



# Western Legislative Academy

THE COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS WEST

*Helping Legislators Become More Effective Leaders &  
Building Stronger State Legislative Institutions*

Creating a Culture of Excellence and Civility

**The Robert D. and Billie Ray Center mission  
is to improve civility  
through character development and ethical leadership.**



The Ray Center vision is to transform lives and strengthen communities by equipping individuals and communities to embrace and practice good character by demonstrating trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship.

# CHARACTER COUNTS!



# How do we shape a Culture of Excellence and Civility

- Relationships
- Culture Shaping Leadership
  - Shared Ground Rules for Engagement
  - Character-Based Leadership
  - Integrity
- Optimal Performance
  - Clear Communication
  - Process
  - Intentional Organizational Audit

*How and where can I use this?*

# One-on-One

## Stand and Find a Partner

- 1) Introduce yourself including your name, position and where you live.
- 2) What is your favorite personal interest or hobby?
- 3) What inspired you to want to serve?
- 4) What do you consider as your best leadership skill?
- 5) What leadership skill would you like to enhance or improve?



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## Context

# Weber Shandwick Poll

Poll finds Americans are united in seeing an uncivil nation

- 79% of Americans believe the 2016 and 2020 U.S. Presidential Election was uncivil
- 69% believe the U.S. has a major civility problem
- 75% of us now believe that incivility in America is a crisis



# American Bar Association

In the recent annual Survey of Civic Literacy, 85% of Americans believe society is less civil than it was a decade ago, and they blame social media **and** public officials for that decline.

# The Depth of Polarization

A Pew Survey conducted in the Summer of 2022 studied partisan differences and found that:

Republicans and Democrats view not just the opposing party but also the people in that party in a negative light. Growing shares in each party now describe those in the other party as more closed-minded, dishonest, immoral and unintelligent than other Americans.

Pew has also found that both Democrats and Republicans said it would be harder to get along with a new person in their community if they happened to belong to the other party.



BETTER WORKPLACES  
BETTER WORLD™

## SHRM + Drake University: Civility 2024

### The Importance of Civility in the U.S.

Practicing civil behavior establishes a safe and empathetic environment where individuals can contribute their best ideas, knowing they will be heard and valued.

Civility is more than making others feel comfortable; it's about creating a dynamic, diverse, and productive workplace where everyone can thrive.

**161 million people work in the U.S. every day.**

**58% of U.S. workers believe our society is uncivil.**

**U.S. workers collectively experience 202 million acts of incivility per day.**

**U.S. organizations collectively lose about \$2 billion per day in reduced productivity and absenteeism.**



## BREAK THE CYCLE

Workers who experience incivility in their everyday lives commit **over twice as many uncivil acts** than workers who do not.

Breaking this cycle is **crucial** for fostering a more respectful and productive work environment.

## WHAT FUELS THE FIRE?

Key drivers of workplace incivility identified by U.S. workers:



DISAGREEMENTS  
ON SOCIAL ISSUES



GENERATIONAL  
GAPS



THE DIRECTION OF  
U.S. SOCIETY



POLITICAL  
VIEWPOINTS



RACIAL OR  
ETHNIC DIFFERENCES

# Framing the Context of Civility

Civility includes issues of decency, respect, decorum, kindness, and etiquette.

The depth of civility we seek to address includes how we can:

- Disagree without being disagreeable
- Approach difficult conversations and hard decisions with a focus on understanding - if not resolution
- Create a culture where elected officials can effectively govern, employees can thrive in the workplace, and citizens can be involved and heard in a participatory process without fear or threat to any stakeholders

## MAKING “SURFACE TO SUBSTANCE” CONNECTIONS

1. Have the **courage and curiosity** to connect — especially with those who are new or different.
2. Connect by asking questions that go **“from surface to substance.”**



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Mutual *of* Omaha



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## Partner Discussion

**What insights do you have from the video?**

# Bob and Donna Reflections

- Most unlikely person
- Follow-up
- No agenda – other than to get to know each other
- Courage to reach out – and respond
- Common Ground / Connections
- Disagree without being disagreeable
- Don't have to hurt each other
- Beliefs didn't change – approach did
- Find the person – reach out

**NOW**  
**THIS**



© Cox for Governor





***“Sir, I will treat you  
like a gentleman not  
because you are one,  
but because I am one.”***

**- Thomas Jefferson**

**Who is the most unlikely person  
on the planet that you  
would reach out to?**



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## Culture Shaping Leadership

## ***COMPACT FOR EXCELLENCE TEMPLATE***

In order to do our **best work** and treat each other with **respect and care**,  
we each agree to/not to:

- » Participate – don't hide / don't dominate
- » Listen actively
- » Respect each other and the process
- » Essential IT use
- » Be open to new ideas
- » Candid conversations



Adapted from Lickona & Davidson (2005).

