There seems to be a subset of values that align with ethical behavior. In his book, *Authentic Happiness*, Martin Seligman has reviewed these core values that influence ethical behavior:

* **Wisdom and Knowledge**: The capacity to take information and convert it to something useful. A prerequisite to doing the right thing when facing an ethical dilemma is knowing what to do, knowing the difference between right and wrong.
* **Self Control**: The ability to avoid unethical temptations. Ethical people say “no” to individual gain if it’s not consistent with institutional benefit and goodwill.
* **Justice**: The fair treatment of people. Are certain individuals and groups given special treatment? Ethical organizations value fairness.
* **Transcendence**: The recognition that there is something more permanent and powerful than the individual. Without this value, one may tend toward self-absorption.
* **Love and Kindness**: In an organizational context, love refers to an intense positive reaction to co-workers, groups and/or situations. An organization “with heart” allows the expression of love, compassion and kindness among and between people.
* **Courage and Integrity**: The courage to act ethically and with integrity. These values involve discerning right from wrong and acting accordingly. They ask employees to consistently do what is right without concern for personal consequences, even when it is not easy.

In practice, these six categories of values are intertwined. For example, the capacity to administer resources fairly and offer fair guidance to stakeholders along the way is supported by courage and integrity. Difficult decisions surrounding the allocation of limited resources leave some individuals and groups with less than they would prefer. The redeeming grace is the perception that such decisions are made with fairness and integrity. Unpopular decisions are easier to accept when they are perceived to be derived fairly and with integrity.

Driving ethical behavior with values and attitudes requires that there be alignment among values, attitudes, and behavior. Examples of this alignment between each of the virtuous values, associated attitudes, and behavior are offered in Table 1.

**Table 1: Values —> Attitude —> Ethical Behavior Chain**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Value** | **Attitude** | **Ethical Behavior** |
| Wisdom and Knowledge | Experience promotes wisdom that helps convert information to knowledge. | Using knowledge to solve problems ethically and to do what is right. |
| Self-Control | Self-control means effectively managing reactions to challenging situations and temptations. | Putting personal motivations aside and acting with objectivity by doing what is right. |
| Justice | Acting justly and fairly is a long-term driver of ethical behavior; remember the “Golden Rule.” | Establishing just and mutually agreed upon criteria and administering them fairly to all people. |
| Transcendence | The belief in a power and source outside oneself reduces self-serving actions and increases humility. | Putting institutional and/or stakeholder interests above self interests. Identifying a personal purpose that is aligned with organizational mission. |
| Love and Kindness | Treating people with kindness helps increase the reservoir of positive affection and love. | Recognizing and encouraging others for their contributions. |
| Courage and Integrity | Ethics requires the courage to do the right things consistently without regard to personal consequences. | Making unpopular decisions based on fair consideration of the facts. |

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