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*I think the moral of the story is that leaders matter but how the leaders interact with their followers, the American people, and how they explain things and make prudent judgments in a very complex, rapidly evolving world, is going to be the secret of whether we are able to maintain American primacy well into this century.*

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**Dr. Robert P. George** | What is Marriage? Man and Woman: A Defense  
*We all agree on the principle of human equality, the equal worth and dignity of every human being. We all agree on the profound and inherent dignity of each and every member of the human family, regardless of what experiences or inclinations a person has when it comes to sexuality. We Christians would say, “Because made in the image and likeness of God, we are bound to recognize the equal dignity of each human being.” But the question is, what is marriage?*
On Business Ethics & Leadership:

**Dr. Clayton M. Christensen** | Lectures on Ethics & Leadership

So wouldn’t it be interesting if there were theories about leadership and management that would allow the next generation of leaders to say, “Oh, so this is the situation I’m in and therefore these are the principles I need to follow as I lead, but if I find myself in this situation I shouldn’t follow those rules”? It’s possible that if we arm the leaders of the future with good theories, they might actually provide better leadership to us than otherwise.

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**Dr. Kim S. Cameron** | Lectures on Ethics & Leadership

Responsible leadership matters and it makes a statistically significant difference in the performance of organizations’ profitability, performance, productivity, and quality. Responsible leadership is not only behaving appropriately or in the right or virtuous way, but virtuousness at its core suggests contribution—helping other people flourish.

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**Mr. Charles Conn** | Lectures on Ethics & Leadership

Being a responsible and moral leader amounts to this: That our means are responsible (not just our ends), that we take account of the impact of our actions on other people and other legitimate aims (not just our own aims), and most importantly—what Kant called the categorical imperative—that we don’t use other people as means to our own ends.

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**Dr. Peter Tufano** | Lectures on Ethics & Leadership

We have incredibly powerful platforms; we have convening power; we have alumni; we have a voice that’s very strong. It is important for us to be able to identify and nudge norms along wherever we can. I think it’s our job to do all that we can to get these issues to the fore, and then to try to highlight organizations and individuals who have done remarkable work, as opposed to simply those who have made the most money, which is the norm.

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**President Kim B. Clark** | Lectures on Ethics & Leadership

It is important for those of us who have any kind of responsibility to be a leader, and that includes pretty much everybody, because I believe in leadership with a small “l”. That is, leadership exists in every level of society, all the way down to individuals and families.
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The Future of American Power

I think the moral of the story is that leaders matter but how the leaders interact with their followers, the American people, and how they explain things and make prudent judgments in a very complex, rapidly evolving world, is going to be the secret of whether we are able to maintain American primacy well into this century. A lecture by University Distinguished Service Professor, and former Dean of the Harvard Kennedy School, Joseph S. Nye Jr.

The condition of American power has preoccupied me for the last twenty years or so, particularly with regard to where we have been in the last century and where we are going in this century. I don’t know how many of you remember that back in the Reagan period in the 80s there was a widespread view that the United States was in decline. Paul Kennedy, a very distinguished Yale historian, said that the United States was finished. Basically, we were going the way of Edwardian Britain or Philip II of Spain. It was all over. There is a long standing tendency in the United States to worry about our decline and to think we are in decline. As a people, we go through cycles of hubris and declinism. If you think back to the 1960s in the Cold War, there was a belief that the Soviet Union was overtaking us. In the 1980s the Japanese were overtaking us and today people think the Chinese are overtaking us. I think the moral of the story is that Americans have got to learn to have a clearer view of what the world is like in order to have a better understanding of American power and our position in the world.

It is quite remarkable that by the end of the 20th century, the United States was the preeminent power in the world. We had about half of the world’s military budget, we had the world’s largest economy, and we had more soft power in the sense of the cultural resources in our universities and our entertainment industry. You had American primacy, which has sometimes been called the American Era.

I would like to talk about presidential leadership and the creation of the American Era. Does it matter what our leaders do or say? If you look at the 2012 campaign, both Governor Romney and President Obama promised that they would resist decline and that they would maintain American primacy. The question we ought to ask is whether it is in their power to do anything about it. Henry Kissinger is alleged to have said that it was all structural, that it was all just the way the cards were dealt by geography, history, and so forth. After he got to the White House, he decided leadership mattered. I guess where you stand on this issue depends on where you sit. I have tried to sort this out in a different way. I asked what would happen if you looked at this, president by president over the course of the 20th century and you imagined that you had a different leader, a different president than the one who was elected. Would it all have turned out the same? If William McKinley hadn’t been assassinated, there never would have been a Teddy Roosevelt. If Teddy Roosevelt hadn’t run as a third party candidate in 1912, there never would have been a Woodrow Wilson. You can go on and on like that through the century using counterfactual history and raise the question of whether the leaders mattered or not.
Now, there is a strong tendency to look at leaders in terms of whether they are transformational or transactional. Ever since James McGregor Burns wrote his book on leadership in 1978, the general preference has been for transformational leaders who really shake things up, who make a big change. Transactional leaders are discounted. So in addition to whether leaders matter, I am interested in whether it matters what kind of leaders you have in terms of making America the power that it has become.

From 1900 to 1920, the two key presidents were Teddy Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson. Teddy Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson were both transformational leaders in the sense that they wanted to make big changes. They didn’t want the status quo; they were going to change the world. They both were quite charismatic in their style and they had similarities. They both were Ivy League presidents, they both were writers and wrote a number of books, they both won Nobel prizes for their work in foreign affairs while they were in office, but they were very different otherwise. Indeed, they had quite opposite views of the world. Teddy Roosevelt, who starts the century, built the American Navy and took the Panama Canal, which meant we could move the navy back and forth without having to go around the Cape. He mediated in the Japanese war (that is what he got his Nobel Prize for) and he mediated in the conflict between Germany and France in Morocco.

Now you go to Woodrow Wilson who, as I mentioned, ironically would not have been president if Teddy Roosevelt hadn’t tried to become president again, running as a Bull Moose candidate in 1912. Taft would have been reelected and Wilson would have never made it. Wilson was interesting in the sense that he came into office not wanting to be bothered with foreign affairs. The last thing he wanted was to get involved in WWI. When he did get involved in WWI, Wilson did something very different from what Roosevelt would have done. He wrapped it up in American morals. He promised that we were going to get rid of all the iniquitous ways of European balance of power. We were going to replace it by a League of Nations in which you didn’t balance power by forming alliances with others; everybody teamed up against the aggressor. That theory of collective security, which was embodied in the League of Nations, was Wilson’s effort to transform the world, to change the way politics had been done.

The next phase in which the United States’ power grew toward the creation of the American Era was with Franklin Roosevelt and his entry into WWII. He sent even more American troops to fight not just a European war, but also a Pacific war. Franklin Roosevelt, when he first came into power, was understandably not very interested in foreign affairs. We had a great depression here at home. It wasn’t until 1938 that Roosevelt decided that Hitler was a threat to us. After the Munich Pact and the attack of Jewish stores in Germany, Roosevelt said that, at some point, history is going to show us to have made a mistake if we don’t resist Hitler.

The American people weren’t there. Every time Roosevelt would hint at trying to move public opinion, he would have to snap back because the isolationist sentiment was so strong. Roosevelt once said to one of his assistants, “What do you do if you are a leader and you look over your shoulder and nobody is following?” So he basically tried to manufacture some incidents that would make the American people realize the danger they were in; it didn’t work. For example, there is a case of a U.S. destroyer where Franklin Roosevelt told the American people that a German U-boat had attacked it. (In fact, as historians now know, the Greer had attacked the German U-boat.) Even that didn’t turn American opinion. What turned American opinion, was the Japanese attack
on Pearl Harbor. Some historians say that was manufactured too but as they look more carefully on it, it wasn't something that Roosevelt deliberately engineered. The interesting point is that Pearl Harbor was what brought the Americans into WWII, which was a huge turning point in the creation of the American Era.

One of the questions that we have to ask ourselves is, what would have happened if we hadn't gone in? Suppose that you had had a staunch isolationist as president of the United States in 1941 when the Japanese attacked at Pearl Harbor. Is it possible that we would not have entered the European war? Maybe. If that would have happened, you really would have had a very different world. A world in which the United States not being involved in Europe might not have countered Hitler's power. The likely result of that would have been Stalin and Hitler, the Soviet Union and Germany, fighting to a standstill, resulting in a tri-polar world where you would have the Western hemisphere, Germany in control of the center of Europe, and the Soviets in place and perhaps the Japanese empire still in place in the Pacific. It would have been very different from what we got. What we got was dominance in which the United States and its allies won WWII.

The next key point was the decision by Harry Truman to stay there—because it wasn't obvious that we had to stay there. There was a strong strand of opinion that says win the war, then come home as we did in WWI. But Truman (who, again, might not have been president if Roosevelt had kept Henry Wallace as his vice president in 1944 and not switched over) made a crucial decision, which is that not only had the United States intervened; it was going to stay overseas. By 1947 when he decided on the Marshall Plan and in 1949 when he decided to create NATO, you had something which was very different: A permanent American presence abroad.