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## COMPACT FOR EXCELLENCE

In order to do our **best work** and treat each other with **respect and care**,  
we each agree to/not to:

- We will have, and are committed to, clear communication
- We will have an open and transparent process
  - ✓ The sub-committees will be where the budget is developed.
  - ✓ We will not conduct committee business at any time after 12:00 am or prior to 6:00 am
  - ✓ We will have a 24-hour window for every bill to be reviewed prior to action by the full committee
- We will have areas of agreement and we want to build those bridges and incorporate minority party perspectives into the budget process
- Neither party has license on good ideas
- We will have areas that we do not agree and the expectation in this committee is that we will conduct our business with the civility, decency and respect that the people of Iowa deserve from their elected leaders



Adapted from Lickona & Davidson (2005).

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**“We shape the culture;  
the culture shapes  
the character.”**

-Dr. Tom Lickona & Dr. Matt Davidson





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the culture shapes  
the character.”**

-Dr. Tom Lickona & Dr. Matt Davidson

## OPTIMAL PERFORMANCE — A SYNERGY OF:



# The life of a legislator?





# Life in the Legislature?

# How do we shape a Culture of Excellence and Ethics



Moral Character (Best Self)  
Performance Character (Best Work)

## PERFORMANCE CHARACTER AND MORAL CHARACTER COMPETENCIES



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# PERFORMANCE CHARACTER AND MORAL CHARACTER COMPETENCIES



Underline two words on each side that are your strengths

Circle two words on each side that you want to improve

Adapted from Lickona & Davidson (2005).



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Let's Take A Break



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Integrity

# INTEGRITY:

## WITHOUT IT, NOTHING WORKS

Important statements, ideas, or information to remember.

Ways you picture using what you learned.

# INTEGRITY:

## WITHOUT IT, NOTHING WORKS

- Integrity is like the Law of Gravity
- Integrity as wholeness - honor our word
  - Keeping our word – on time as promised
  - Inform parties when we can't keep our word as soon as we know – and clean-up any 'mess' created
- Integrity deals with oneself
- Integrity impacts performance
- Objects and systems have integrity – design, implementation and use
- Out-of-Integrity behavior impacts performance, reliability and workability

# INTEGRITY-IN-ACTION ESSENTIALS

» **Discernment:**

*Being able to make well-reasoned decisions about right and wrong.*

» **Conscience:**

*Sense of obligation to do the right thing.*

» **Competence:**

*Demonstrating the “know-how” needed to translate knowledge into action.*

» **Identity:**

*The degree to which our character and integrity are central to our sense of self.*



# RULES OF AN ACTIVE CONSCIENCE

*What NOT to do to keep your conscience as a guide for your integrity.*

- » **Don't distort.**  
*Don't exaggerate or blow things out of proportion.*
- » **Don't create an enemy.**  
*Don't avoid the truth by finding or creating an enemy to fight against.*
- » **Don't play the victim.**  
*Don't rationalize to convince self or others that I/we are really the victim.*
- » **Don't fan the flames.**  
*Don't get self/others fired-up so that emotion clouds reason.*
- » **Don't be a gamer.**  
*Don't try to convince self/others that it isn't wrong, "just how the game is played."*
- » **Don't let ego get in the way.**  
*Don't let "being right" interfere with "getting it right."*





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Culture Shaping Optimal Performance

# *Clarity, Habit, Accountability, Mindset* → *Performance*

## CLARITY

clear specific expectations for context, resources, abilities

## HABIT

intentional, intensive, focused practice, real-world simulation

## Performance

## MINDSET

mental preparation, emotional toughness, focus, resilience

## ACCOUNTABILITY

support, challenge, reflection for growth

**Clarity, Habit, Accountability, Mindset → Performance**

**CLARITY**

10,000 Steps

**HABIT**

20 Minute Walk  
Park Far Away  
Take Stairs

Exercise More

**MINDSET**

Opportunity for Steps  
Healthy

**ACCOUNTABILITY**

Daily Step Check  
Friends

*Clarity, Habit, Accountability, Mindset* → *Performance*

CLARITY

HABIT

One Word - Word Map

MINDSET

ACCOUNTABILITY

*Clarity, Habit, Accountability, Mindset* → *Performance*

CLARITY

HABIT

Civility

MINDSET

ACCOUNTABILITY

# *Clarity, Habit, Accountability, Mindset* → *Performance*

## CLARITY

I Want  
You Want  
We Could

## HABIT

Right Place / Right Time  
Set Ground Rules  
Active Listening  
Ask Questions / Don't interrupt

