

## Leadership and Ethics

*Leadership is doing what is right when no one is watching.*—George Van Valkenburg

[Note: These tips are gleaned from current and former PR practitioners as well as from experience. This is not an exhaustive list, but it's a good start. Feel free to add your own gems and share with others.]

- **Lead from where you are.**
- **Trust your gut.**
- **Use your expertise.**
- To quote Brian Woodland, APR, "The art of being wise is to know what to overlook: Not my circus. Not my monkeys."
- **Be the conscience of your district.**
- Always act in the best interest of children.
- Ask: How does this serve kids?
- Stand for something: equity, inclusion...
- **Be a trusted advisor.**
- Never take a problem to your boss without offering a solution (or two).
- Never surprise your boss or your board.
- Have your supervisor's/colleague's back.
- Communicate internally, first—ALWAYS.
- Think in the collective tense: "We" not "I."
- **Be flexible.**
- Offer to do things no one else wants to do.
- Be the role model for how others should act.
- **Abide by decisions that are made.**
- Ask the hard questions...in private, with grace.
- **Always tell the truth.**
- Be proactive and transparent in district communication.
- Listen, listen, listen and develop methods for feedback.
- Remember you're on the job 24/7/365.

- **Seek to be part of the proactive discussion—rather than just the post-disaster clean-up.** Keep knocking on your supervisor's door until you're included.
- **NEVER say "I told you so."**  
But you can think it, if you want....
- **Seek help from trusted MSPRA colleagues. Many have been there, done that and may just have the counsel, advice, or encouragement you need.**
- Find and post helpful items on FRED (Free Resources for Educators)  
[www.michiganedusource.org](http://www.michiganedusource.org)
- **Practice NSPRA's Code of Ethics:**  
[www.nspr.org](http://www.nspr.org).

*Do not wait for leaders. Do it alone, person to person.*—Mother Teresa

Remember:

Be mindful of your thoughts, they become your words.  
Be mindful of your words, they become your actions.  
Be mindful of your actions, they become your habits.  
Be mindful of your habits, they become your character.  
Be mindful of your character, it becomes your destiny.

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*In my humble observation, School Public Relations is more than a profession, it's a calling. Those who are called possess an unmatched blend of positivity, generosity, wisdom, skill, dedication, tenacity and sense of humor. BUT, they don't have much quittin' sense.*

*To those of you, who have answered the call, THANK YOU. Our students and schools need you now more than ever. So, please remember take care of yourself as you lead from where you are.*

*Best Wishes,  
Gerri Allen, MSPRA Executive Director  
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