In 1952, Dwight Eisenhower took this strategy of containment of an American presence overseas and made it the basic American policy. The fact that Eisenhower, as a Republican, was consolidating the policy that Truman started meant that it became the consensus for the next half-century. That didn't have to happen if Robert Taft had become the Republican nominee in 1952, and if the Republicans had turned down the Democrats, the Americans might not have had a NATO or a permanent presence overseas. In that sense, Eisenhower made a difference.

He also made a difference in another way: He not only brought eight years of peace, but he also avoided certain things that could have badly derailed the American presence. Most importantly, he refused to get involved in saving the French in Vietnam, not because he was sympathetic to Communism or didn't want to help the French, but because he said that if we get involved in Vietnam, it will swallow up our armies by the divisions. That was very wise advice, which John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson failed to follow. It did mean that the Americans stayed out of that land war in Asia. The other thing that he did was to refuse the advice of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to use nuclear weapons against Vietnam and China. He had a very strong moral streak against the idea of using the nuclear weapons, though he was quite happy to use them for his political purposes, but not to really use them. If Eisenhower had not been president, you might not have had containment as a consolidated position of American foreign policy, and you might have had a president who would have used the nuclear weapons and that would have led to a very different world—one that I think would have been much less stable.

You could argue that this was the third period of America's entry into global politics. The fourth period of the growth of American power was under Reagan and the
first George Bush. Trying to be objective and understand the contribution of Ronald Reagan is difficult because very often people will say Ronald Reagan won the Cold War when he said, “Mr. Gorbachev, knock down that wall!” In fact, the causation is much more complex than that.

I would argue that the truly transformational leader in the end of the Cold War was Mikhail Gorbachev. Gorbachev wanted to save the Soviet Union, and he did that by basically instituting perestroika, restructuring and glasnost or opening up. Gorbachev was like a fellow who has a sweater on and the sweater has a loose thread. He starts to pull on the loose thread and before you know it, he has no sweater. Gorbachev was truly transformational, but not in the direction he intended.

Reagan’s great gift was to see that he could do a deal with Gorbachev and he did. He reached a series of deals with Gorbachev, well ahead of where other members of this administration thought that it was possible, which is kind of ironic because when people talk about a Reaganite foreign policy, they often say a Reaganite foreign policy is tough talk and a big defense budget. In fact, Reagan’s skill as a politician was tough talk, a big defense budget, and willingness to compromise and that was a rare leadership capacity that not everybody had. I think Reagan gets credit, but sometimes not the way people thought.

If you take the counterfactual and you imagine that Andropov, a tough as nails KGB agent who was the Soviet Union leader after Brezhnev, had stayed in power, I think you could make an argument that the Soviet Union could have lasted another ten or fifteen years. Eventually it would have declined because it couldn’t cope with the third industrial revolution, the information revolution in which they didn’t have the agility of a market economy to cope with it, but they could have persisted longer if you hadn’t had a reformer Gorbachev pulling on a thread with a sweater. Andropov probably could have kept them there for another decade or more. So if Reagan had faced Andropov I doubt that we would have been crediting Reagan with contributing to the end of the Cold War. The counterfactual testing on that one makes a difference.

That brings me to George H.W. Bush and the end of the Soviet Union, which really is when the American preeminence in the world power becomes clear. Without the Soviets as a balancing factor, the Americans really are the world’s only superpower. George H.W. Bush (sometimes called Bush 41) was not a flashy leader. He was not somebody who came in with a goal of ending the Soviet Union. In fact, in his memoirs with Brent Scowcroft, he says just the opposite. He had extraordinarily good judgment and managerial experience. If you think of what Bush did, he managed to see the collapse of the Soviet Union and the reunification of Germany inside NATO without any fighting, without any bloodshed. That is quite an extraordinary accomplishment.

It is interesting that Bush 41 was asked this question at the end of the Berlin Wall in November of ’89: “Why don’t you make more of this? Why don’t you make some big speeches that we won the Cold War? We should be going out and really making a Reaganite type speech to show how well we have done!” Bush 41 said, “No. I am not going to dance on the wall.” Instead of that, he kept relatively quiet and within the next month he went to Malta for a summit with Gorbachev and began a process of negotiations, which successfully unraveled the Soviet Union and ended the Cold War without violence. It is really quite an extraordinary performance.

So if Michael Dukakis who was Bush’s opponent in 1988 had been elected, would the outcome have been any different? Perhaps, because Dukakis, I think, would have
wanted to negotiate with Gorbachev, but I am not sure he would have had the same experience in international affairs as the governor of Massachusetts that Bush had with his preparation running CIA, Ambassador to China, then UN ambassador and so forth.

So then we have to ask ourselves the question, “Did leaders matter?” Yes, some of them matter, but then notice something: It is not always the ones that you would have expected who mattered most.

Notice that two of the heroes of my story were Dwight Eisenhower and George H. W. Bush, neither of them transformational, neither of them flashy, but both of them extremely skilled in managerial leadership. I think when we look back at history and we ask what difference a leader made, you have to ask not only what the leader decided that was a big issue, but consider the dogs that didn’t bark, and the things that the leader avoided. Leaders matter but we have to be careful not to think it is flamboyance that makes a good leader. It may be contextual intelligence and judgment and knowing how to run things.

Another way of putting this is, what are the lessons for American power in the 21st century and where do we go from here? Should we be looking for a transformational or transactional leader? I think that as we look for lessons for our century, we shouldn’t be looking for flamboyance or great rhetoric; we should be looking for the ability to have contextual intelligence and managerial skills. If you can combine that with good rhetoric, fine. If you had to choose one or the other, I think we would rather have the skill. I think the moral of the story is that leaders matter but how the leaders interact with their followers, the American people, and how they explain things and make prudent judgments in a very complex, rapidly evolving world, is going to be the secret of whether we are able to maintain American primacy well into this century.
WHAT IS MARRIAGE?
MAN AND WOMAN: A DEFENSE

So here is a view of marriage that makes sense of the idea that it’s two, that it’s permanent, that it’s exclusive, that it’s a sexual union, that it has some connection to family life and to the wide sharing of goods and therefore, to the common good, something that the whole community will take an interest in. A lecture by doctoral candidate in Philosophy at Princeton and JD candidate at Yale Law School, Sherif Girgis.

To begin, I want to say a brief word about the kind of argument we are making. Very often you hear arguments for the vision of marriage as a man and a woman as one simply from history: It has always been that way, so it should always be that way. That is not the kind of argument we are making today. We are not making an argument for moral condemnation of same-sex relationships, either. We think there is a prior question of what marriage is, which would be the same kind of argument and would have the same kind of answer, whether the challenge to marriage law today were about same-sex relationships or about some other deviation from the understanding of marriage that we are going to defend.

It is also not a religious argument—and the reason for that is not some secret strategy. It is not simply the practical idea that if we use religious arguments they wouldn’t be effective, though certainly in some contexts they are not as effective as other forms of argument. We think there is a pre-theological truth here. To put it a different way, the theological truths about marriage that are common to the Christian, Jewish, and Muslim traditions, to various Eastern understandings, and even to some non-religious, non-theistic philosophies, reflect something about the human good. They reflect the truth about human nature and what makes people live and be well. There is even a theological reason to get into those non-theological reasons about marriage. They show you the wisdom of this law and that it’s not just a capricious or despotic sort of decree. It gives you a deeper appreciation for living by it.

Usually, this debate seems settled by framing it as a matter of equality. Marriage is a good thing. The proposal today is to expand the pool of people eligible to marry, and if you’re faced with a good thing that more people want, equality says you give it to them. In fact, you give it to them on an equal basis.

Everybody in the debate believes in human equality, and everybody in the debate believes that marriage, whatever it is, should be recognized on an equal basis. What we disagree about is what marriage is. So the debate is really about a competition between two visions of what marriage is. The vision that’s on offer in the proposal to redefine marriage today is a vision of marriage mainly as a form of emotional union or companionship.
What makes a marriage different from other forms of friendship, on this view, is its degree of emotional union, intensity, or priority. After all, that is what would separate two men who live together, are in love, want to commit to each other and can get a marriage license in New York from two brothers who are committed to sharing the burdens and benefits of common life and to living together indefinitely but don’t have that romantic element and therefore, can’t get a marriage license in New York. What makes them different is a certain kind of emotional companionship or romantic or domestic partnership. That’s the vision of marriage on offer.

One thing we can argue today, on terms that are accessible to everybody, is that that vision of marriage must get marriage wrong. The way you can see that is that it can’t explain other features of marriage that people on both sides of the debate still acknowledge. Take a simple example: the idea that, to get off the ground at all, marriage has to be pledged to permanence. If what makes marriage is this emotional union, that idea makes no sense as anything other than an arbitrary restriction, an old hang-up, just a tradition. As long as the emotional union is there you have a marriage, but as soon as that’s gone so is the marriage; it’s reverted to a friendship. We shouldn’t pledge permanence, but only to be together as long as that emotional union lasts, or as long as love lasts, as some people now make their vows. The idea of permanence makes no sense.

Another example is sexual exclusivity: If what really makes a marriage is an emotional union or intensity or priority, then maybe, for some people, based on temperament or taste, exclusivity will serve that and foster it, but for some it won’t. For some, according to their own understanding, it would do the opposite. Sexual openness in the relationship, an agreement not to be sexually exclusive, would actually foster the emotional union that is what really makes the marriage on this view. So that, too, becomes arbitrary—permanence and exclusivity.

