

EPISODE 13

[INTRODUCTION]

[00:00:05] ANNOUNCER: You are listening to 10,000 Swamp Leaders, leadership conversations that explore adapting and thriving in a complex world with Rick Torseth and guests.

[00:00:19] RT: Hi, everybody. This is Rick Torseth. Welcome back to 10,000 Swamp Leaders. 10,000 Swamp Leaders is a podcast where we explore with people who are on the leadership trail about what it means to choose to lead, to deal with really complex, wicked, or what we would call swamp, messy problems. Today, I have a unique opportunity to have two guests on at the same time. Kitty Nooy, who is a Dutch lawyer, who is formerly working in the judicial system in the Netherlands. She has her own consultancy now, which she'll talk about. And her business partner, Tycho Prins, who is a philosopher and an academic, who's done a lot of research around the topic that we're going to explore today, which is ethical leadership.

For all of us in the last few years and currently, we've been witness to the need for ethical leadership, mostly by its absence. I think, our conversation today is timely, because we have two experts here who have committed their lives to developing this capacity in organizations and in people and gosh, knows we need it. Let's get started here. I'm going to ask both Kitty and Tycho to tell us about themselves. I'm going to start with you, Kitty. If you just introduce yourself and tell the people, the listeners, what you think they need to know about you, before we get into the details.

[00:01:42] KN: Thank you very much, Rick. I'm delighted to be here and to join this podcast. Well, my name is Kitty Nooy. I'm 69-years-old and happily married for 45 years. We have a son and a daughter. I've been working in government organizations for a long time and well, it was a great job. I've been a public prosecutor. In the end, I've been working there as a chief public prosecutor.

Since November 2018, I have my own business with two colleagues. Tycho is one of them. The three of us who work on ethical leadership. For me, it is a full-time job. Well, Tycho will tell himself what he's doing. I know that in general, I like to talk about what motivated me to dive

into the ethical leadership, to be involved with it. Our family, we had three children. I was the eldest one, and my father died when he was 51. I was 19, my sister, 15, and my brother, 11. My father was a butcher and my mother didn't have any education.

What impressed me a lot is that my mother was cleaning the house just to give us a proper education. There was no money and no time to go to high school. I started working when I was 16. I met a chief, who convinced me that I had to study. I studied in the evening, my high school, went then to university. I had the opportunity to become a public prosecutor. The reason that I like to tell people this is that in that period, coming from a labor family, my feeling for justice has grown a lot. I think, it's into my genes.

Justice is a very important part of ethical leadership. I think that one of the reasons that I'm interested in that ethical leadership and of course, there's a lot more it's important for me to tell this, that my youth, the family I come from has meant a lot to me. Some people think that the damage, you know, it didn't – after all, it's a great opportunity to have start like this. It was difficult. Yes, of course it was difficult. This gave me the opportunity to develop myself. Well, I'm, of course, a little bit proud on my last jobs, being in the top of an organization.

[00:04:22] RT: You've created a nice opening for us to explore. Thank you for that, Kitty. Tycho, how about you? Share us a little bit about who you are.

[00:04:30] TP: Oh, yeah. Thank you, Rick, for having us here. Well, my name is Tycho. I'm also from the Netherlands, just like Kitty. I've originally studied law, Dutch administrative law. Besides that, I once chose in the summer, just before courses began again, to either go to work, besides my study, or take a second study, so to speak. I was always interested in philosophy.

For that reason, I chose, became philosophy. It started out as a hobby, and now it's more than a hobby. It's a hobby that really got out of hand. After my two studies, I majored in administrative law and in ethics. I started as a legal advisor. I'm still a legal advisor now. Whenever I get the chance, I like to study philosophy, and I started the company with Kitty and a lawyer, a third partner of ours in ethical leadership.

How we came to ethical leadership is that, well, Kitty started with ethical leadership from her experience, so to speak. It was fortunate and I think a coincidence that I studied ethics and we

could really work together on what ethical leadership meant and what it would be. This is basically how we got together. It started as me helping her out, I remember. I just kept starting helping her out further. Eventually, we just started a company, and that's now why we're working together.

