

# The Moral Compass Essay: Frameworks and Applications

Student Success Center



JOHNS HOPKINS  
CAREY BUSINESS SCHOOL

# Overview and Objectives

- Understand the purpose and requirements of the essay
- Identify a framework for organizing your writing
- Define and distinguish between the major terms within the assignment
- Engage in critical self-reflection by examining and responding to the key questions that are provided or implied

# Purpose and Requirements

- Purpose
  - “Articulate a thoughtfully reasoned system of values, principles, and practices as a human values framework and branding for business leadership”
- Audience
  - Actual: Your instructor
  - Implied: Other business leaders, partners, stakeholders
- Importance (why does this assignment matter?)
  - Understanding yourself and your moral compass is innately valuable
  - Businesses must be CSR-minded – a developed moral understanding is needed for industrial competitiveness

# Purpose and Requirements

- Form/Structure/Organization
  1. Personal Integrity Statement
  2. Moral Compass Elements
  3. Your Future as a Business Leader
  4. Reflection
- Your instructor may give you additional instructions; be sure to adhere to those, too
- Use of outside sources is always advantageous, even when not explicitly required

# Questions About Framework

- What questions do you have about your Personal Integrity Statement or Wisdom Tradition?
- What questions do you have so far about the framework for your paper?
  - Organizational framework
  - Moral/ideological framework

# Major Terms / Moral Compass Elements

- **Moral Vision**
  - Stories, symbols, images, inspirations, intuitions
  - What stories do you find compelling and why?

# Major Terms / Moral Compass Elements

- **Moral Code**

- Rules, rationale, norms that are created and negotiated socially
- How does the exchange of goods differ in your relationship....
  - To a religious institution?
  - To family?
  - To a friend?
  - To a stranger?
  - To a business contact or situation?

# Major Terms / Moral Compass Elements

- **Moral Fitness**

- Cultivated, practiced, enacted, habitual, routine
- What organizations do you support?
- How do you spend your free time?



# Major Terms / Moral Compass Elements

- **Defining Moment**

- A time when you had to choose between 2 choices that were both right. This choice is made based on your values. Why did you make that choice?
- Right v. Right Decision
- Example: a friend asks you to sign her name on the attendance sheet so she can skip class without appearing to be absent. What do you do?
  - Do you refuse to sign her name and uphold your own honesty? (follow Carey code of conduct and your value of honesty) OR
  - Do you sign her name to support your friendship? (value of loyalty)
  - Both considered “right” and will shape how you act in the future.

# Brainstorming

- Take a few minutes to reflect on how you will define, explain, analyze, and respond to these four elements in your paper
  - Moral Vision
  - Moral Code
  - Moral Fitness
  - Defining Moment

# Discussion

- Pair up with a partner and discuss each of these major elements and how you are planning to address them
  - Moral Vision
  - Moral Code
  - Moral Fitness
  - Defining Moment
- We will then discuss some of your ideas as a group

# Your Future as a Business Leader

- “Drawing from the wisdom of your moral compass, how do you envision the role of human values in your future as a business leader?”
  - Business leadership
  - Civic engagement
  - Networks/online communication/technology
  - CSR
  - Other situations?

# Reflection

- “What is your key take-away from this assignment?”
  - What part of the essay did you find most difficult?
  - In what part of the essay did you find yourself questioning your values and behaviors most deeply and critically?
  - What part of this essay makes the strongest connection between your personal morality and your decision-making as a business leader?

# Additional Questions and Resources

- Final questions about the Moral Compass Essay?
- To make an appointment with a writing tutor, visit [carey.jhu.edu/ssc](http://carey.jhu.edu/ssc)