How to engage in difficult or  
challenging conversations

## MINDSET

Seek understanding  
and look for resolution

## ACCOUNTABILITY

Post conversation  
reflection with self and a  
trusted colleague



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## Lens of Leadership

Dewitt Jones

# Dewitt Jones Insights

- Do you have the right lens on?
  - What's your perspective or angle?
  - Find the extraordinary viewpoint to the problem.
- Are you in the place of the most potential?
  - What's the one thing we could do better or differently right now?
- Don't worry about making mistakes.
  - There's more than one right answer; find the next right answer.
- How many times a week is it up to you?
  - See the extraordinary in the ordinary.
  - Are you ready to embrace this and respond?



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Assess Process – Organizational Audit

# ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS AUDIT

1

*Review the effectiveness and efficiency of **CURRENT PRACTICES**. Determine which of them we should:*

**Stop**

We should stop practices that:

- are not having the desired outcome
- may have proved impractical or inefficient
- are distracting from core mission or overall effectiveness

**Continue**

We should continue practices that:

- are having the desired outcome
- are efficient and effective

**Improve**

We should improve or enhance practices that:

- are having some of the desired outcome, show promise
- but need to be more efficient or effective

2

*Brainstorm and identify **NEW PRACTICES** that may help address a new situation or factors that did not exist before, or new ideas that the team may want to try to improve effectiveness and/or efficiency*

## ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS AUDIT

### Stop

Practices that:

- are not having the desired outcome
- may have proved impractical or inefficient
- are distracting from core mission or overall effectiveness

### Start

New practices

that may help address a new situation or factors that did not exist before, or new ideas that the team may want to try to improve effectiveness and/or efficiency

### Continue

Practices that:

- are having the desired outcome
- are efficient and effective

### Improve

Practices that:

- are having some of the desired outcome, show promise
- but need to be more efficient or effective

# LEADER-TO-DETRACTOR RUBRIC

## Leader

*Demonstrates personal commitment and mastery, and encourages others by word and deed to do the same.*

- » Demonstrates teamwork, initiative, and willingness to work with others.
- » Demonstrates the ability to organize and lead group toward stated goals, but also does his/her part in the actual group tasks.
- » Encourages teamwork and leadership in others.

## Participant

*Carries out personal responsibilities in an adequate way, but does not demonstrate collective responsibility for shared goals or collective good.*

- » Demonstrates adequate teamwork and willingness to work with others.
- » Rarely, if ever, demonstrates the ability to organize and lead group toward stated goals.
- » Assumes adequate responsibility for group tasks — not leading others, but not detracting either.

## Detractor

*Doesn't meet the standards personally and prevents others from meeting the standards.*

- » Demonstrates poor teamwork and inability to work with others.
- » Demonstrates inability to organize and lead group toward stated goals.
- » Assumes no responsibility for group tasks, and detracts from the group's ability to function adequately.

Adapted from Jeffrey Beedy.