[00:06:01] RT: Okay, great. Let me make a connection here to the three of us and how it came about. Because in October of last year, I had done some work pre-pandemic with The Hague Academy around leadership. A colleague of mine, named Matt Barnaby, who is in The Hague, he and I did that work. We were approached in October of last year to do a leadership program called the Midas School of Leadership. It had about 15 participants from mostly Eastern European countries, who were working in varying government agencies in their respective countries.

The program had multiple modules and at that time when we were going over the content, which was given to us, it was oriented around this framework that I had not seen before, which you're both very familiar with and we're going to talk about. Without giving away too much, what I was struck by was as this information was shared with the participants over the course of about five weeks, and then the work that Matt and I did, working with them on their leadership challenges, how they use this framework and maybe the wrong word, you can clean me up when this comes back to you here, how they use that as a basis to coach each other with their leadership challenges.

What struck me about it was how accessible it was for them to actually put it to use and do something with around real issues. For somebody who's been working in the leadership world and looking at all sorts of frameworks and stuff for years and years and years, that jumped out for me. We want to talk about the framework that you had developed and why it's important and why we need it.

Before we do that, I just want to add a little bit because, Kitty, on your website, you talk about leadership is perhaps the most researched and least understood area of organizational behavior. I agree with you. Ethical leadership is even more difficult. Then, Tycho, on an abstract from a paper that you wrote at the very beginning, you say, institutional corruption is an underdeveloped concept. The main reason is that it lacks a moral foundation. Consequently, our practical tools for fighting it are underdeveloped, too.

It strikes me that you two and your partner have weighed into a very challenging area of leadership. I think, it's important for people who are listening to understand why you've chosen to go down this road with this work, what you've learned about it, and why this framework you think is relevant and useful to people who are in a leadership position. That's a very open-ended place to start our conversation. I'd like for the two of you to share with the listeners, the framework and where it came from, and then we can go from there, once they have a bit of a grip on what it is that you're doing and the approach you're taking.

[00:08:57] KN: You're right. On my website, I wrote that leadership – let's say, it's very difficult to find a proper definition. When I look on the Internet, I can find 20,000 definitions, or something like that. Being able to work at the top of an organization, I found out in a way, it's an open door, but I like to emphasize that leadership is so very, very, very important.

I have been working in an organization where ethical leadership was not present. There was no ethical leadership at all. I was in the center of that period. I was in the center of that organization. I really experienced and saw the damage that was caused by the absence of leadership, of ethical leadership. By the way, it was officially investigated by a commission. It's not that I can say, there was no ethical leadership. No. There was a commission who investigated this organization. That's to say, what happened there, and then said, there was no ethical leadership.

Again, maybe we can't define leadership, but it's also very, very, very important. Well, that is the first thing I like to say. Maybe, Tycho like to tell something about the frame about what we are doing.

[00:10:19] TP: Yeah, sure. We started with leadership, with which Kitty has a lot of experience. What we really try to do, because it's exactly as you say, Rick, ethical leadership is already a difficult concept, a complex concept. Ethical leadership is all the more complex. It's really hard. Then again, maybe it's not that hard, in the sense that in philosophy, there has always been philosophers who have said really already a lot about leadership, about what would make a king just, or what would make a ruler a just ruler, or an ethical group, or how would you do that? Or, how would you lead yourself, so to speak, in your own life?

Then again, what we've noticed and what we're still noticing a lot is the ethical leadership in our societies, in our world is still an undefined and difficult concept, which actually little is researched and unknown, if I'm making sense. I guess, it's the changes in the different kinds of societies, the different kinds of leadership, the different kinds of situations that make it so complex.

