

Collective Responsibility

It is accepted that collective responsibility comes with good governance. This is what is associated with the leadership and management of any enterprise, organization or government. When an individual is elected to serve as a member of leadership or management team, it is expected that individuality would give way to the collective will of the team. This for some, can be a difficult undertaking, especially in circumstances where the individual chooses for whatever reason choose not to identify with their colleagues, and/or has a personal or agenda.

This type of behaviour is not something that is not known to exists. Very often individuals allow their personal differences and positions to dominate over commonsense and reasoning. Where there are clouded judgements, perceptions and prejudices, the likelihood exists that there will be turbulent times ahead in the decision-making process and with those individuals identifying with positions that are taken by the majority.

The whole concept of collective responsibility is built around being a team player. This is clearly reflected in the definition of collective responsibility, which reads, 'that it is a concept in which individuals are responsible for other people's actions by tolerating, ignoring, or harboring them, without actively collaborating in these actions.' What is expected may be lost on those who may choose to plea ignorance, and use the lame excuse that they are responsible to those who elected them to office. Unfortunately, they are others who simply don't care about right or wrong, but allow internal politics, personal interests and external influences to sway their thinking, behaviour and actions.

The words of scandalous and ridiculous that can be ascribed to those who allow internal politics, personal interests and external influences to influence their thinking, behaviour and actions. Persons who join the leadership and management of an organization ought to know what is their remit, and what is expected of them. It must be known that in assuming office, the decisions made are binding on all team members. Those who revert to the use of the pronoun 'I' ought to question the purpose of being a part of the team. If, for nebulous reasons you are prepared to divorce themselves from a majority taken decision.

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Those who stand on a matter of principle when rights are being violated, and /or have good reasons to believe that there is a flouting of a directive of the membership of an organization, or there is a blatant disregard for the rules, regulations and the law, and the non-adherence to policy, procedures and process; must be commended.

Within an organization, there is still room for each person to take personal responsibility or individual responsibility. In the decision-making process, each individual ought to be comfortable with their actions, and moreover take responsibility for the same. Needless to say, it all boils down to what is ethically and morally correct in treating to what is right and wrong.

This position is concretized by the fact that personal responsibility is the willingness to both accept the importance of standards that society establishes for individual behavior and to make strenuous personal efforts to live by those standards. Accepting that it is a norm to have a dissenting voice or an alternate position, this should not cascade into any form of irresponsible behaviour, where an individual takes the issue into the public domain, for the purpose of venting whatever frustration they might have.

It becomes imperative that those who by virtue of the office which they hold understand the importance of collective responsibility, come to appreciate the importance of thinking before speaking and acting, considering the impact of the action you take upon others, accept responsibility for what goes right or wrong and be prepared to fix what goes wrong. Distancing yourself is tantamount to a cowardly and non-caring act.