



## UNIT I: Personal Leadership Skills

# Module 2: Values and Ethics

There are many different approaches to learning about values, ethics, self-esteem and motivation in the context of leadership and followership. Our actions as individuals and group members, as well as our behavior while serving in leadership roles, are based on values. An awareness of what we believe and value, and recognizing the sources of these beliefs and values, is a basic beginning step in developing our personal leadership skills. The topics are closely related to one another.

There is a growing need to find ways to promote ethical behavior, individually and in group situations, without imposing a specific value system. Group decisions, where some individuals or groups benefit while other pay costs, sometimes result in ethical dilemmas. These dilemmas involve a conflict between core ethical values — between “right and right” or between “wrong and wrong.”

## Recognize What You Value

Values are abstract concepts of worth — what we think is good or important. They guide the way we feel and act about certain ideas, things, situations, and people. They are principles which guide decisions and actions.

Values are formed through experiences over time. They are influenced by many sources — including parents, siblings, friends, teachers, religions, organizations, the media and many other factors.

A value in itself is neither good nor bad. We are influenced every day by our values. Values can and do change. We are often aware of some values, but others that have been learned at an early age may not be easily recognized.<sup>1</sup>

The feelings and attitudes that we have about the relative worth or importance of things make up our values. The things we value may be material possessions, such as clothing, property or automobiles; the activities that we enjoy, such as sports, music, our work; the people we care about, such as our family or friends. We also value or hold dear certain ideals, principles or beliefs.

## Types of Values

A personal system of values is made up of all the things that a person prizes, cherishes, holds dear, or considers important.<sup>2</sup> There are many different types of values. Among the different types of values are:

*Moral Values.* What is good or right behavior? What is just? What thoughts, ideals, attitudes or beliefs are noble and worthy?

*Spiritual Values.* What are the best ways to worship? What is the spiritual or religious way that is most meaningful to you?

*Aesthetical Values.* What types of things are beautiful, harmonious or pleasing to you?

*Sensual Values.* What kinds of experiences make you feel good or give you a sense of pleasure or of well-being?