What we try to do is get for ourselves a clear, basic framework within which we for ourselves, make out with ethical leadership would entail, what would it mean, what would the basic minimal requirements of ethical leadership be, if they are there at all? What we basically started out with is starting with the question, what is ethical leadership? What are we talking about? Basically, the minimal requirements that are necessary for ethical leadership to be exercised. I'm not sure if I'm completely answering your question with this, Rick.

[00:12:07] RT: Well, that's okay, because we're going to get more specific here. It strikes me, too, as you both speak, as I was preparing for this conversation, I started thinking that it strikes me that ethics, the quality of my ethics, let's put it that way, probably has its roots way, way back in the very beginnings of how I was raised, both in my nuclear family and then by other people who were significant; teachers, coaches, mentors, those kinds of people that young people come in contact with. There's that part. Meaning that whatever it is, whatever the good stuff is, or the stuff that's not so great, it's probably been there for quite a long time for a lot of people, possibly.

Then, also started thinking a little bit, I'd be interested in your thoughts on this in our discussion, is I don't have a great sense that organizations are vetting their potential leaders against some basis of ethics. They're basing it oftentimes, on technical competencies, prior leadership work that they've done, their strategy thinking, these kinds of things that are important, no doubt about it. There's not a tremendous amount of overt designed analysis, the ethical history of this person to account for when we're thinking about it. That's my experience, but you may have a different experience than me.

What I think is useful is if you would share with the listeners the specifics of the framework. Give them a set structure that you're using to do the work that you're doing, and then we can play with it from there.

[00:13:37] KN: Well, first of all, we talk, of course, about the basis of leadership, and then we explore with people in the training, what is leadership? What is important? Again, an open door. What is important is the function of behavior of the leader. The communication is very important and also, the ability to discipline the people if necessary and to give them a compliment when it's necessary. That is a basis that we share with the people. Then, we talk about the ethics, the word ethical and ethical leadership. Then we ask people to tell us the situation and dilemma they have been in the last year, or are in now, and ask them in small groups, please talk with your colleagues about this difficult situation.

Again, they are not allowed to have a situation. They imagine. They must have been in a situation, or still in it. Then we ask, please think about the characteristics once you need to solve this situation, this dilemma in an ethical way. That's a very nice exercise. Because then, they talk and they think, and then they come back and they come at a lot of characteristics, transparency to be kind, to have respect and so on and so on. Then, they have to find out themselves which characteristics are really necessary to be an ethical leader. Maybe it's an idea, Tycho, that you take it over from here?

[00:15:21] TP: Yeah, sure. What we've tried to do, Rick, is when we talk about leadership, it's not about the single decisions that leader make, or a single act that a leader does. One swallow doesn't make it summer. When is leadership good leadership, in general? What we're trying to look at is what characterizes leadership? From what disposition, so to speak, would a leader be in from this position can he act and can he make decisions and do things and treat other people in a way that shows ethical leadership?

What we've tried to do, and that's what Kitty says, is we try to help people get a framework for that. We do that with the questions that Kitty just explained. We're trying to do is then find out what a disposition, or such characterization of leadership could be. What we've discovered is that there are basic qualities that are central to ethical leadership. Those basic qualities are the four cardinal virtues. They are very well-known from Aristotle, of wisdom, justice, courage and temperance. It's actually a funny story, in the sense that we've just started out from theorizing from there. This is our hypothesis. We may be completely wrong, but let's just start from there.

What basically happened is that what we've seen is that if you give people this framework, you can apply to any different leadership style, and you can apply it in every situation. You can apply

to every organization, or every kind of leadership that is involved. I think, this is a very strong advantage of the way that we use as cardinal virtues for our participants to get a framework within which they can recognize ethical leadership and strengthen their own ethical leadership.

We've gotten feedback from a lot of participants who say, "Well, we want to be ethical, because most leaders, of course, want to be ethical and they want to show ethical leadership," but they don't know how exactly. That's the problem we just discussed. It's a really, really complex concept. If you stick to those frameworks that you basically need in your leadership, the wisdom to see what the situation is, the justice or fairness to know how to do right by people and how to be fair to other people. The courage to actually go perform your ethical leadership, your moral courage, so to speak, and the temperance and the self-restraint to stick to the path and the way you are leading, of which you know that that is the leadership you have to show the ethical leadership.

