The Moral Compass Essay: Frameworks and Applications

Student Success Center
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
• 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?
• 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.
• 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
“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