

## **Double Standards and Hypocritical Behaviour**

Those who lead and manage organizations can sometimes find themselves being accused of practicing double standards. This comes about when it is perceived that the action(s) of the leader or manager is inconsistent with what is expected. This thinking is consistent with the definition that refers to double standards as the application of different sets of principles for different situations. The practice does not encourage a harmonious relationship, inspire confidence in and respect for the leadership and manager.

Persons who show dissatisfaction with the actions of the leadership and management, can sometimes be driven to go further and lay a charge against them of hypocritical behavior. What is really meant by hypocritical behavior? It is said to be the practice of preaching one thing and acting totally different. Put another way, it is where people actually do things which they tell other people not to do. The combination of the practice of double standards and hypocritical behavior is a virus which can have a serious impact on the effective functioning of any organization or enterprise. Patterns of indifferent behaviour at the level of the leaders and management are to be discouraged and abhorred. Silence is to give consent and by not speaking up and distancing oneself from the behaviour, makes all who are part of the team, culpable.

In further detailing the shortcomings of practicing double standards, it is to be understood that it means not playing by the rules, or conveniently applying the rules as the needs arises to accommodate one's interest. In the context of promoting fairness equity and non-discrimination in the workplace the example of men being paid more for the same work that women as in the case in some countries, is a double standard. This is a matter which trade unions would be expected to treat to. This is based on the understanding that anytime some are held to a higher standard than others, there is a double standard because everyone is not being treated fairly.

The bone of contention when it comes to the issue of double standards is about not practicing what one preaches, saying one thing and doing another. Some persons can be guilty of projecting one set of behaviours in public life and another in private life. The conclusion is that hypocrisy often takes the form of the double standards.

**Double Standards and Hypocritical Behaviour, Dennis dePeiza, Labour Relations Consultant,  
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The irony is that hypocrisy is considered as a deceitful tactic often used by those in power. This brings home the point that leaders are expected to observe a set of guiding principles. In compromising themselves, leaders and managers contribute to their loss of credibility and leave themselves open to being accused of practicing favouritism and having personal agendas.

It may be misleading to suggest that double standards and hypocritical behaviour rests on the door step of leaders and management. It can be reasoned that it is more pronounced within this group. It is disturbing that persons within the leadership and/or management team would for the sake of satisfying their own self-interest or protecting that of an external organization or group, would accommodate indifferent behaviour.

Organizations and enterprises have a responsibility to establish standards and codes of conduct as a means of attempting to drive out the practice of double standards and hypocritical behaviour. This action would not be dissimilar to that taken when dealing with corruption. Inasmuch that this behaviour fringes on the thing known as integrity, conceivably it may be hard to control.

Since integrity cannot be legislated, it begs the question as to how best the behaviour of leaders and managers can be controlled. Inappropriate behaviours and actions can appear to be encouraged where parties to them are prepared to turn a blind eye. Those who are prepared to stand up can expect to be pushed back. With the full knowledge that this is likely to occur, it should provide the impetus to stand up and expose where double standards and hypocritical behaviour exists within the organization or enterprise. It is the only way that any improvement will be brought about.