These are not all qualities that are needed for ethical leadership, but they turn out to give a really, really good, simple, structured and at the same time, these are also difficult qualities, but they provide a really simple and effective framework within which leaders can strengthen and improve their own leadership, or maintain their ethical leadership.

[00:18:30] RT: I think, you say something really useful for the listeners out there, which is, well, two things. One is we need to start someplace and you have a hypothesis. Let's start there. You've got there appropriate disclaimer there. You could be right. You could be wrong. Could be useful, not useful, but let's go. I think it is relevant to remind people that sometimes, you have to act your way into a new way of thinking, rather than think yourself into a new way of acting. Meaning, you take actions, you learn something, you get wiser.

I also think when you can actually reference the four cardinal virtues from Aristotle, there's some regard there. I think that also must give you some access to the conversation. I think, you're describing exactly what I experienced, though, with these people in this program. Their ability to start to diagnose and work on their challenges using these four cardinal virtues was almost intuitive, once they were made present to them through the modules and the instruction that was coming in the program that was designed that way.

Let's talk a little bit about how people can actually develop this stuff. Because right now, if I'm listening and I didn't pay any attention to Greek history when I was in high school, or I know Aristotle was somebody famous, but now here he is again in my life, and there's these four things. There's courage, there's temperance, there's justice, there's wisdom. How do I get a grip on this as a leader in the real world? What's your experience about how people actually build this muscle, or these four muscles, if you will, so that they can be more nimble with it, rather than clumsy?

[00:20:05] KN: For the justice, in the Netherlands, we do have a instruments to find out what might be just that are – a justified decision. Again, Tycho should speak about that, because he knows exactly how that works. You are right. Because when we start in an organization with trainings, the first thing we say to, for instance, the board of directors, the first thing we say is, “First of all, if you don't agree with what we teach your people, then we don't start.” Because it has to start at the top. That's very important for us. If they don't agree, or they don't like it, or they don't want to work with it, then we don't start our training for the organization.

[00:20:52] RT: Kitty, can I ask that when you're having a conversation with the board of directors, you're actually introducing these four cardinal virtues explicitly, so they know those are the ones you're starting with. Is that a fair way to understand?

[00:21:05] KN: Yes, but in a way, we do that with their employees as well. It's not that we are there and say, “Hello. It's this.” No, because telling people that it's about the cardinal virtues, that doesn't work. We have to train. We have to be interactive. What we do is starting in an interactive way with the board of directors, so that they experience themselves, what we do with their employees. Again, most of the time, they like it. Again, if not, okay, we are friends still, but then we don't start.

At the same time, we say to the board, “Listen, it's not only that we want to have your employees find out what they need to be an ethical leader, but we also want them to do with the coming months and the coming years. We want this information and this experience to stay.” Now, I'm going to answer your question. We also do have interactive exercises, where we teach people in what way they can explore there, as you call it, their muscle. In a lot of organizations, you will see that the muscle of courage has to be developed by a lot of people. Or, that's

challenging and nice as well, the characteristic of virtue of temperance. Because some people are angry or whatever.

Then, we have some exercises with which we train people in what way they can explore their characteristic and their virtue. That also depends on what situation they want to use that courage. For instance, when they – the situations, of course, there are a lot of people together and you think that it takes too much time to tell people what is needed. Someone wants to say, “Okay, we have to stop, because it takes too much time.” A lot of people are afraid to do that, because they are afraid to be criticized, or whatever. Then we train these people with a special exercise, in what way they can develop that.

[00:23:16] TP: It's like a muscle trained. That's really hitting the nail on the head. What you need with your ethical leadership is to slightly improve in everyday action, in every single decision and every single act, to concretely and in a way with a low threshold that is not all too difficult. Make sure that you strengthen and improve your leadership. That within the framework, as we think would be a good way within the framework of the four cardinal virtues. They give a good framework.

