Institute for
Global Ethics

MISSION:
*To promote ethical behavior in individuals, institutions, and nations
through research, public discourse, and practical action.*

**Introduction to the
ETHICAL FITNESS® SEMINAR
IGE's four-step process for resolving ethical dilemmas**

We recognize that the ethics responsibilities of many leaders in business, government, and nonprofit environments have grown significantly beyond compliance in the last few years to include the mandate for building ethical cultures, where trust can grow and thrive and where employees themselves become the security network for corporate ethics.

The core of IGE's approach to growing ethical cultures is the Ethical Fitness® Seminar (EFS). The EFS is positive, non-threatening, and highly interactive. Participants from the last fifteen years claim greater awareness of ethical issues, higher levels of decision-making confidence, and a high degree of relevance to their job responsibilities. Some have told us that the EFS was a life-changing experience; others say that the impact of their EFS experience has grown over time, rather than diminished. Most are content to share their gratitude for a disciplined way to approach life's very difficult decisions.

The learning objectives for the EFS aimed at organizations include the following:

- *Recognizing the importance of ethics—for individuals, for organizations, for the future and its role in building a trusting culture*
- *Defining ethical values—whose values are they? How are they applied in the workplace? What other values exist and how can they be aligned?*
- *Analyzing ethical challenges—how can we identify and avoid right-versus-wrong moral temptations, and how can we distinguish them from real right-versus-right ethical dilemmas? Can ethical dilemmas be categorized?*
- *Resolving dilemmas—which principles best apply?*
- *Developing a robust language for understanding and discussing the work-through of an ethical dilemma in the organization.*

IGE's work assumes that fundamental, shared values can be discovered and applied. We also assume that individuals and organizations are capable of developing what we call "ethical fitness"—which, like physical fitness, keeps you in mental and moral shape to recognize and address ethical dilemmas. Participants will leave our seminar with the tools and confidence required for resolving ethical dilemmas—equipped to confront issues that face them every day, at work and at home.

SESSION SUMMARIES:

Our seminar comprises discussions of Moral Awareness, Values Definition, Ethical Analysis, and Dilemma Resolution, using a mixture of lectures, group discussions, and small-group exercises.

SESSION 1: Moral Awareness

This first step consists of:

- Describing the current ethical climate noting the signs of hope but also stressing the warning signals of a collapse of shared values, with reference to statistical studies, opinion polls, and corporate and governmental examples.
- Defining ethics in two practical and useful ways, as:
    - "obedience to the unenforceable," and
    - not only "right versus wrong" but more often "right versus right."
- Understanding trust as a social phenomenon that can be influenced by leadership and grown in an ethical (values-based) environment.
- Recognizing that a trusting workplace culture facilitates the recognition, communication, and resolution of difficult ethical issues.

SESSION 2: Values Definition

Not to be confused with "values clarification," this step consists of group exercises that:

- Identify the shared values of the group;
- Test these values against one another, looking for synonyms, and
- Test these values as a set to determine if it is complete and relevant, and whether the individual values are mutually exclusive.
- Align participants' individual values with organizational and professional values

The result is a working "code of ethics" upon which the following sessions can be built.

SESSION 3: Ethical Analysis

This session begins by contrasting simple right-versus-wrong decision-making situations (moral temptations) with tough right-versus-right ethical dilemmas. First, participants are given tools to identify and test for right-versus-wrong moral temptations. Then, they explore the concept of right-versus-right ethical "dilemma paradigms," based on the understanding that right-versus-right dilemmas, however complex and varied, typically reduce themselves to one or more of several dilemma paradigms. The instructor demonstrates right-versus-right ethical dilemmas with examples previously drawn from the organization in telephone interviews.

The session continues by examining ethical issues drawn not from written case studies but from fresh, individual experiences shared by the participants in the seminar. In this step, participants are encouraged to:

- Share with a small group the story of a dilemma they themselves have experienced;
- Identify the ethical elements in the dilemma;

- Articulate the fundamental values at work within the dilemma; and
- Recognize the dilemma as either a "right versus wrong" moral temptation or a "right versus right" dilemma that pits two valid but opposing principles against each other.
- Participants do not reveal how the dilemma was resolved.

SESSION 4: Dilemma Resolution

The resolution session explores three unique decision-making principles drawn from the traditions of moral philosophy. Each is widely respected but vastly different in application. Participants test the dilemmas raised in Session 3 with each of the resolution principles to determine the "highest right" recognizing that the "lesser right" is not necessarily "wrong," and that individuals drawn to it in this circumstance cannot be dismissed as unethical. After participants fully experiment with the three resolution principles, individuals reveal how they actually resolved their dilemmas.