a **3-foot-nothing, 800-year-old, big eared, big eyed green being that's not even human**.

Does this sounds like something that has happened to you?

At your house?

At work?

At your house of worship?

Maybe this being looks like the person you met on that blind date from the Internet?

This 3-foot-nothing, 800-year-old, big eared, big eyed green being is not exactly what you have flown across the expanse of time to find.

But it is exactly what you need.

It is Yoda.

But it does not look like all of the legendary stories you have heard about since you were a small child.

Come on: This is **Yoda????**



It's like when you are looking for a new member of your team at work. You have in your mind exactly what they should look like.

To be a member on your team:

They need to fit in.

They need to blend in.

At this point – you are like – **Skywalker** –
You are using sight and not the Force of Faith.

Many of you know the rest of the story.
But for those of you who don't –
Skywalker needs to get his X-Wing Fighter out of the swamp.

It's not stuck.
It is buried.

I've tried.
It won't work.
It's too hard.
It's never been done.
I'm stuck here forever.
It quit.
Does any of this sound familiar?

For the record: These are never things you hear coming from real leaders.
In their weakest moments, their spirits will not allow it.

“I tried,” Skywalker said to Yoda as he sits down on a rock in defeat.

**Yoda then steps forward and says what
Every real Jedi Master –
Every real Mentor – and
Every real Leader says to a young apprentice...**

**“Try!”
“Try not!”
“Do or Do Not.”
“There is no try.”
“There is only Do!!!”**

In your mind the music builds for this event.
Yoda turns and points his three-prong hand toward the muck and mire of the swamp.
And with a single-minded focus and the Force of undeniable FAITH;
He raises Skywalker's Intergalactic X-Wing Fighter out of the swamp and places it on solid ground, as Skywalker looks on in amazement.



With the Faith of a mustard seed when you say to this mountain be removed and casted into the sea; the mountain shall obey.

What is the mountain before you at this time?

What is the buried X-Wing Fighter in your life that seems buried under insurmountable odds?

1. What have you put your heart and mind to lately that demonstrates your ability for Leadership when things appear to visibly seem impossible?

2. Can you pass the Honor Code test?

I know you missed the last two questions, so I will repeat them.

1. What have you put your heart and mind to lately that demonstrates your ability for Leadership when things appear to visibly seem impossible?

2. Can you pass the Honor Code test?

This is leadership training for people working in nonprofit organizations – right?

So here are a few more nonprofit leadership questions for you:


- What do you know about the business world?
- In your community?
- Your town or city?
- In this State?
- In the Nation?
- Global business and economics?

- What kind of business system forms the basic structure of American business?
- What is the right balance between profit and loss in business?
- What is the right balance between profit and loss in nonprofit business?
- When you spend the money you earn; do you spend it locally or globally?

Now for the **BIGGER QUESTIONS:**

❖ **Who should pay for social services? Should they be paid for by:**

- Communities?
- Churches?
- City, state or National Government?
- Big Business?

- 
- Small Business?
 - I don't Know?
 - I don't Care?

 - How much freedom do you need in order to be free?
 - What is the price break on taxes before a government becomes economically socialists?
 - Do you know the difference between a blessing and a curse?
 - How long should a person live?
 - When should a person not live any longer?
 - Define profit?
 - Define nonprofit?
 - Should a nonprofit make any money?

These are questions you should PONDER. Why?...

They are questions that the business executives you ask for money to fund your nonprofit organizations think about all the time. They can only give you money to support your causes when they make profits from the businesses they operate.

If you don't know what they are thinking about as leaders; how can you expect them to respond over time to the financial needs of your nonprofit causes.

Leadership 101 is a 360° event that requires focus.

The training you have been getting for so long has said **you are not supposed to think**. That thinking is wrong. I have taken you on a ride from one end of the Leadership spectrum to another.

Hear me: There are how many types of leadership?

That's right – two!