The tool that we designed for those and which we hand to the participants in which we trained the participants with is a tool that is designed to take really small steps. These small steps are intended to, like exercising your muscles, you don't start with the most-heavy barbell, so to speak. You start slow. You start in small steps. If you want to run a marathon, you don't start with 42 kilometers. No one does that. We apply the same principle and we give the participants tools to take really small steps. That's the first principle.

The second principle step with the tool, if you apply it in your everyday practice, it's really concrete. It especially makes people aware of their ethical leadership. If you have that framework, you're really, really starting to become aware of what you're doing and how you're doing that. What aspects could be improved? The last thing, and that's also very, very important is that what we tell people and give to people is find your support in this. You can't do it alone. It's too difficult. It's really, really useful for your learning process and for your improvement on ethical leadership that other people help you in all different kinds of ways. Moral support for taking courage, if you have to make a really difficult decision or do something really, really

courageous. Or for example, because other people can give you really useful advice that you simply don't think of on your own.

What we get back from participants is that this really helps, getting support from other people as well. If you take these three principles into account, so the awareness of your ethical leadership and your everyday practice, the small steps to improve and strengthen them, maintain your ethical leadership within the framework of cardinal virtues, and then the support they get from other people, that seems to work out really well.

If you add to that what Kitty just explained with the board of directors, that you take into account the entire system, so not only middle management within organizations, but the board of leaders as well, or the top of the organization, then we hope that the organization can really improve itself as well through its leadership.

[00:26:15] RT: As I look at the four cardinal virtues, I don't know what the tools you're referring to exactly, but I do my own self-inventory, where I think I stand, let's say, scale of one to 10 on each of these. I have different numbers for each one, for obvious reasons. I assume that that's not an uncommon situation.

I'm curious if you can share what you've witnessed of these people who are following your practice with the four cardinal virtues. They're building their self-awareness, they're taking small steps, which I'm assuming means, they produce results, they get some feedback, they figure out what worked, what didn't work, and they're doing that in some supportive network. What kind of progress and things have you seen that people, and how does that show up in terms of how they perform? If they've taken this stuff seriously and they're working in it according to the way you've designed it, what are you witnessing in terms of people's progress around becoming more aware and more effective in their ethical leadership?

[00:27:12] KN: Well, one of the things I can see in my trainings is it's not number one, but it's important. They feel less lonely. Because one of the things we teach them is that their colleagues, they can talk with, they can ask for support. Maybe for us, it's normal. I do remember, when I was working in the top of the organization, I felt lonely very, very often. It took me some time to find out that there are also colleagues. You can't have a good connection with all your colleagues. You don't trust not everyone, and that's okay.

There are always one or two people you can talk with and you can share your dilemmas and whatever. The first thing they find out with the trainings we give them, "Wow, I'm not alone." That's very important. Then they say, what helps me as well is that when I'm in a difficult situation, or I have a dilemma, I have a framework. They realize that conscience is very important. You have to be conscience, first of all, of what's happening, then you start with the wisdom, what's happening? What should happen, and in what ways? That's the conscience.

Why do you have this conscience? Oh, this is difficult. Then that's the first important step. Then they realize, that's justice is important, courage and temperance as well. Then, sometimes go to a colleague and talk about it. What they note is that their team feels more safe. So that when you are an ethical leader and that is one of the reasons that I started with developing this leadership, is it really makes a safe environment. You know a lot about leadership, Rick, and you do know that the safe environment is probably the most important condition in an organization to get the results you want as an organization.

They also tell me that when I try to be an ethical leader, and they make a lot of mistakes, but so do I. I'm 69, but you really don't want to know how many mistakes I make. That's okay. Then I'm still developing. That's okay. They also find out that when I try to be ethical and that's not happening immediately, of course, but at the time of two weeks, after months, they see that some of their employees start to be ethical as well, in a way that, shall we talk about this? Or when an employee knows that there are not enough courage, or she wants to develop that missile, that courage missile as well.