Even monogamy, the idea that marriage is inherently a relationship of two people, that group unions can’t make a marriage, makes no sense, if what makes a marriage is a certain shared emotional union plus domestic life. Well, three men can have that just as well as two men or a man and a woman. They can have emotional union, they can find most personal fulfillment in the group bond. They can want that to have the same equal social status and dignity. They can want their children reared in this kind of relationship not to be stigmatized. They can want the same tax-breaks that are given to monogamy.

So permanence, exclusivity, monogamy—even the idea that marriage is a sexual relationship at all—ultimately makes no sense on this view, because this view says that what makes marriage different is the degree of intensity of emotional union. In other words, everything that makes marriage different from deep friendship, from companionship in general, the idea that it’s between two, that it has to be pledged to permanence or exclusivity, even that it’s a sexual union, makes no sense on this new vision of marriage. So the vision of marriage must be incorrect, and incorrect by both sides’ lights.

The next thing you might ask is, “Ok, if that’s wrong, if it can’t just be emotional union, if that collapses marriage into companionship, what is the alternative?” In other forms of friendship [and] companionship, people are united in heart and mind. They come to know and seek the other person’s good. Only in marriage is union comprehensive, including the whole of the other person. That’s what romantic desire
seeks, and it finds its fulfillment in the comprehensive union of marriage. The body is a real part of the person, and for that reason, any union that didn’t include bodily union wouldn’t be comprehensive.

The remarkable thing about being a human being is that that deep kind of bodily union, active coordination towards a single end that encompasses them all, is possible between two people, but just in one respect, with respect of reproduction. It is in what the law as well as the church has called the marital act, the act that seals or completes a marriage, that a man and a woman become, in their bodies, actively coordinated towards a single end, the reproduction of them as a couple. So they become, in that respect, truly and not just metaphorically one flesh. There is comprehensive union in the activity.

It is comprehensive in the dimensions of the partners united, including the body. Through that bodily union, it is oriented to or enriched by procreation and therefore all the range of goods. It is also comprehensive in the commitment that it requires because of those two senses of completeness. If it is really making them one flesh in the marital act and one flesh in the new life that they can bring about together, then it also calls for a comprehensiveness of commitment. And through time, that means permanence, and at each time that means exclusivity.

So here is a view of marriage that makes sense of the idea that it’s two, that it’s permanent, that it’s exclusive, that it’s a sexual union, that it has some connection to family life and to the wide sharing of goods and therefore, to the common good, something that the whole community will take an interest in. And it’s that vision of marriage, which we find across time and place for millennia, basically in every society that we know of before the year 2000, that’s being challenged today. Not challenged with an expansion, not challenged with the true principle of equality, but challenged with a contender, a different and much watered-down vision of marriage that collapses marriage and companionship that abolishes marriage as its own category at all.

The lecture abridged here was originally delivered at the Wheatley Institution at Brigham Young University on April 10, 2013.

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WHAT IS MARRIAGE?
MAN AND WOMAN: A DEFENSE

Marriage is about connecting goods and people that otherwise have a natural tendency to fragment. It connects sex with love, husbands with wives, sex with babies, babies with mothers and fathers. This bundle doesn’t come together in a permanent and exclusive relationship just by happenstance. It takes strong cultural signals to make this happen, and the law will either strengthen those cultural signals or weaken the cultural signals. A lecture by doctoral candidate in Political Philosophy at the University of Notre Dame, Ryan T. Anderson.

I want to begin by considering when government redefined marriage for the second time. The second time government redefined marriage was with the introduction of no-fault divorce. The expectation of marriage prior to the introduction of no-fault divorce was that marriage was a permanent relationship that could be gotten out of only for grave reasons, which in the common law tradition were listed as the three A’s of abuse, abandonment, and adultery. With the introduction of no-fault divorce law, spouses could now leave, abandoning their spouses for any reason or for no reason at all. And this taught something. The law now taught that marriage need not have that expectation of permanency. The law then taught culture, culture shaped beliefs, and beliefs influenced action. We saw that divorce rates rose from the single digits to now approaching 50%.

The activists who organized in the ‘80s and the ‘90s to try to combat the introduction of no-fault divorce laws, and the host of social ills that came with this, had same-sex relationships nowhere on their radars. They were motivated by a vision of marriage, the social goods that institution provides, and how it impacts the common good. In particular, they were interested in combating the social harms that the law’s teaching of a false image of marriage were causing to the American family in terms of broken hearts, broken homes, and all of the social ills that came with increased single parenting, non-marital childbearing, cohabitation, and divorce. Maggie Gallagher, David Blankenhorn, and the first generation of marriage activists were working on these issues throughout the ‘80s and the ‘90s when they wrote books like Fatherless America: Confronting Our Most Urgent Social Problem.

It was in 2003 that the Massachusetts Supreme Court redefined marriage for the third time in the nation’s history by eliminating the norm of sexual complementarity. They said it was arbitrary to have marriage law with the expectation that marriage is a union of a man and a woman. Marriage activists and scholars had to ask themselves, “Will redefining marriage to make fathers optional send the message that fathers are essential? That’s what we just spent the last twenty years of our lives advocating, writing books in the ‘80s and the ‘90s about the importance of fathers, and now the law is going to be teaching that that view is arbitrary, the result of nothing but irrational animus.”
This led to the second generation of the marriage movement, explaining not only why marriage matters and why it’s important, but also explaining what marriage is in the first place.” The question is, what social function does marriage play? We can also ask, what does marriage do for a political community? What does marriage do for our society?

Marriage is about connecting goods and people, that otherwise have a natural tendency to fragment. It connects sex with love, husbands with wives, sex with babies, babies with mothers and fathers. This bundle doesn’t come together in a permanent and exclusive relationship just by happenstance. It takes strong cultural signals to make this happen, and the law will either strengthen those cultural signals or weaken the cultural signals. The introduction of no-fault divorce law weakened those cultural signals, and the introduction of genderless marriage, the redefinition of marriage to exclude sexual complementarity, will only go further to weaken those cultural signals.

Marriage is based on the truth that men and women are different and complementary. It is based on the biological fact that it takes a man and a woman to produce a child and the social reality that children need mothers and fathers. When a child is born, a mother will always be close by. That’s a matter of biological fact. One of the things a marriage institution does is maximize the chance that the father will be committed to that mother and that the committed mother and father will be taking responsibility for the child. This is based on the truth that there is no such thing as parenting in the abstract. There is mothering and there is fathering; Moms and dads bring different and complementary gifts to the child raising enterprise.

One thing that is particularly important is the role that fathers play in the lives of their sons. If you want to ask yourself a question, which parent is more likely to be wrestling in the living room floor with the son, teaching the son how to be masculine without being violent, how to be physical without biting or pulling hair or gouging out eyes? In very few cases are you thinking of the mother. You’re thinking of the father because the sexual differences between men and women are real, they’re not social constructs. When this doesn’t happen, boys fail to develop into law-abiding, productive members of society that we call men. This is why we saw the rise of crime for children who grew up without fathers. This is why we saw the rise of child poverty; it’s why we saw the increase in the prison-population for children who grew up without fathers.

So marriage as a social institution maximizes the chance of protecting the child’s right to having the love and the care of the man and the woman—the mother and the father who created the child. A child’s development can actually be quantified when compared to other parenting arrangements. The social science that we have has looked at single parenting, cohabitation, divorce and remarriage, and it’s starting to look at same-sex parenting. The conclusions are rather clear—children do best when raised by their married biological mother and father on a host of indices.

The social function that marriage plays can explain why government takes cognizance of marriage in the first place. If marriage is just about the love life between consenting adults, we can take the government out of the bedroom. Government is in the marriage business because it is the least coercive, least intrusive way of ensuring that children are reared to maturity to be law-abiding, productive members of society. The correlation between when the family collapsed and when the welfare state exploded is direct. It’s also when we saw child poverty rise, social mobility decrease, and prison populations and crime increase in our nation. The marital family, a civil society
institution, limits government and it protects a flourishing community by doing the job of raising citizens and raising children much better than a government program can.

It does all of this without criminalizing anything. In all fifty states, two people of the same sex can live with each other, love each other, join a liberal church, and have a wedding ceremony performed. They can work for an employer who will give them marital benefits. None of this is illegal; none of this is banned. The primary concern here is not about a small handful of gay or lesbian relationships that will be raising children. The primary concern is which vision of marriage will be promoted through our nation’s laws. Will it be a vision in which marriage is more about your number one person (in the language of John Corvino) where it’s about your intense emotional union? If that’s what marriage is, then it seems that it will further delink the marital relationship from a child-bearing, child-rearing institution. It will make marriage more about the desires of adults than about the needs of children. There will be no institution left in law that would even hold up as an ideal that a child deserves a mother and a father. In fact, to say that would now be equated, through the force of the law, with legal bigotry.

Once you eliminate the norm of sexual complementarity, the other three traditional marital norms—monogamy, sexual exclusivity, and the pledge of permanency—become arbitrary. So you see activists activating, agitating in favor of plural marriages, marriages between groups of three or four or more, [and] sexually open marriages because, again, if marriage is about an intense emotional union, sometimes that emotional relationship of the spouses can be enhanced, [as] the argument goes, by having extramarital sexual outlets.

