LEADERSHIP | PERSONAL GROWTH | PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT | VALUES

The Leader's Leader—

Personal Values

A hands-on worksheet to assist YOU in creating your Personal Values Statement

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The Leader's Leader should begin the process of establishing an organizational *logos*— or philosophy— by creating his or her own personal values list. These values are the leader's "unshakeable unbreakables," the core values that the leader will strive not to violate under any circumstances— and will immediately confess to the team and/or customers if a failure does occur. These core values are the guiding principles that will provide the foundation for the leader's behavior in both good times and bad.

> ***It has been said that one person, filled with conviction and resolve, can rout an army of ninety-nine armed with only an interest.***

That kind of conviction *must* be rooted in a set of consistent core beliefs if a leader hopes to make a meaningful contribution to a family, a group, or a community. What follows is an exercise that will help you to identify those values that are your "unshakeable unbreakables."

Creating a Personal Values Statement

Step One: Carefully read through the list below. I have provided you with a values "shopping list." On your first read through the list, write down each value that you would identify as being important to you. (I suggest

that you use a pencil; you will be referring to this list several times, and you'll want to keep it fairly neat.)

Wisdom	Obedience	Compassion	Understanding
Harmony	Kindness	Spirituality	Dependability
Forgiveness	Justice	Responsibility	Friendliness
Self-discipline	Independence	Vision	Emotional stability
Virtue	Authenticity	Good listening	Hope
Respect	Love of learning	Trust	Honesty
Moral character	Teaching	Love of family	Judgment
Social growth	Fiscal responsibility	Sense of purpose	Patriotism
Physical health	Confidence	Courtesy	Integrity
Strength	Supportive of others	Humility	Love
Flexibility	Patience	Industry	Loyalty
Gentleness	Giving		

Step Two: Review the values shopping list a second time, and select the ten values which you believe are uncompromisingly important—that is, you would refuse a promotion or leave a job altogether before you would willingly violate one of these values. Write these ten values down on your sheet of paper.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

Step Three: Now arrange those ten values in numerical priority, with #1 being your single most important value.

Step Four (a): Describe what each of your ten values means.
Step Four (b): Describe what each of your ten values does *not* mean.

Example

Value:	**What the value means:**	**What the value does *not* mean:**
Giving	I like to contribute	I am not selfish

Step 5: If you had only six months to live, which five values would you rate as most important? (Are your "top five" values from Step 3 *really* your top five?) List them, in descending order of importance (#1 being the single most important value to you).

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

With these steps completed, it should be easy to complete a personal values statement. You may wish to go no further than Steps Three, Four, and Five above, and simply create a list of five-ten values that comprise your personal core—your "unshakeable unbreakables." I strongly suggest that such a list be accompanied by a set of definitions, like those you completed for Step Four.

> ***You should identify what each value means, as well as what it does* not *mean.***

You may wish, however, to make the extra effort to complete a personal values statement, which would incorporate these values into a written statement that spells out the essence of your Steps Four and Five. Either way, your values list or statement should be short enough that you can commit it to memory and repeat it to another person in only a minute. Your personal values statement should be short and to the point—

> ***"This is who I am and what I believe; this is the essential statement of who I am."***

You may remember that I have said that **a company must begin by determining what it wants to *be* before it can decide what it wants to *do*.** This is just as true for you as a leader. Before you can hone your behaviors to model the kind of top-flight leadership you wish to display, you must determine what *beliefs* will provide the foundation for your behavior.

In next month's article, I'll give you practical suggestions for creating a corporate values statement.

Jack Lannom is an internationally known speaker, author, and consultant. He has served as a corporate coach for several Fortune 500 companies, including Citibank, R&R Donnelly and Sons, Jefferson Pilot Communications, Caterpillar, and also Knight-Ridder Newspapers and is featured on the PBS television program, "Lannom Memory Methods".

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He's also a talented athlete who holds black belts in six different styles of Kung Fu, including a tenth degree black sash in Wa Lu. And Jack holds the world record for breaking a 3,150-pound block of ice with a single blow from his hand!

To learn more about Jack Lannom, visit his website here: JackLannom.com where you can sign up for his free newsletter, learn more about his products and read the next 25 pages of *People First*.