What is very, very fascinating is that some of them come to me and say to me, I don't know how I can translate that in English, but a manager and an employee has a yearly moment, they talk about the functioning of the employee. She said to me, "I really want my manager to ask me about my ethical leadership in that conversation." That is exactly the reason that we say to the board of directors, you have to do it as well, because your people asked to be able talking about if they are ethical and if they can improve.

As Tycho confirmed, if that board of directors behave, or try to develop their own characteristics as well, you can see that there is really a fundamental change in that organization. It's not a secret, Rick, that it is very difficult to convince the members of the board to develop their

muscle, because most of them say, "Why? I'm an ethical leader. Don't bother me." If someone tells me that, then I do know that he needs to develop, or she needs a development of an ethical leadership. Those are the things we see and that makes us very happy.

[00:31:19] RT: Tycho, I have a different angle on this, because you're a philosopher and you're an academic. I know from your abstract that you probably in a constant mode of collecting information to season your hypothesis and to inform it. What are you seeing on your side of the conversation? What's working and what's not working based on what you're actually doing now?

[00:31:40] TP: My initial thought was, let's start with those cardinal virtues. They're a good point of departure. There's a good reason that it really clung two and a half thousand years when Aristotle explained them, so to speak. They have been present and they can still play in modern days. I quite honestly didn't expect that they could be applied so well in our organizations and in our societies as well. To my surprise, actually, they held up pretty well. What I've seen is especially that participants of our trainings and people with whom we're talking to, because for us, it's just a journey of discovery as well. We're still developing a lot of thoughts and ideas, and we're definitely not at the end points yet, and we're never going to be in an endpoint. We're always learning ourselves.

What I've noticed especially is that how little people get from their organizations and their employers in their ethical ideas and their moral points of view. That's also something that you already said, Rick. Everyone has an education is raised as a good man, or a woman, or at least, let's hope that's the case. Still, people have little basis for ethical viewpoints. The more we work with this, the more complex it gets and the more that we have to research and the more that we want to talk with other people about this. Because just when you think that you know something and you have discovered something, then it just leads to more and more questions. It's like a monster that you behead, and then three others pop up.

[00:33:28] RT: This is exactly why I asked you into 10,000 Swamp Leaders. You deserve a place in the swamp with the rest of us. Thank you for joining us here.

[00:33:39] TP: Oh, pleasure.

[00:33:40] RT: How difficult. I'm just curious, because I'm a consultant, too. Part of, at least for you and I, Kitty, part of the game is how do you get your work into an organization to do whatever you think is valuable? I'm just curious, what's the degree of openness, or resistance factor to this conversation about bringing ethical leadership into an organization? It seems to me, that would be a bit challenging.

[00:34:07] KN: Yes, it certainly is. Especially because of the word ethics. Because some people think that ethics is soft, but it isn't. It isn't at all. Well, we have now an advantage, or the benefit of the fact that the world is becoming more complex and complex. People find out that the way we live, the way we act, the way we work isn't good for this world. Not only because of the climate, but because also, of the distance between the poor and the rich. What we see is that it is somewhat easier to talk with leaders, with members of the board about behaving ethical. Because they understand. If they don't, well, that's what we say in the Netherlands, they will miss the boat. It will go wrong within their organization.

That doesn't mean that it's easy to talk with them about it, but it's most of the time works by means of their own employees. For instance, for the organization we work now, we were asked by the Bureau of Integrity. They said to us, integrity, that's important. We think that ethical leadership is necessary. We started with the bureau, then we started with some employees. Now we are saying, okay, now we want to talk with the members of the board. Sometimes a member of board comes to us and asks, "Can we talk about ethical leadership?" It's not really easy, that's true. At the same time, I think we are in the moment people ask for ethical leadership. Let's say, ask for ethical behavior. They are not ashamed anymore to talk about it.