Lastly, the pledge of permanence is no longer viable. One proposal that is coming from the legal academy is to make marriage a temporary relationship like a car lease that can be renewed if it’s going well. The expectation would be that it’s temporary, maybe a five-year relationship that can be indefinitely renewed, but it can also be walked away from after five years if it’s not going well.

Regardless of what your moral evaluation is of plural marriage, sexually open marriage, or temporary marriage, it will be a disaster for the public policy purposes that marriage serves. Sexually open, sexually plural, temporary relationships between people of the same sex don’t have the type of externalities that those relationships have when engaged in by a man and a woman. The more sexual partners I have, the more sexually open my relationships are, the more transient and temporary my relationships are, the more likely that I create fragmented families and fatherless children. The state’s interest in channeling my behavior into a committed, exclusive, permanent relationship that can provide children with a mother and a father is directly undercut if the vision of marriage that the law will now be promoting teaches that it’s arbitrary whether you have a monogamous or a polyamorous relationship, whether you have a sexually exclusive or a sexually open marriage, whether you have a permanent or a temporary relationship. That was the ideology that the sexual revolution brought to the fore. We don’t want the law to now teach that vision of human sexuality and marriage as the true vision.

The lecture abridged here was originally delivered at the Wheatley Institution at Brigham Young University on April 10, 2013.

For the full lecture, please click here.
What is Marriage?  
Man and Woman: A Defense

We all agree on the principle of human equality, the equal worth and dignity of every human being. We all agree on the profound and inherent dignity of each and every member of the human family, regardless of what experiences or inclinations a person has when it comes to sexuality. We Christians would say, “Because made in the image and likeness of God, we are bound to recognize the equal dignity of each human being.”

But the question is, what is marriage? A lecture by the McCormick Professor of Jurisprudence at Princeton University, Robert P. George.

Marriage: what an interesting idea. What a great idea! What a profound human good! A good so profound, one might even think that some divine being must have thought the thing up, that it is more than merely human. Of course, it is a human reality, a human good, a human institution, one that we believe is pre-political, is prior to the state, and even prior to the church. We find this in Genesis in those passages—not merely metaphorical, mind you—passages that are meant literally, that the man and woman shall leave their home and cleave to each other and become truly one flesh.

Consider this: if human beings did not reproduce sexually, by man and woman coming together to create a baby, would anybody have thought up the idea of marriage? No. If human babies were born like some shark species where offspring are born ready to go, ready to rumble, just take off and not need Mom and Dad anymore, would anybody have thought up the idea of marriage? The question answers itself, but it immediately begins to tell you something very important about what marriage is, about the nature of marriage, about the basis of marriage as a human good and a human institution.

Marriage really does have something to do with procreation and with childrearing. It brings a man and a woman together as husband and wife to be mother and father to any children that their union is blessed with. It confers on those children the profound blessing of being reared in the bond of mother and father. Marriage is that institution that unites man and woman as mother and father, as husband and wife, to be mother and father of the children born of their union, giving those children the blessing of being reared with a mom and a dad, each making the characteristic and distinctive contributions that men and women make to the enterprise of childrearing.

It is a widespread error to suppose that this is a debate based on agreement about what marriage is and only disagreement about who’s allowed to participate in the institution. This is the error that virtually suffuses discussion of marriage in the current context and which our book, What is Marriage?, was written and titled to combat and—we hope—to refute, because it is a false depiction of the debate. The truth is that the debate is about what marriage is, not what does the equality require. We all agree on
the principle of human equality, the equal worth and dignity of every human being. We all agree on the profound and inherent dignity of each and every member of the human family, regardless of what experiences or inclinations a person has when it comes to sexuality. We Christians would say, “Because made in the image and likeness of God, we are bound to recognize the equal dignity of each human being.” But the question is, what is marriage?

We will not get one centimeter closer to resolving this issue, or closer to saying what equality or fairness requires, unless we answer that question and there are on offer two options. We refer to them as the conjugal understanding of marriage, the understanding of marriage as a conjugal partnership, the union of husband and wife, and the revisionist understanding of marriage, which depicts marriage as essentially a matter of sexual, romantic companionship or domestic partnership.

On the conjugal view, marriage is distinctive and set apart from other forms of friendship because it is naturally oriented to the having and rearing of children together and would naturally be fulfilled by having and rearing children together. Notice how I put that because it is terribly important: “would naturally be fulfilled by.” This is not a view that supposes that marriage is merely instrumental in its value to procreation and the having and rearing of children as if that were an extrinsic end. That is false to the actual conjugal view of marriage. Historically and today, its defenders have always argued that marriage is an intrinsic human good, a basic, irreducible aspect of human well-being, of human thriving, of human fulfillment.

It is intrinsically valuable to husband and wife to be in the type of union that is naturally ordered to the coming to be of children and would naturally be fulfilled by having and rearing children together if the union is blessed by children. You can have that and be in that even if the woman is beyond childbearing or conceiving. You can have that if the couple is infertile. That is why historically, our law, not only the law of the church but the law of the state as well, has always recognized the marriages of infertile people as valid marriages. Infertility was not a ground for the declaration of an annulment of marriage, even if infertility was known and known to be permanent.

By contrast, the law (both church and state) considered that the non-consummation of a marriage by the act that at one and the same time makes marital love and makes new life was an impediment or a ground for the nullification of marriage. It was not grounds for divorce, but rather for a declaration that the marriage had not been completed, had not been perfected, and therefore could be dissolved by way of annulment. That’s the conjugal understanding of marriage. Marriage is an intrinsic human good linked to procreation, but not in the relationship of means to extrinsic end. On the basis of that we can make sense of all the features of marriage, not only sexual complementarity which today is in dispute, but even those that in the case of most people remain not in dispute. One example is the idea that marriage is a sexual partnership, and not some other kind of partnership, like the kind of partnership that could just as well be integrated around shared interests and activities like playing tennis together or reading novels, sharing an interest in 18th century literature or what have you. Think of how odd it would be if you met a couple and they say that, “Well, we have a sexually open relationship, sex isn’t what our marriage is about, but we are really strict about tennis playing. For us, adultery means Sally plays tennis with somebody other than me, Bill. That’s adultery for us.”
Does that sound really odd? It’s laughable, right? That’s because we have an understanding that marriage is a sexual partnership that can be explained on the conjugal view.

We should add that marriage is a union of two persons and not three or four or more on polyamorous sexual ensembles. That’s probably bringing to the minds of many of you polygamy, or more properly, polygamy as practiced for example in the Old Testament or in the early days of the LDS church, but what we have in mind is something much more radical than that. Even in the days of polygamy each marriage was a conjugal relationship—Henry married to Sally in a marital bond of the conjugal sort, Henry married to Louisa, Henry married to Jill and so forth. The alternative today is far more radical, it is polyamory, the idea that three or four or five persons can be married together in a sexual partnership where they are all married to each other. It is the antithesis of a conjugal bond. The conjugal understanding of marriage can explain why we have the norm of two-ness and why three or four or five people in a polyamorous relationship can’t be a true marriage. The conjugal understanding can make sense of the otherwise inexplicable idea of permanency of marital commitment.

How about the revisionist view? How about the view that treats marriage as a sexual, romantic, domestic partnership or companionship in which children are merely incidental, a life-style choice, you have them if you like them, you don’t if you don’t? That view simply cannot make sense of any of those other features of marriage. It cannot make sense of sexual complementarity, permanence of commitment, two-ness rather than three or four or more, closed sexual partnerships rather than open sexual partnerships, or even the idea that marriage is a sexual partnership at all. The revisionist understanding can simply make no sense of any of that except as subjective preferences or sentiments that a particular couple might happen to have, which have no objective significance; it’s just a preference like any other preference but shouldn’t be imposed on anybody that doesn’t want it and shouldn’t be favored by the stated alternative points of view.

When you are witnessing to the good of marriage, you have got to see—and you have got to make your interlocutor see—that what’s at stake here is not simply sexual complementarity. What’s at stake here is an entire understanding of marriage with all of its norms on the table. It is not just the pro-traditional marriage people; it’s also the clear-headed and candid people on the other side saying exactly the same thing. If we look at respected figures like Judith Stacey of NYU, Elizabeth Brake at Arizona State University, Dan Savage the syndicated columnist, Victoria Brownworth, they say, “Yes, absolutely, of course it’s true that what we’re after is not simply opening marriage up to more people; we want to fundamentally change the institution by eliminating all of its traditional norms which we regard as regressive and repressive and restricting of the human personality.”

The kind of argument we are making is an argument about the principles that define an institution as what it is. We are making an argument at the level of principle. The conjugal view can support the principles that define marriage historically. The revisionist view ditches all of those principles.
The lecture abridged here was originally delivered at the Wheatley Institution at Brigham Young University on April 10, 2013.

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Lectures on Ethics & Leadership

So wouldn’t it be interesting if there were theories about leadership and management that would allow the next generation of leaders to say, “Oh, so this is the situation I’m in and therefore these are the principles I need to follow as I lead, but if I find myself in this situation I shouldn’t follow those rules”? It’s possible that if we arm the leaders of the future with good theories, they might actually provide better leadership to us than otherwise. A lecture by the Kim B. Clark Professor of Business Administration at the Harvard Business School, Clayton M. Christensen.

