

# **Ethical Leadership: Shaping Legacies and Leaving a Lasting Impact**

*FCS Prof. PLO Lumumba*

## **Introduction**

In today's rapidly changing world, the subject of leadership has ever been more relevant. It is a topic that transcends borders, industries, and sectors. However, what does it truly mean to be a leader? Is it merely the occupation of a position, or does it entail something much more profound? These are the questions that continue to challenge us as we strive to redefine leadership in a world where ethical values seem to be in crisis.

This article sheds light on the essence of leadership that goes beyond mere position or title. Drawing inspiration from historical and contemporary figures, this article explores the importance of ethical leadership and its impact on individuals, societies, and the world at large.

## **Ethical Leadership: A Historical Perspective**

Historical examples of ethical leaders abound, and their stories serve as beacons of inspiration for contemporary leaders. Mahatma Gandhi, often referred to as the father of the Indian nation, stands out as a prime example. Gandhi's leadership was characterized by selflessness and a commitment to non-violence. He never held public office, yet his influence on the

Indian independence movement and his efforts to unite a divided nation continue to inspire generations.

Similarly, Martin Luther King Jr., a civil rights icon, dedicated his life to fighting for equality and justice for all, regardless of their race or color. He, too, serves as a reminder of the transformative power of ethical leadership.

### **Leaders Who Serve Selflessly**

In today's world, ethical leadership is not limited to historical figures. Modern leaders also demonstrate the enduring value of ethical principles. Coming close home, Julius Kabarage Nyerere of Tanzania is a prime example of a selfless leader who placed the interests of his people above all else. He advocated for the unity of East African nations and willingly stepped aside, showing that leadership is not about holding onto power but about serving a greater cause.

### **Ethical Leadership in Professional Roles**

While we often associate ethical leadership with political or social movements, it is equally relevant in professional roles. Lawyers, doctors, accountants, and other professionals have a unique responsibility to uphold ethical standards in their fields. The choices they make in their daily work have a lasting impact on individuals and society as a whole.

### **Ethics as a Guiding Principle**

So, what is ethics? It is not a mere philosophical concept; rather, it is a guiding principle that drives individuals to do what is good and right simply because it is good and right. Ethical

leadership embodies the age-old principle of Ubuntu: “I am because you are.” It is about recognizing our interconnectedness and acting in ways that benefit all.

### **Ethical Leadership: A Legacy for the Future**

In conclusion, ethical leadership is not about seeking recognition or short-term gains. It is about making choices that look to the future and leave a lasting legacy. Ethical leaders are remembered fondly by history because they serve selflessly and do what is good and right, even when it is challenging.

As governance professionals, we have a duty to embrace ethical leadership in our respective fields. We must ask ourselves uncomfortable questions about how we serve and whether we prioritize good over evil. The choice is ours, but the recommendation is clear: choose to be ethical leaders who leave a positive impact on the world.