I do remember when I was still the leader in the organization I was working, when I tried to start to talk about integrity, for instance. There was always the reaction, why? Am I not an ethical person? Always the distance. Now, it disappears. People really like to know ethics. What is ethics, and what is ethical leadership? Let's talk about it. With that, people, we like to talk, we like to work, we like to train, and what Tycho says, we like to develop for that organization, because not every organization is the same. We to talk about what that organization needs.

[00:36:41] RT: I'm just going to say again what I said at the beginning. I think, that the work that you've done with this framework has some wonderful capacity to be pretty accessible pretty quickly. It's not complex, as a learning modality that you have to absorb before you can start

taking some actions. That gives me great hope. I'm not sure if you've noticed it, but in my country, we have some leadership ethics issues, particularly in our government.

Every day, we're reading about what they discovered in the January 6 commission work that they're doing about the capital a year ago, and it's appalling to see the degree of lack of ethics at the highest, all the way to the top. It's disconcerting, because – I'm pontificating here a little bit, or expressing. How deeply rooted is it? We're talking about it, but what's it really take to make a change? I'm heartened a little bit that you two have chosen this.

At a most personal level, why have you chosen – Kitty, you say this little bit, it's in your genes, so I'm going to start with you, Tycho. Why have you chosen to spend your professional life advocating for ethical leadership, when you know it's hard and people may not be open for it? How do you stay in the game? How do you take care of yourself, so you stay in the conversation when sometimes it's going to be challenging? Tycho, how do you do that?

[00:38:08] TP: I agree that there are many leaders, sadly, that do not show ethical leadership at all. That really is disheartening. For me, it's all the more motivating to do something about it. The point of leadership is that in leadership, you're always in more or less, in a way, more or less, you're holding onto power. You have the ability to influence people and you really take the lead. You're in charge. People will listen to you. If you say, go left, then people usually will go left. That means that those people are also bear very special responsibility. With power, comes responsibility. With influence, of course, as well.

What really, really motivates me is that if you want people to behave ethically, to just do the morally right thing, to act in a just way, and a special burden placed upon the person who is taking leadership in any way imaginable. It's a really important aspect to train people in leadership, to give them a framework, an accessible framework as accessible as possible, to recognize our ethical leadership and to strengthen them. It's just because, they're shutting this is really important leadership. If you're in leadership, then you're really setting an example, whether you like it or not, whether you intended it or not.

That can be a good example, but it can also be a bad example. For example, if you are a president of a country, or another leader of a powerful organization in some way, then people will look up to you. If you behave in a fair way, in a just way, taking into account at least the

cardinal virtues, then you set an example for other people as well. If you don't do that, and if you are a terrible leader and you're being, for example, really cruel, or really unjust, then that is an example as well. It's really important that if you're in a position of leadership, you set the right example and you manage your influence that you have over people the way you take charge, that you do that in the right way. That's what really, really motivates me, and I think, Kitty as well.

[00:40:34] RT: Kitty, how do you take care of yourself? How do you stay in this work?

[00:40:37] KN: I think, the most important reason is that I've been working in the situation where the ethical leadership led for eight years. I've seen people who have chosen for on other job, who were sick, or depressed. I saw the results of the organization going down. Most of the time, we were working. I realized that if you work in an organization, where is no proper leadership, where is no ethical leadership, you might be unhappy for a big part of your life. That's very important as well.

What's so fascinating is that talking with the managers, with the leaders about leadership and ethical leadership makes them realize how important it is. Our last trainings, I asked them, please, let me know what were your last acts as a leader. What makes you a leader? Then, we discussed about the fact that a leader has power. Then some of them said to me, "Power, I don't like power. I don't need power." Okay, I hear what you say. You do have power, whether you like it or not. You do have authority, whether you like it or not.