1. There is Good Leadership;
- and
2. There is Bad Leadership.

The Force within you knows the difference. When you listen very carefully to that Force, it will help you know the difference.

The only decision you will have to make today is:

**Are you going to be a Good Leader; or
Are you going to be a Bad Leader?**

The choice is yours to make...



I put before you blessings and courses – life and death: Choose Life. Choose the blessings. Choose Good Leadership.

I won't be there later today, next week or next year when you have to make that next life challenging decision, but the Force within you will be there.

One of the greater Leadership stories I have heard is that of David and Goliath.

The story has in it all of the essences of Honor.
It's a story we first hear in childhood.
It becomes more age-appropriate as we hear mature and here more updated versions.

Today, it is simpler for me than it was as a child.
It has great basics.
Many children hear it from the time they are very young as a story of good overcoming evil or as the story where the little guy wins over the giant.

David is the typical teen with, older siblings and plenty of family chores to do. His main chore of the day was watching over “a few head of sheep,” according to his older brothers. It had to be a classical chore for a **Jewish teenager 2,800 years ago**. He was reported to be very adventurous, too.

That has not changed in today's teens.

When the word came there was an opposing army ready to go to war against his nation, the whole nation of Israel was reported to be afraid and turn and ran for the hills. In the rules of war, we can't win until someone either surrenders or is defeated in battle. The word had gone out saying, Saul, the king of David's nation, was offering a reward. And by today's standards, it was worth millions of dollars; tax free. At the time, David was off watching sheep. But the word, via the grapevine, cannot escape the ears of an active teenager; yesterday or today.

The soldiers were gathered around the campfires in the hills telling each other the stories about the rewards the king would give to the man who killed Goliath. David had come down from watching his sheep to bring food to his brothers. He sat around the fires to listen to the stories. He didn't want to believe it so he asked the soldiers to repeat the stories. These stories were too good to be true.

Being the younger brother, you can only imagine the older brothers would show up to spoil David's party. They did just that. One of the eldest brother asked him why was he not guarding his few head of sheep? David responded to his brothers like most teens who have had older siblings. He said, “**What have I done [wrong] now?** If you have had older siblings, you know the feelings David had.



You also know this was not the first time his brothers had picked on David. He, being the youngest, was the point of all of their jokes and kidding. The brothers sent him packing. David didn't go far. He left them and turned to another group talking about the reward at another campfire.

He began asking the same questions: "What are the rewards the king is offering for the man who kills Goliath?" They repeated the rewards and this Jewish teenager now has a dream – a dream that would serve his life and his nation well for the rest of his life.

David's life would not be without toil and pain, but it would be rich life, by any measure of standards. Even as adults we can get involved in situations in our families, at work or in our communities. We are working on the task assigned, but have others who treat us as David's brothers treated him.

What we can learn from young David is how important it is to have a dream – a dream that can drive us to do things we normally would not undertake. Most things that get done are done by people who catch the dreams, not the nightmares.

The bigger the challenges the bigger the dreams we must have to take them on. David's dreams were to get the rewards offered by the king. The king knew the challenge before his nation went winning a distinctive battle against the giant or be conquered or killed. Being conquered or kill was not an option for the king. For the king being conquered would be sure death for him and many of his leaders. Giving a large rewards for killing the enemy is a small price to pay for living. Winning was the only thing that would work.

Goliath and his army had set the stage: defeat me and the war is over. However, when I win, you are conquered and your nation surrenders to our nation. Imagine the king finding there was no one in his kingdom who wanted to even take on the challenge of fighting for the freedom of the nation. That included the king, himself. So, in walks this teenage boy who is suppose to be watching a few head of sheep on a hillside somewhere and says he'll take on the giant.

What's amazing is the king has to be serious about listening to the kid. Why? Because no one else is coming forward.

Have you ever felt like you were the only one with your toes touching the frontline? Have you ever had a dream burning in you the way the dream must have caught fire in David? Where are David's older brothers now?

