

Commander's Guidance for Senior Leader Ethics Education

EXPLORATION TOPIC: SHIFTING SANDS - WHY DO AMERICANS EXPECT SO MUCH OF LEADERS?

The intent for this module, *Shifting Sands - Why Do Americans Expect So Much Of Leaders?*, is to provide a platform of study and engagement with peers that will enhance understanding of why Senior Army Leaders are subject to such high expectations for exemplary conduct in an age of increasing moral relativism. All senior military officers (and Soldiers in general) have experienced these expectations in a day where information is readily available and quickly transmitted through multiple mediums, and they will continue to characterize the environment in the future. These expectations require a strong foundation of ethical values and behavior rooted in the Army Values.

In order to provide insight into the effects of these issues on the Army Profession, the module recommends an “analysis of why Senior Army Leaders are subject to high expectations for exemplary conduct in an age of increasing moral relativism.”

The first area for investigation is the need for Trust and authentic Communication between the Army and American people. How is trust developed and maintained? How does communication affect trust? What are effective communication strategies? What are the effects of breaking trust? Can broken trust be mended?

The second area for investigation is to examine effects of communication technology and media. How does communication technology and media affect trust in civil military relations? What are strategies for dealing with the media? What changes in American culture have resulted due to communication technology and media?

The third area for investigation examines the purpose and functioning of the Army in relation to standards of conduct expected by the American people. Does the US Army require higher standards than American society and should it? What role does the Army Ethic play in civil military relations? What role do Senior Army Leaders play in these relationships?

The fourth area for investigation examines moral relativism in American culture. Are American values changing? Why/how? Do Americans expect military values and standards to be the same as American society or different? What are the risks and/or benefits of them being the same or different? What are the effects on trust?

Together with the foundational modules, *The Army Profession as Our Unifying Purpose and Context* and *Investing in Character Development*, this module promotes learning in the higher categories of the cognitive and affective domains. Learning new material, applying the learning, and engaging in topic discussion is the suggested method.