They are very happy with the fact that we can discuss about this, because they have forgotten it. When I was a leader, I do realize, I was the person who always said, "You please enter my room. My door is always open." Well, first of all, I was never there, so that was my first big mistake. Secondly, you can say that. Even if you're really in the room, you have to realize that you do have power and the people look up to you. By every step you make, and that's difficult, and that's the reason why you can make as many mistakes as necessary, but you have to talk about it. It's important that we also discuss about that exactly for a reason that Tycho says, they set an example. They forget very often how important and how big their influence is.

That makes me, that motivates me to talk about leadership and ethical leadership. It may sound dramatically, but I really think that when an organization improves its leadership, it improves a little bit the world. Because at home, you are in a way, you might be a leader as well.

[00:43:00] RT: I agree with you. All right. We're down to the last question here. What should I have asked you that I didn't know enough to ask? Okay. I'll give you a second to think about it. What should I have asked you that I just didn't know enough to ask that you think it's important for the listeners to hear? For the listeners, since I can see both Kitty and Tycho here, they're both thinking here.

[00:43:24] KN: Yeah.

[00:43:25] RT: Okay, Kitty. You go first. What should I have asked?

[00:43:28] KN: Maybe you should have asked me, and it might be an open question, but important enough, is it really worth to work on ethical leadership?

[00:43:37] RT: If I did ask that, you would have said what?

[00:43:42] KN: Yes, it is. It might take you a lot of energy and you might think, ethical leadership, it's a bit soft, and I don't have time. I can promise people, that if they take the time and the energy to think about ethical leadership and to talk with colleagues, or with us, it doesn't matter with whom, it's really worth it, because it's not only good for the work, as I said before, but it's also good for your private life. Sometimes, I've had the moment I really had to take a very, very, very courageous decision. It was difficult. I was afraid. I was lonely. I felt powerless. It was a horrible time. I made a decision and you know, I'm proud of it. It gave me a very good feeling. It improves everything I do now and in future. I do notice I can't find the proper words, but I'm quite sure you know what I mean.

[00:44:41] RT: I do. Tycho, what should I have asked you?

[00:44:44] TP: I think you already asked me, but I'm not sure if I gave you a complete answer. You basically asked me if I'm not mistaken, what could other people do? How could they learn about ethical leadership and proven themselves? What I'd like to say to everyone in the position

of leadership, two things; from our practice and from our ideas, really take a good look at the cardinal virtues from Aristotle. They're not outdated. They still fully apply. I'm really convinced of that right now.

See how you can bring this into practice. There are a couple of things that these leaders, I think could really help. The first thing is keep those four cardinal virtue really in mind. This is your framework. This is something you can really, really work with. If they're still too vague, if you still don't know how to work with them, or how to understand them, or how to interpret them, take your time. Read about it. Talk to other people about it. This is also something that the knowledge is already there. You're gradually going to find this.

The second thing is, try to take really little steps with what you're doing. Don't start doing the most difficult things. Don't start taking the most, big hills that you cannot climb the first time. Take it step by step. The last thing I'd like to emphasize, because I know I've already said it, really, really find support from other people. That gives you all the more strength. If you need the strength, because you made the comparison of muscle training, so to speak, to train the muscle, to strengthen it. If a burden is too heavy to bear, find other people who can help you bear it. This is really important.

[00:46:35] RT: Great. To all the listeners here, I'll work with Kitty and Tycho to put some resources in the show notes for this episode. Kitty, your website we'll put in there. Tycho, you may have some resources, reading materials. I don't know what, but let's see what we can provide to people who are listening to get, as you say, more familiar with the cardinal virtues and some ways in which they might go about doing some work, or maybe being in contact with you about the work you're doing.

I want to thank you for being in the swamp with me today. It's been a wonderful opportunity to have a great conversation. Thank you for your time. Welcome to the swamp.

[00:47:16] KN: Thank you. It was big a honor. Thank you very much.

[00:47:18] TP: Big honor. Thank you.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

[00:47:22] ANNOUNCER: Thank you for listening to 10,000 Swamp Leaders with Rick Torseth. Please, take this moment and hit subscribe to follow more leadership swamp conversations.

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