

Integrity Matters Broadcast

By Jim Bracher

"War should be last resort to solve problems"

Question:

You write about integrity-centered leadership. What is your position on war?

Response:

A special friend of mine, a retired colonel, spent his 30-year career defending the United States, on five continents. He has seen of the horrors of war, up close and personal. He carries shrapnel in his body in several places and has been shot more times than he cares to remember. He even risked his own life to protect a colleague by smothering an exploding hand-grenade. He tells me war is the last resort because it is an awful way to resolve differences. Lives, families, dreams and legacies are destroyed when leaders declare war. My personal position on war is to pray for the safety of those who lay down their lives to protect and preserve the way of life my society has afforded me and those I love.

The integrity of life itself is placed at risk when war becomes the path forward, for any reason. Yet, the history of the United States of America was created from an armed conflict that challenged taxation without representation and oppressive "foreign" intervention. Without the American Revolution, there would not have been a United States emerging at the time of Washington, Adams, Jefferson, Franklin and Hamilton, in the last quarter of the 18th century. Was that war necessitated by integrity-centered leadership issues? Millions would say it was.

War is appropriate when its purpose is to fight poverty, disease, intolerance, drunk driving, and irresponsible behaviors including violence, ignorance, corruption, and graffiti, killing in the name of religion and drug abuse. With more thinking time, there are probably other powerful battles that would make it onto my "sanctioned" integrity-centered wars list. War is the escalation of disagreement beyond the willingness of opposing forces to resolve differences peacefully. When positions are hardened, by either side, and conversations stop, which often means that relationships have broken down, conflict is inevitable. Individuals experience "war" everyday when they get fired, divorced, arrested or jailed. In global conflicts, soldiers and civilians are wounded and killed by rockets and bombs. Do integrity-centered leaders choose war? Yes.

When children are no longer singing, it may be time for war. Adults owe the next generation a wholesome place to be loved, nurtured and educated. Those responsible for young people must create and preserve an environment that is free from destructive tension, fear, hunger and homelessness. When that is not possible, then it may be time for actions to be taken to restore a safe-haven where children can again laugh and sing, play and learn. When the music of the children stops; when youth no longer have confidence that those around them care for them as people, not property, as the promise of the future, not as cheap slave-labor for today; then it may be time to demand changes, with little willingness to compromise. Integrity-centered leadership can choose to re-shape the future by enabling all the children to sing again. Neither integrity nor safety is free.

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