Let me describe the dilemma that academia has imposed on responsibility and leadership: A good friend of mine was chosen to be the dean of the graduate schools at one of the most prestigious universities in America—a world class scientist. As they were testing her credentials to be sure that there was nothing hidden, it became known that she taught Sunday School in the Episcopalian Church in their community. The fact that it was known that she taught Sunday School almost scuttled the deal. Ultimately she got the job and did a wonderful job.

When I learned of that, I thought, what has happened to academia that it is so narrow-minded that you couldn’t have that kind of diversity in the faculty? In defense of academia, does that mean you have to embrace discussion about any topic on any issue? Deciding what fits in and what does not fit makes academia very difficult when you are faced with the challenge of teaching people to be responsible leaders. As long as you keep the discussion at the level of values, then everybody can buy into values, but if you start to get any deeper about types of values, then you just get in all kinds of discussion and argument: We can teach this, we can’t teach that.

In my own thinking, I have decided that maybe a better way to frame values in leadership in academia is to teach our students how to think rather than teach them specific values that they should follow. In fact, if we teach ourselves what theory is about, understanding what theory is, and how it applies, we might give our graduates—as tomorrow’s future leaders—a better way to work their way through all of the pitfalls that might arise than if we try to teach that certain values always ought or ought not to be applied. Theory might be really important in teaching tomorrow’s leaders how to be responsible.

The word theory gets a bum rap with managers because the word theory is associated with the word theoretical which denotes impractical, but a theory is a statement of what causes what, why, and under what conditions. When you think of theory in those terms, it turns out that managers are voracious consumers of theory because every time they make a decision to take an action, it is predicated upon a theory in their minds: if I do this, I will get the result I need. Every time a manager puts together a plan, it’s predicated upon one or more theories that if we do these things, we
will be successful. The problem of course, is a lot of times managers don’t know the theories they are using and they sometimes use crummy theories.

Let me describe how a theory is developed to get a sense for why being a good theorist might be useful for leaders, making them flexible enough to deal with some of the problems that otherwise we get killed by. If you go back to the Middle Ages, there was a long effort that lasted hundreds of years to research flight, and the question was, is it possible that mankind ever might be able to fly? In the Middle Ages they approached it by collecting a lot of data and observing that almost everything that could fly had wings and feathers. There were a few exceptions: Ostriches had wings and feathers and couldn’t fly; bats had wings with no feathers and they flew very well; flying squirrels had neither and they got by. The correlation between the attributes of wings and feathers and the propensity to fly, the “r-squared,” was so high that researchers of the day would fabricate wings, stick feathers on them, strap them on, bulk up, go up to cathedral spires, jump off, and flap real hard. It just didn’t ever seem to work.

For centuries they would criticize those who killed themselves by saying, “Well, they just had bad wing designs or they didn’t bulk up enough or didn’t flap hard enough,” but they kept killing themselves. Then Bacon in 1285 published a very important theory, where he essentially said, “You guys got the categories wrong. It’s not wings and feathers and no-wings and feathers that decide the outcome—it is solid versus hollow bones.” It turns out that those who can fly all have hollow bones and those that have solid bones can’t. Bad news for humanity: You have solid bones, therefore you can’t. Then he proposed a bunch of machines that could flap their wings. Maybe there was hope for man after all.

Daniel Bernoulli came along in the 1500s or 1600s and he observed, through his understanding of mechanical physics, that it isn’t wings or feathers but there is a particular shape that we call today an air foil and if wind runs against that shape it pushes it up. Bernoulli’s principle helped us understand what causes flight, not what is correlated with flight. For a while it still didn’t help us much because you had this force pushing up, but people would try to build airplanes that harnessed that principle, and sometimes they would be successful and sometimes they would fail.

When research would fail, the researchers would look up and ask, “What is it about this situation that they found themselves in that caused Bernoulli’s principles not to result in successful flight?” So little by little, the researchers articulated the different circumstances in which you might find yourself that would cause this mechanism to fail, which then allowed them to say, “Alright, so if you are in this situation, this is the way you need to fly the plane, but if you find yourself in this situation, don’t fly it that way because you will fail. You will have to follow these rules instead and if you are in this situation, don’t even try because it is impossible.” Bernoulli figured out what caused successful flight but then understanding the different situations in which you might find yourself, caused flight to be predictable. Today we are the beneficiaries of a wonderful theory that is very safe because we understand the different situations that we might find ourselves in.

So wouldn’t it be interesting if there were theories about leadership and management that would allow the next generation of leaders to say, “Oh, so this is the situation I’m in and therefore these are the principles I need to follow as I lead, but if I find myself in this situation I shouldn’t follow those rules”? It’s possible that if we arm
the leaders of the future with good theories, they might actually provide better leadership to us than otherwise.

I think America has been horribly led over the last twelve years. Let me frame what has happened in America’s experience in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, and Egypt—and now possibly what we might do with Syria. I think our leaders did good correlation analysis and they observed that there is a very high correlation between prosperity and having a government based on democracy. Our leaders have then concluded that everybody ought to be governed by democratic governments and as we had the opportunity we intervene in Iraq and kill or knock out the old leader and then announce on Monday morning, “Let’s have democracy, shall we?” Then we do the same thing in Afghanistan, run by really bad people (the Taliban). We do our best to get rid of them and then announce, “Why don’t we have democracy here starting on Monday?”

It turns out, if you are really guided by a solid theory, that yes, democracy is a wonderful institution and there some circumstances in which democracy works quite well, but there are other circumstances in which democracy actually doesn’t work. And it turns out there is no apparent evidence that our leaders considered that possibility. Rather, we saw a correlation between these two and tried to impose democracy, but the circumstances in which you might find yourself in democracy, are actually designed so that you can’t catch most criminals. It’s predicated upon people under democracy stepping forward and voluntarily choosing to obey all of the laws, even unenforceable laws. Because we voluntarily choose to obey the laws, democracy works; but if you look in situations where people actually don’t believe that they will be held accountable for following unenforceable laws, democracy actually doesn’t work very well at all.

Look at the situations in which America tried to impose a type of government: We tried to impose it in a situation where democracy won’t work. Qaddafi has been a bad actor for a long time, and as momentum built up through the Middle East, and CNN (which really dictates our foreign policy) built enough momentum around Qaddafi that there was enough movement that we had to get that actor out, so we killed him. We never asked what happens if you take the leader out and there is nobody behind that person to take charge. It turns out that people who have been in power for a very long time get their power by killing all the people underneath them. So you take out Qaddafi and then the Americans say, “Oh sorry, we have got to watch our children’s football games and I’m sure there is somebody in Libya that can take charge.” We never thought about that.

There are two different situations. There is one situation where there is a leader and then there is another cadre of people who are ready and willing and capable to take charge, but there is another situation where if the leader goes, there is actually nobody to take charge. America essentially plunged Libya, and before that Haiti, into chaos because there isn’t anybody in charge.

I worry that we have leaders who don’t know how to think. I just wanted to offer this as an academic who has some responsibility to teach the next generation of leaders. If we try to teach them the detail of all of the values, then we need to keep those values at all times in order to be a good leader. Maybe we would give them better tools to wield if we were to teach them what good theories are, because any time they try to act in one way or another, they are using a theory. Maybe that’s the way we need to influence them.
The lecture abridged here was originally delivered at Said Business School at Oxford University on September 6, 2013.

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Lectures on Ethics & Leadership

Responsible leadership matters, and it makes a statistically significant difference in the performance of organizations’ profitability, performance, productivity, and quality. Responsible leadership is not only behaving appropriately or in the right or virtuous way, but virtuousness at its core suggests contribution, helps other people flourish. A lecture by William Russell Kelly Professor of Management and Organizations in the Ross School of Business and Professor of Higher Education in the School of Education, Kim S. Cameron.

One way to think about a responsible leader is a person who is accountable, that is dependable, as in “Gee, that person is really responsible; he or she follows through.” Another way is to think about responsible leadership being responsibility for something. That is, I have resources, I have discretion, I can take responsibility to follow through, or to accomplish a task, or to make progress. In other words, responsibility in those two connotations implies responsible. I am able to respond.

There is a third way to think about responsibility: This person does the appropriate, good, right thing. It is in that sense that I want to talk about responsible leadership. The problem is that goodness for you may not be goodness for me. Interestingly, almost all human beings agree on what I am going to refer to as virtuousness. That is, with a few radical exceptions, virtually all of humankind believes that it is better to be kind than abusive; better to be helpful than the reverse; giving life is better than taking life in most situations. As a set of human beings, we have come to believe that virtuousness is a representative of the best of the human condition. Doing the right, virtuous, or appropriate thing, or fostering or enabling virtuousness, is an often neglected but very important connotation of responsible leadership.

This matters in terms of human beings and in terms of leadership. Think of a horizontal continuum. In fact, let’s call it a deviance continuum, deviance simply meaning having an aberration from the norm. On the one end would be negative aberrant behavior, in the middle would be normal expected, and on the right hand side would be positively deviant behavior or attributes.