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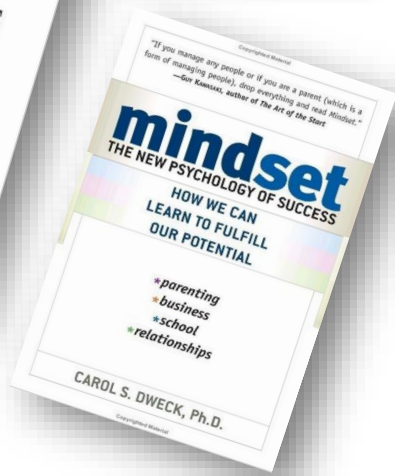
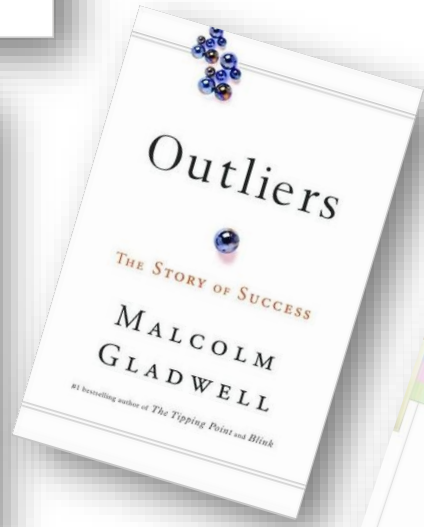
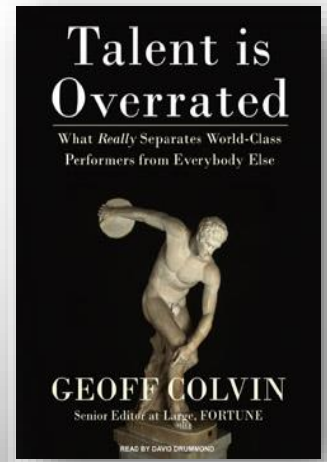
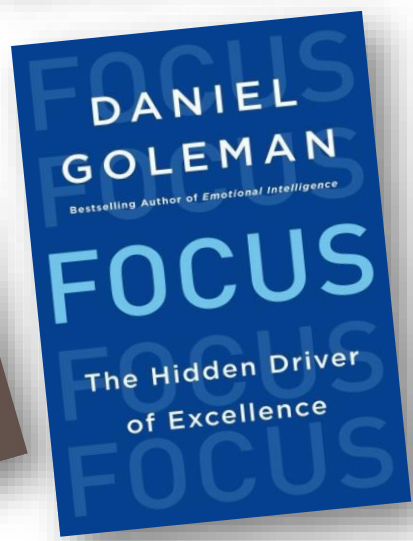
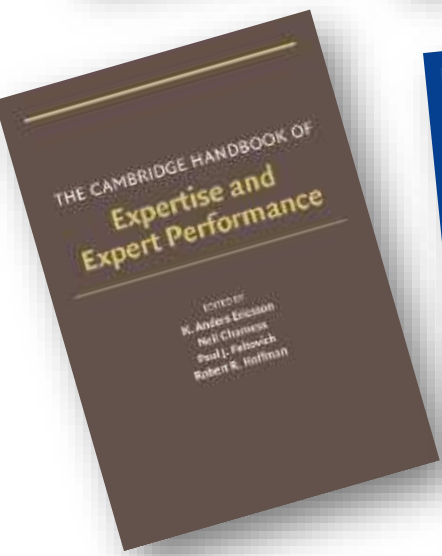
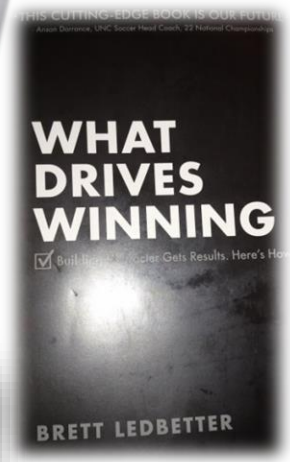
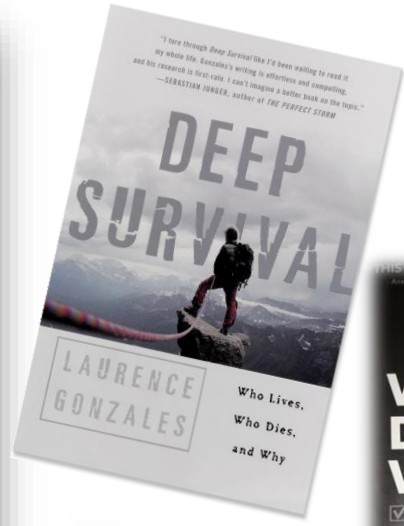
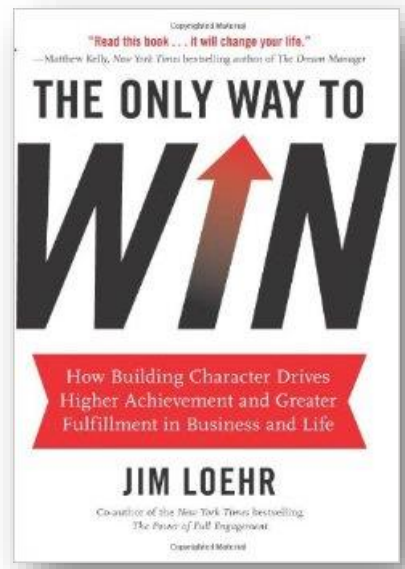
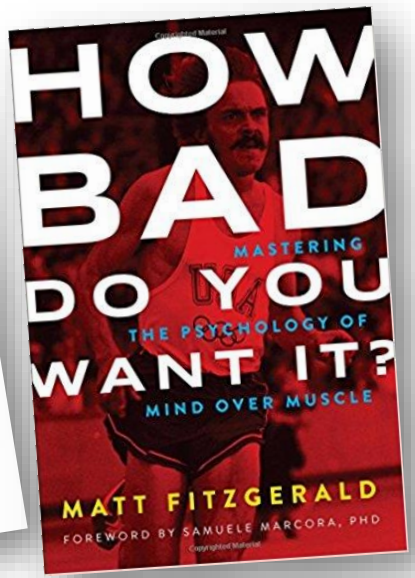
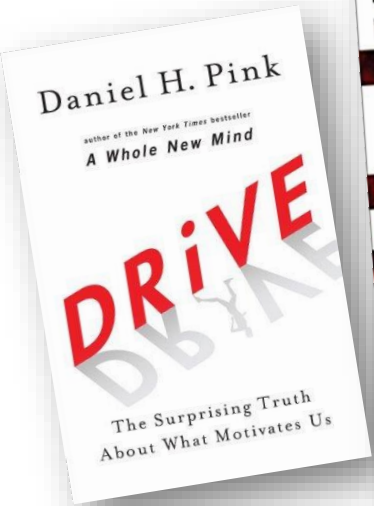
# How do we shape a Culture of Excellence and Civility