So as a teen, David had few friends, but there were guards willing to share the story that he turned into his dream – a dream that would move him from the bottom of the family ladder to a hero for a nation. Things can happen that fast for you too.

However, are you willing to take the type of risk David took? Most of us are not.



Some of the expressions we most often hear today when we speak to people, and ask them how they are doing, we get:

“fair-to-middl’in”,
“gettin’ by”,
“so-far-so-good”,
“keepin’ a low profile”,
“laying back”, etc.

You have heard them all – sometimes, you may have even use them...

David, on the other hand, says, “**If it’s out there, I’ll get it.**” That was his attitude about battling a giant and most importantly, getting the rewards – the best rewards ever offered by the king.

- **So, what is motivating your dreams or vision at this time?**
- **Being a leader?**
- **Being a better leader?**
- **Getting that promotion?**
- **Starting your own company?**
- **Getting that bigger house or new car?**
- **Are your dreams strong enough to make you take on your giant?**
- **Do you even know what your giant looks like?**
- **What have you done to prepare yourself for battling your giant?**

For most of us, the giant is within.

That’s right; the giant we will battle is within.

We have the answers. We have the action plan.

But do we have the will?

Is our dream big enough that the facts do not matter?

Remember the Silver Bullet question?

The Silver Bullet will leave here with you today.

Now what are you going to do with it?

You brought the **Silver Bullet** with you to this conference.

That’s right.

It was with you when you left home or your hotel room this morning. It was with you when you were at registration.

It sat down with you at lunch a little while ago.

I have news for you.

It will go to bed with you tonight.



That's right.

You are the Silver Bullet you've been looking for all this time.

AGAIN – THE TWO BOOK READING RECOMMENDATIONS ARE:

1. **Doing Virtuous Business** by Theodore Roosevelt Malloch, Yale University and
2. **The Way We Will Be** by John Zogby, The Zogby Report [One of America's chief Researchers].

THE BOTTOM LINE:

Leadership 101: The Honor Code...

- ❖ **Is about the type of character will you bring into the workplace tomorrow morning...**
- ❖ **It is about the character you will bring home to your family from this conference.**
- ❖ **That Character is Your Silver Bullet...**

- **Will it be one with a vision?**
- **Will it be a vision that others will want to follow?**
- **Will your vision stand the test of time?**
- **Will you stand tall when the going gets tough on your vision?**
- **Will your family, your friends, your co-workers your state, your nation be able to count on you in good times and in bad to see your vision come true?**
- **Will anyone even recognize that you had a vision and you are a leader or that you are leading now?**

- ❖ **Jim Gibbons**
- ❖ **Luke Skywalker**
- ❖ **King David as a teenager**
- ❖ **Emma Stacker**
- ❖ **Me**

All were leaders. They lived out the 16 character traits highlighted earlier. Their words, deeds and actions instilled a sense of:

1. **Respect,**
2. **Loyalty,**
3. **Dependability,**
4. **Availability,**
5. **Humility,**
6. **Compassion,**
7. **Boldness,**



8. **Kindness,**
9. **Obedience,**
10. **Wisdom,**
11. **Virtue,**
12. **Generosity,**
13. **Discretion,**
14. **Fairness**
15. **Forgiveness, and**
16. **Courage**

into those around them.

- ❖ **They use their words, deeds and actions to inspire others.**
- ❖ They dreamed big dreams.
- ❖ They shared their dreams.
- ❖ They caused others to dream big dreams, too.

Remember Langston Hughes:

“For when the dream dies, life is a broken-wing bird which cannot fly.”

So I say to you – Dream on. Dream Bigger.

No, Dream bigger and bigger and bigger!!!

Believe me, your dreams will become a lot bigger when you knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that you will not fail.

What you do to put your **Best Foot Forward** will be the deciding factor.

So, stand up and Go!

You Go.

Don't send someone else.

You Go!

And when you Go, take **your Honor Code** with you. Its Force will sustain you when all else fails...

Go!

Go!

Go!

THANK YOU!!!

Blessings Always...

###