One implication of thinking of deviance on a continuum is that all organizations exist to eliminate deviance. The reason we organize is to eliminate unexpected aberrant behavior. So we all come in the room, we are instructed to come down to the front, we come down to the front, we sit down, we stop talking. We organize ourselves in order to eliminate chaotic, unexpected, aberrant behavior.

There is another implication. Most research in organizations and in other fields focuses on one half of the continuum and not much on the other half. Think, for example, of physical health. On the left-hand side is illness; in the middle is health absent illness, i.e., my body is working fine. Ninety percent of all medical research focuses on that gap. Ninety-nine percent of all psychological research focuses on that gap—depression, anxiety, schizophrenia, burn out, most of what we know is focusing on
that side of the continuum. On the right-hand side of the continuum, there are aberrant or positively deviant situations. You never walk into a psychiatry office and say, “Gee, my family is doing well, I’m happy, my life is great. Give me something to make me spectacular, Doc.” Nothing would be prescribed; there is a gap on that end.

When we focus on the right-hand side of that continuum, it unleashes something in human beings called the heliotropic effect. The heliotropic effect can be defined as, every living system, from single celled organisms to complex human systems, has a tendency toward the light and away from dark or, more accurately described, toward positive energy and away from negative energy, toward that which is life-giving and away from that which is life-depleting. Think about evolutionary processes. Over time all species are attracted to that which gives life and avoid that which detracts from or endangers life. That is the heliotropic effect.

If that is true, it has implications for human beings and how we interact with each other, but in particular it has enormous implications for responsible leadership because responsible leaders are those that engender, enhance, and enrich life. They focus on the best of the human condition and the one word definition of that is virtuousness. It turns out it matters a lot if we actually identify, enhance, or implement virtuous practices in organizations, and if we find leaders who foster virtuousness. In one particular study, we selected twenty-eight organizations across sixteen industries; we had manufacturing, financial services, health care, education, and government organizations, that had experienced or were currently experiencing downsizing. The overwhelming number (between 80% and 90%) of those organizations experiencing downsizing will deteriorate in their performance.

We discovered however, that there was a normal curve. Some of these organizations consciously embedded or implemented in their organizations virtuous practices. Leaders became responsible leaders and governed their organizations or implemented change in those organizations on the basis of these virtuous practices. On hard numbers like profitability, productivity, and quality, as well as soft numbers like morale, cohesion, and teamwork, there were strong significant differences in the performance of those organizations, including financial performance.

Now you would say, “Well, wait a minute; that is not causal. Maybe it is the organizations that were doing especially well that were then able to implement positive practices or virtuous practices.” So we did several other studies.

We studied the U.S. airline industry after 9/11. After the Trade Towers came down, it was against the law to fly anywhere in the world for the next two or three days. Nobody knew for sure that was going to happen. As it turns out, when people began flying again, ridership topped out at 80% of previous ridership levels. Short haul routes were especially affected. All that is fine, except that the economic model of the U.S. airline industry is based on an 86% seat fill rate. If you top at 80%, you get 20% too many pilots, too many gate agents, and too many planes, so everyone downsized.

The prediction was that all of those airline industry firms were going to deteriorate even more. The two firms hurt the most were the two short-haul carriers, U.S. Airways and Southwest Airlines, which rely on less than 500 mile trips. U.S. Airways and Southwest approached this in very different ways. US Airways downsized more than 20%. They also declared financial exigency, which means all contracts are null and void. So, thank you very much for 20 years of service, you’re out of here, no severance, no benefits, hand in your car, we cannot afford it.
Southwest Airlines laid off no one. I had dinner with the CEO who said something like, “Look we’re losing a lot of money every day” (it was about a million-and-a-half dollars a day) “and certainly we can’t continue to do this indefinitely, but we are willing to suffer some damage even to our stock price to protect the jobs of our people. We want to ensure to our people that we are willing to sacrifice even some short term gain, to protect our people to help them develop loyalty and trust.” Well, that is ok except that Southwest Airlines is a publicly traded firm. If I invest in Southwest Airlines, I am not just giving you my money. I don’t care about what you’re doing with your people, I want a return.

The analysis we did was simply on what happens to financial return and the virtuousness of the downsizing strategies. There are 10 organizations, and I’ve only explained two, but the correlation between the virtuousness of the downsizing strategy and financial return one year later (and we followed it five years later) is 0.86. It is almost perfect. The virtuous organizations had a financial return far greater than those who were not.

We said, “Okay, that is pretty compelling data, but let’s look at Wall Street, because of all the places we would expect, Wall Street is not likely to take this stuff seriously, certainly not responsible leadership in the way we are talking about.” So we picked forty Wall Street firms. We simply asked them to invest in and implement virtuous practices. We asked some leaders to begin changing their behavior in doing some things that we would refer to as virtuous leadership. Then two years later, we simply looked at the change in their financial performance and we measured it in six different ways, so nobody could argue that we left out their particular way for analyzing financial return. The R-squared between change (getting better at virtuous practices) and financial return was .45, almost half the profitability in financial service organizations. We could predict simply on that basis the extent of responsible leaders.

This research has taught me that responsible leadership matters, and it makes a statistically significant difference in the performance of organizations’ profitability, performance, productivity, and quality. Responsible leadership is not only behaving appropriately or in the right or virtuous way, but virtuousness at its core suggests contribution, helping other people flourish. The reason we are kind and trustworthy and the reason we express forgiveness and gratitude, is that all of us do better in those circumstances. Virtuousness causes the human condition to elevate. Responsible leaders matter because they make that difference.

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The lecture abridged here was originally delivered at Said Business School at Oxford University on September 6, 2013.

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Lectures on Ethics & Leadership

Being a responsible and moral leader amounts to this: That our means are responsible (not just our ends), that we take account of the impact of our actions on other people and other legitimate aims (not just our own aims), and most importantly—what Kant called the categorical imperative—that we don’t use other people as means to our own ends. A lecture by The Warden of Rhodes House and Director of Patagonia, Charles Conn.

As director of Patagonia, the outdoor clothing company, and the new head of the Rhodes program, I’ve been ruminating a lot about responsible leadership. One of the things I spend my time thinking about is the contrast between Cecil Rhodes who as the founder of the Rhodes scholarships a hundred and ten years ago, and Yvon Chouinard who is the founder of Patagonia. You couldn’t imagine two more different people and I think that is kind of the point. As many of you know, Rhodes established the Rhodes Scholarship and maybe you don’t know that it was really the first of its kind. He was explicitly trying to develop young leaders to do what he called “fight the world’s fight,” which for him, meant to encourage relationships among countries and to make the world a better place.

His criteria were really interesting. Rather than just picking intellectuals, he wanted to pick people who had a devotion to truth and caring for others. He also wanted people with the energy and ambition to develop and he wanted most of all people who he felt had moral force of character to lead. All of that sounds like an ambition to responsible leadership, and I think it was.

It has produced some amazing leaders. It produced Bill Clinton, Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbot, Bob Hawke, Norman Manley in Jamaica, Cory Booker in New Jersey, and many others. Today I thought it might be fun to look at Cecil Rhodes and others.

Rhodes was an amazing entrepreneur and business person. When I say amazing, imagine that by age 48 he had started two companies that are still with us today (De Beers and Gold Fields), two countries that are still with us today (they have different names now--Zambia and Zimbabwe), and had been Prime Minister of a third country, all before forty-eight. Then he promptly keeled over and died.

By any definition he was a remarkably effective leader, but history has not judged him to be a responsible leader and I thought it might be interesting to talk about why. He had amazing breadth of vision and many of the characteristics that we do think of as good in leaders. He was a person of really big ideas. He wasn’t a scholar, maybe surprisingly. In fact, the only book he carried with him (and he carried it with him all the time) was Marcus Aurelius’ Meditations, which is a stoic text and one of the things it propounds is basically stripping away all of your personal concerns and developing a conception of the cosmos as all-present and at the same time encompassing all time.
None of that is about personal gain. He was guided by the big principles and ideas of British values and the British Empire. Today we might think about empires as somewhere between bad and silly, but Rhodes’ ideas and ideals were shared by his countrymen of the day. So for now we will set aside our view that an empire may be a silly idea: It was a powerful idea in its time.

Rhodes painted a large vision for Africa that captured the attention of others. He built followers and shaped followership of thousands based on his leadership, and he inspired many people. He is famous for saying to the Countess of Warwick toward the end of his life when she accused him of being a dreamer, “It is the dreamers that move the world. Practical men are so busy being practical that they cannot see beyond their own lifetimes. Dreamers and visionaries have made civilizations. If there had been no dream, we would still be living in caves and clubbing each other to death over a mouthful of food.” This is a person with a big vision, definitely far beyond his life.

He was also a great judge of people. He surrounded himself with those who had different skill sets from his own (another characteristic of effective leaders), which included the strategist Alfred Beit, the financier Lord Rothschild, and the operator Charles Rudd. Rhodes had enormous charisma to get these kinds of people to follow him, but he was also a careful listener and he drew these people out and incorporated their views into his view. Finally, he built an enormous fortune, but he didn’t give a whit for money. In fact, he owned almost nothing personally. He wore the same old hat, he wore the same rumpled clothes, he didn’t even own a watch, and not until the end of his life did he even live in a proper house or have a bed any more than a cot. He didn’t do anything that he did—starting countries, starting companies, genuinely changing the face of the continent—for any gain or any luxury in his own lifetime.

