YOUR PERSONAL ETHICS STATEMENT

A personal code of ethics puts into writing those ideas, values, and philosophies that are the essence of your life. This exercise allows you to reflect on your own core values and commitments – to create a snapshot in time of your personal value system.

Assignment Option One: In six to eight sentences, describe your own personal code of ethics. This assignment should be completed after reflection on which values of the four ethical lenses are the most important to you. Remember to translate your core values into specific behaviors.

Assignment Option Two: Write a two- to three-page reflection paper. For this assignment, you will write down your reflections as you work through the Baird Decision Model™. The paper should demonstrate that you thought through the strengths, challenges, and opportunities of your primary ethical lens. The last paragraph will be your own personal code of ethics, where you describe the values that are the most important to you and the specific behaviors that flow from those values.

Both of these assignments will take some thought and work on your part. The following ideas and questions will walk you through the process.

Ideas to prime the pump:

- As you complete this assignment, do you interact with people differently in your various personal and professional roles?
- Reflecting on the information about your core ethical lens, what resonated with you and where did you find differences?
- Our ethical beliefs come from people and organizations that are important to us. Which people and organizations have been the most important in shaping your ethical values? What specifically about them and their values did you respect?

Questions for reflection using the Baird Decision Model™

| Step One      | Be Attentive                      | • Given that we have long lists of values, what specific values resonate with you?  
|              |                                  | • How were your values formed? Family? Friends? Faith?  
|              |                                  | • What behaviors are important as you live into your values?  
| Step Two     | Be Intelligent                   | • What does the phrase “personal ethics” mean to you?  
|              |                                  | • What values take priority when you have to choose and your values are in conflict?  
|              |                                  | • What commitments (religious, philosophical, and/or personal) serve as the basis for shaping your value priorities?  
| Step Three   | Be Reasonable                    | • What principles are important for you to follow (Rights/Responsibilities Lens)?  
|              |                                  | • What ideal goals (justice, autonomy, independence) are important for you to use in your life (Results Lens)?  
|              |                                  | • How do your actions, habits, behavior, and character traits affect the relationships in your life (Relationship Lens)?  
|              |                                  | • What virtues are important for you to develop as you build your character (Reputation Lens)?  

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### Step Four: Be Responsible

- How would you manage a situation where you believed that something was not aligned with your personal ethics?
- What commitments serve as the basis for shaping your relationships?
- What personal approach do you take to help you answer and deal with ethical questions?
- What would you do if you saw a friend behaving in what you thought was an unethical manner?

### Plus One: Return to Awareness

- How do you avoid your ethical blind spots?
- How do you assure that you build ethical awareness?
- How do you work to assure consistency in your ethical values?
- If you asked a friend to describe you, what would they say?

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**Writing a Personal Ethics Statement:** As you write your personal code of ethics, the following tips might be helpful.

- Keep the statement simple and clear. Whether you are writing a short statement or the longer reflection, make sure you use words that you understand and have meaning for you.
- Keep your statement positive. Focus on your strengths and your ethical aspirations.
- Your statement should touch upon who you are (your character) and the values that have a significant positive impact on your life.
- Include behaviors and character traits that you consider particularly important or ones you want to develop further.

*Be creative and come up with your own words so that your statement reflects who you are.* If you were writing your statements in light of the values of the Four Ethical Lenses™ your statements might be like this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rights and Responsibilities Lens</th>
<th>[Choose two to four values] serve as the foundation for my life….to bring these alive I [specific behaviors that show how you live by these values] to live out my core ethical principles.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reputation Lens</td>
<td>I choose to live my life applying [chose two to four values] and I express these values by [specific behaviors that show how you live by these values] to build a strong ethical character.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship Lens</td>
<td>I value [choose two to four values] because [reasons why these values are important to you]. Accordingly, I will [what you can do to live by these values] to build strong, fair relationships.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Results Lens</td>
<td>I live each day with [choose two to four values] so that [what living by these values will give you]. I will do this by [specific behaviors your will use to live by these values] to achieve my ethical goals.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**After you write your Personal Ethics Statement:**

1. Once you finish writing your statement share it with someone close to you and see if they agree with what you wrote.
2. Look back at the information about your primary lens; does the statement reflect that lens?

**Remember:** Your personal ethics continue to grow and develop over time and are influenced by many life circumstances and events. Your Personal Ethics Statement will continue to change and evolve as you gain insights about yourself and as you keep on choosing what you want to be, do, and have during this lifetime.