- **Relationships** – Surface to Substance
- **Culture Shaping Leadership**
  - Shared Ground Rules for Engagement - Compact for Excellence
  - Know Your Character-Based Leadership Competencies and the Competencies of Others
    - Moral Character (Best Self)
    - Performance Character (Best Work)
  - Understand and deliver Integrity
- **Optimal Performance**
  - CHAMP
  - Lens of Leadership
  - Assess Process - Intentional Organizational Audit of Practices to Stop, Continue, Improve and Start

# I wish I would have known...

- Seek Harmony – Not Balance
- Drink half your body weight in water – everyday - and early
- Use the three most important words every day:  
**I love you**
- Think about the three words that are second most important every day:  
**Because of you...**

What Will Matter



**mindset**

CAROL S. DWECK, Ph.D.



**TOUGHNESS**

DEVELOPING  
TRUE STRENGTH  
ON AND OFF  
THE COURT

**JAY BILAS**

Z4J

NEW  
AMERICAN  
LIBRARY

THE CHAMPION'S **MIND**

JIM AFREMOW, PhD



**RELENTLESS**

TIM S.  
GROVER



**THE MENTAL ATHLETE**

**WINTER**



**RELAX and WIN** Championship Performance in Whatever You Do - *Winter : Lee*

**THINKING BODY, DANCING MIND**

CHUNGLIANG AL HUANG  
AND  
JERRY LYNCH

TAOSPORTS FOR EXTRAORDINARY PERFORMANCE  
IN ATHLETICS, BUSINESS, AND LIFE



Ravizza, Hanson

**HEADS-UP BASEBALL**



ADAM GRANT GIVE AND TAKE

WHY HELPING OTHERS  
DRIVES OUR SUCCESS



WINIFRED GALLAGHER RAPT

Attention and  
the Focused Life



Elite Minds

— Beecham —



ENDURE

Mind, Body,  
and the  
Curiously  
Elastic Limits  
of Human  
Performance

ALEX  
HUTCHINSON

Wm  
MORROW

GRIT ANGELA DUCKWORTH

"Persuasive and fascinating." —MALCOLM GLADWELL



POSITIVE INTELLIGENCE



SHIRZAD CHAMINE





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BETTER WORLD™

## SHRM + Drake University: Civility 2024

### **MORE THAN HALF OF U.S. WORKERS BELIEVE OUR SOCIETY IS UNCIVIL**

In the current political climate, it's our collective duty to foster workplaces that prioritize civility and respect. We may not always see eye to eye, but we can be champions of civility and work together to end the cycle, one conversation at a time.



[shrm.org/civility](https://shrm.org/civility)



Source: SHRM Civility Index, August 2024.

*From May 24 to June 4, 2024, SHRM surveyed 1,618 U.S. workers to assess their experiences and observations of incivility in daily life and at work. The data is weighted to reflect the broader U.S. workforce.*

# Visit Us Online

[CharacterCountsInIowa.org](http://CharacterCountsInIowa.org)