Today we might not agree with the idea of building a bigger British Empire and expanding Queen Victoria’s realm, but if we set that aside, we must ask why Rhodes is not viewed as a responsible leader. He was loved by those around him, especially those closest to him. He was vetted by the Queen and he was admired by both Britons and Africans during this period.

I think many of us know the answer: While his ends were ends that many held, his means were not. Rhodes would do whatever was required to win his game and his game was a big game, bigger than we typically talk about with companies today. He told different people different things—that’s lying. He manipulated shares in stock exchanges in order to get more wealth, again for ends, not for himself. He even started small wars when other forms of persuasion like bribery didn’t work. That is how we ended up with upper and lower Rhodesia. People were bullied, ruined, people died, all while Rhodes pursued this vision.

He was a friend of the Queen; she thought what he was doing was a good thing. In the end, however, it doesn’t matter how great your aims are. What you do matters. Mark Twain has a wonderful saying about Rhodes, “He wants the earth and he wants it for his own. And the belief that he will get it and let his friends in on the ground floor is the secret that rivets so many eyes upon him and keeps him at the zenith where the view is unobstructed. I admire him, and frankly I confess that when his time comes, I shall buy a piece of the rope as a keepsake.”

In the end, time caught up with Rhodes before any rope did. We can see the difference between being an incredibly effective leader and being a responsible and moral leader. Being a responsible and moral leader amounts to this: That our means are
responsible (not just our ends), that we take account of the impact of our actions on other people and other legitimate aims (not just our own aims), and most importantly—what Kant called the categorical imperative—that we don’t use other people as means to our own ends.

I want to contrast this historical character, Rhodes, with a living character, Yvon Chouinard, the founder of Patagonia with whom I get to work many days of the year. I know it is a big segue to go from empire to Patagonia, but Patagonia is a pretty successful company out there in the world. It is a story that is much less grand, but it is grounded in a genuine story of responsibility.

Chouinard is an environmentalist who very reluctantly happens to be a capitalist. He only became a capitalist because he wanted to make pitons that worked and didn’t fall out when he was mountain climbing. Then he started the clothing company because he needed a cash cow to pay for his trips to go climbing. Literally, this is how it happened. For him, the starting point is always nature, which he enjoys. His view is, unless you sell organic seeds or night soil, you’re doing some environmental harm.

At an early part in the company’s history, an epiphany came to them about how much harm even a good company like Patagonia was doing. This is the lesson in responsibility. They found even when they produced an organic, cotton polo shirt that it used 2,700 gallons of water and burned 21 pounds of CO\textsubscript{2} in its production, transportation, and packaging. That led to this fanatical pursuit inside the company to change how they thought about the company and how they made their products to be responsible. He will still tell you today that Patagonia does harm, but it is their explicit goal to do no unnecessary harm. I am going to talk about three things they do because they underscore that being responsible is a lot more than having a great aim and thinking good thoughts; it is about what you do on the ground.

The first is what they call the footprint chronicles. They looked at every single product they made and they traced every single step of the product and they tried to root out any dangerous dyes, any improperly produced imports, and any worker practices that are unfair or unethical. Not a single product in Patagonia gets produced without that kind of intensive process.

Second, they recognized that just producing good products was not enough, but that they needed to think about their customers’ demand behaviors. Most companies want as much demand as possible; at Patagonia that is not the case, strangely. They started something called Common Threads, which encourages customers to reduce what they purchase. The last campaign was “don’t buy this jacket,” which literally was “please don’t buy this jacket unless you really need it.” When you have something from Patagonia that breaks, they don’t want you to throw it away, they want you to send it back because all those fibers get reused and recycled. They also recycle via the E-bay store, so if you are tired of what you have from Patagonia you can send it there and donate any profit to charity and other people can enjoy the clothes.

The third thing we are working on in Patagonia right now is called the Higg Index, which is a way of taking both of these ideas from a single company, Patagonia, and making it at the scale of an industry. They are trying to create an index that measures the impact on both workers and the environment for every single piece of clothing that is produced for the people that are participants in the index—more than 300 companies from Walmart to North Face to Patagonia. So they are trying to take their little practices that started in Patagonia and make it broad.
The point is, Yvon is actually a lot like Rhodes. He cares about only one big thing, saving the planet, and it is something that will never be achieved in our lifetime. He doesn’t care about money. Chouinard wears an old pair of Walmart jeans. He won’t even wear Patagonia jeans—they cost too much. He drives the same Toyota Corolla that he has always had, he doesn’t own a cell phone, and he lives in the same house he has lived in for 40 years. He is the same kind of curmudgeon that Rhodes was. He doesn’t even have Rhodes’ charm. He is a grouchy son of a gun, but he is a responsible leader. He is a responsible leader because he does not only try to make a great end, but he also cares about all the steps along the way that are required to do it.

The lecture abridged here was originally delivered at Said Business School at Oxford University on September 6, 2013.

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Lectures on Ethics & Leadership

We have incredibly powerful platforms; we have convening power; we have alumni; we have a voice that’s very strong. It is important for us to be able to identify and nudge norms along wherever we can. I think it’s our job to do all that we can to get these issues to the fore, and then to try to highlight organizations and individuals who have done remarkable work, as opposed to simply those who have made the most money, which is the norm. A lecture by the Peter Moores Dean and Professor of Finance at Said Business School, Peter Tufano.

I think of responsible leadership at three levels. First, is the individual, second, is the organization, and third, is the broader system. When we talk about responsible leadership, we first deal with individuals and it should really be about individuals and individual behavior. To the extent that we want to as schools generate and create more people who are going to be responsible leaders, we need to get them thinking about what that means and discuss these questions openly.

There is, however, this unfortunate nature versus nurture debate—the question of how much can we change personalities, especially personalities by the time they arrive at a school at the age of 26, 29, 35, 42, or whatever it might be. Some of the research on behavioral aspects these days is quite clear that people’s intentions are different than their actions. It is true that we can get people sensitized in order to behave and think about certain ways; we might even be able to get them to say they will do those things, but it’s often very difficult to have them do them. You can think about that in terms of dieting, controlling finances, and other things that we all know we should do. You could come away from all that dispirited, wondering where that leaves us if you can’t change personalities so much, and if people are more well-intentioned than they are well-behaved. I think that leaves us in the place where we have to do all that we can to talk about these issues. As a dean of a business school, it brings me up one or two levels.

The next level is not about individuals, but about organizations. (I will confess that I’ve been reading some very good work done at NYU about organizational design, so give credit where credit is due.) How is it that you can create an organization whereby the rules of that organization and the design of that organization is more likely to lead to responsibility as opposed to less likely to lead to responsibility? How do we create an organization that encourages people to make responsible choices, to hold them responsible for their choices, and to reduce the number of situations where people are put into almost impossible choices? So we might not be able to change individuals that easily, but certainly as a business school we should be thinking about how we might change organizations. How might we foster some of this responsibility within the organizations that we help to lead?

I offer here another confession: I am an economist and a financial economist. Despite the fact that I’ve spent my entire professional life as a financial economist, I find that economics in and of itself is problematic in this regard. In particular I think about...
the world of finance on Wall Street where I’ve spent part of my life when I was not an academic. Why is it that the value system that comes out of economics is very dispiriting to the conversation that we’re having? I think because it focuses primarily on economic gain rather than other consequences. Any time you reduce a problem to a single dimension, you often find that you get the behaviors that you’re not hoping for but that are unintended. The value system focuses only on one stakeholder. For many years, I preached shareholder value-maximization which makes the other shareholders and stakeholders seem unimportant. The value system also focuses on money as the primary way to induce behavior, and we know from research that doesn’t work. While it sounds bizarre in business school, Ignatius had written this warning: “riches to honor to pride.” It almost sounds like a path to success at a business school, but in Ignatian philosophy, rather than that being a way to success, that’s actually a way to failure. Much of what we teach about is the transition from riches to honors to pride.

What do we do about that? What are the levers that we have when we think about organizational design? Well, I think the first one is whom do we promote? Whom do we hire? How do we reward people? Whom do we reward? Under what circumstances do we reward them? How do we organize them? What messages do we send? How do we discipline people when they do the wrong things? How do we reward them when they do the right things? How do we organize the firm? I don’t have answers to these questions, but while it is true that we can focus on individuals all the time, if we go up one level and think about organizations, there are certain kinds of organizations that are better able to support people to make responsible decisions. How do we find those organizational traits that might help us all in our search to make better decisions?

So if we start with individuals, then we go to organizations, and then we go up to the next level—that next level is systems. None of us own systems, but how do we affect them? I talk about rules of the game. The rules of the game are the combination of laws and regulations as well as social norms that determine the playing field on which we act. Most of us are not in a position to write rules and laws, nor do we set social norms. Having said that, why are they so important and what can we do about the rules?

When we go and play football or soccer, it is not appropriate to bring a crowbar onto the field and to whack the other players. We all know that that is not a good thing to do. Somebody sets the rules. Some of those rules are written down and some of them are not written down. We have people who study laws and regulations; we have people who study social norms, and we have people who study reputation, which is the embodiment of the social norms. What then is the role of a business school and a university in this search for responsibility?

We have incredibly powerful platforms; we have convening power; we have alumni; we have a voice that’s very strong. It is important for us to be able to identify and nudge norms along wherever we can. I think it’s our job to do all that we can to get these issues to the fore, and then to try to highlight organizations and individuals who have done remarkable work, as opposed to simply those who have made the most money, which is the norm.
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Lectures on Ethics & Leadership

It is important for those of us who have any kind of responsibility to be a leader, and that includes pretty much everybody, because I believe in leadership with a small “l”. That is, leadership exists in every level of society, all the way down to individuals and families. A lecture by President of Brigham Young University-Idaho and former dean of the Harvard Business School, Kim B. Clark.

I have several things I would like to say about responsible leadership. First, it is important for those of us who have any kind of responsibility to be a leader, and that includes pretty much everybody, because I believe in leadership with a small “l”. That is, leadership exists in every level of society, all the way down to individuals and families, in organizations, in project teams, in divisions, in any kind of group, all the way to CEOs and even people who lead large parts of societies. In every position of leadership, leadership is always and everywhere a moral act, because every leader takes the lives of other people in her or his hands, and in various ways takes action that affects other people. It is either for their wellbeing to improve their lives and help them become more effective and better off, or it hurts them. So the first observation is that it is always a moral act.

The second observation is that all of us, whether you're in a school or not, will teach other people about responsible leadership. It doesn’t matter what you do, all of you will teach responsible leadership whether you intend to or not. This is what we came to at HBS (Harvard Business School). We thought hard about what we should do as an institution to develop leaders who go out and really make the world a better place. Not rhetorically, but actually make the world a better place. You can talk about it, but will it have any effect? We decided that whether you choose to or not, you will teach people about responsibility. If you choose not to do it with intent, you will do it inadvertently and haphazardly, and they will learn about responsibility from you, but it won’t be a happy lesson. You will teach them you do not care about it, and it is not an important part of being a leader. They will take that and it will get into their hearts, because responsibility is always about the heart and the mind.

So we chose at HBS to educate for responsibility. And it is not easy. It is challenging. It is full of paradoxes. So how do you teach that? Well, one way is you try to help the faculty understand something about these principles. I want you to picture in your mind the Harvard Business School faculty arrayed in a room. There are two hundred and something of them. It is the most prestigious business school in the world, populated by faculty of great international renown. I’m there and I’m talking to these people, all of whom got to where they are by single-minded pursuit of their own interests. Do you have the picture now? I told them about this paradox about responsibility. I said, “Alright, this is what I believe. If we work together in such a way that we are willing to invest in each other, even if it causes us individually to sacrifice our own interests, then we will end up creating an organization that is so powerful in its
influence and in its culture, that individually we will end up better off than if we selfishly pursue our own interests."

It is a paradox because you have to believe that if I’m working on a paper and trying to write and Peter appears in my office door and wants to talk to me, I have to set that aside. I have to believe that by setting this aside and spending time with Peter rather than my own work, it will eventually create a culture that’s very powerful, and I will be better off some day, only not this day. That is exactly what you do. I believed that very strongly at HBS and I believe that very strongly now. We saw it begin to happen.

One of the sweetest things that happened to me in my time at HBS was a letter I got; it was a letter from one of my colleagues who is an absolutely brilliant economist, internationally renowned. This was a brilliant person who grew up in a country where he saw people pursuing their own interests to the max and he saw the consequences of it. He learned that only the people who are ruthless and cynical survive. So when I started talking about investing in other people and we’ll be better off, he thought it was complete nonsense. I got this very sweet letter from him when I left. He wrote me this long letter and he said, “You know, when you first talked about this stuff, I thought, ‘this is nonsense, this is crazy,’ but as time went on, I decided that I would begin to experiment with it, so I began to behave the way you taught us. I have to tell you, I am a convert. I now believe what you believe because I’ve practiced it and I’ve watched the change it’s made in my life.”

Responsibility the way we’re talking about here is very powerful, but, while it’s powerful, it is not easy. It is not only about the heart, what you stand for, about who you are, and about your identity and your principles, but it is also about the mind because you cannot be a responsible leader if you don’t know how to take powerful and effective action or organize and motivate people so that they do the things that bring about responsibility. What does it take to get three hundred companies to sign up to play a game that is not in their interest? It is more than heart; it is skill, it is knowledge, it is expertise, it is the kinds of things we teach about. In fact, I think you can argue that the real power is to get people who have responsible hearts and very powerful minds. William James developed a concept which has been deeply engrained at HBS for a long time. He taught that what you want in leaders is someone who’s tough-minded but not hard-hearted. So, you want responsible hearts and strong, powerful minds.

There’s another issue that I’d like to share with you. I’ll give you one example. A leader that I have a lot of respect for is a man named Paul O’Neil. He was the CEO of Alcoa, a big aluminum company. Very nasty business to make that metal: a lot of mining, a lot of smelting, a lot of metal working; it is very, very dangerous. When Paul O’Neil became CEO of Alcoa, Alcoa was killing its own people and injuring them on a regular basis, but its safety and health record was superior to the industry. So given that aluminum is dangerous, they were less dangerous than most aluminum guys. This had consequences beyond the boundaries of the firm. If you kill this worker, what does that do to his family or to the community? It’s devastating. Occasionally throughout the year, somebody would die. That was standard, accepted practice in the industry. Well, Paul came in and he said, I don’t think that’s right. The only standard that has any standing is zero. So we are going to seek to have zero fatalities and zero injuries—incredibly difficult to do.

The idea is to say, can we find not only ways to ameliorate the situation, but find ways to increase value actually in both segments, for the firm and for society? What
happened in the O’Neil case is they went after zero, and he was dogged, and he got a bunch of people convinced. He said, “How can you accept anything other than zero? How can you ask a family to come work for us, and your probability of dying is only .04?”

Today, it is unacceptable. As they pursued zero, they began to discover things about their processes, systems, information, communication, and all sorts of things, and over time the safety record got lower and lower and lower. Fewer and fewer people died, and significantly fewer people were injured. Alcoa’s processes got better because they began to discover things about their processes they didn’t know.

One last thought about systems. There’s a recent paper by Rebecca Henderson and one of her colleagues, Karthik Ramanna, which argues that leaders who are embedded in the kind of economic system we’re all embedded in, where you have private enterprise and governments—this kind of mixed system that we have, leaders in that world have a responsibility for the system. There are times when it is justified for private individuals to take action to preserve the integrity and therefore the legitimacy of the system. Even if it causes some short term cost to their companies. An example they use is accounting standards. If accounting standards are manipulated by the participants and the participants actually are involved in setting the standards, and because of their knowledge of the standards they can manipulate them to their advantage, that will eventually cause the system to collapse because no one will have any faith in it. And therefore, there will be regulation, and you know what happens when you have regulation. You get corruption, you get costs on the system, and eventually it just starts collapsing on itself.

I want to use an example that’s not currently a huge problem, but it is going to get a lot bigger. To do that I want to describe to you an episode that happened at a university. A student comes in to a teacher; the teacher has in front of her a paper that the student wrote. The paper is covered with blue highlights because the professor has run the paper through a software program that searches the internet for plagiarism. The paper is littered with whole paragraphs lifted from sources on the internet. The teacher shows the paper to the student and says, “What do you have to say?” and the student looks at her and says, “I know! I tried to get that blue ink out of the thing, I couldn’t figure out how to do it. I know, isn’t that tough? Look, I don’t know what to do.” And she says, “No, you’re missing the point. All this stuff is taken from other places; it’s not your work.” He looked at her with a blank stare and said, “So what? So what?” And she said, “Well, it’s plagiarism,” and he said, “So what? You give me an assignment, I give you a paper, what else do you want?” and the student was serious. The student is about 18 or 19 years old, turned in a paper basically lifted from the internet, and thought that was fine. The student had a moral code that basically said, “What’s right for me is right.”

I want you to think about that for a minute: What’s right for me, so whatever makes my life better, according to me, is right, morally right. There’s a whole generation of young people out there who have this code. They are flooded with information. Their view is, “Well, you have requirements, but they’re sort of your thing, and I have to meet them, but I’m going to meet them however is best for me. And all your rules, I don’t really care about your rules, because they don’t really apply to me. So that’s how I’m going to be.” Now you think about what that would be like if that moral code is in a lot of the rising generation in the world. That’s the code that starts getting into the people who run organizations. I guarantee that if that happens, the economy that you saw recently
in the 2007, 2008, 2009 period, will feel like a cakewalk compared to what will happen if that code takes over. So that’s my prediction.

That means everybody, every leader, every person with any interest in a healthy, functioning, growing economy, has a responsibility to counteract that moral code. In whatever way you can, whether you’re a teacher, a leader, in a firm, in a home, wherever you are, in families, in organizations, you need to recognize when it pops up and you need to teach. You can start by helping them see that by having that point of view and moral code, they are headed to sure personal disaster, because no one will trust them. No one will believe anything they say, including the people they want to believe them. That code destroys human relationships, destroys organizations, and destroys families. It’s a sure recipe for disaster, because it is very short-sighted. You can start by teaching them that it is in their interest to learn to tell the truth, it is in their interest to care about how other people feel, it is in their interest to think about the consequences two or three steps down of their behavior. All of us have that responsibility.

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