

The Bathsheba Syndrome Revisited



Ethical Leadership & Moral Injury

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VOA | ReST

Resilience Strength Time

The Healing Power of Sweat Lodges

Exploring Native American Traditional
Healing Ceremonies

ADAPTIVE DISCLOSURE

A New Treatment for Military Trauma,
Loss, and Moral Injury

Brett T. Litz,
Leslie Lebowitz, Matt J. Gray,
and William P. Nash

JAGGED EDGES

A New Stations of the Cross
David Coore, Peter Leake and Sarah Troughton

Edited by Maggi Coore
With a Foreword by the Right Reverend Dr. Helen Ann Hanley

A NEW HARBINGER SELF-HELP WORKBOOK

The Moral Injury Workbook

ACCEPTANCE & COMMITMENT THERAPY SKILLS for
MOVING BEYOND SHAME, ANGER & TRAUMA
to RECLAIM YOUR VALUES

Includes
bonus
downloadable
worksheets &
resources

- A powerful step-by-step program to help you:
- Cope with difficult thoughts, emotions & spiritual struggles
 - Reconnect with your sense of self
 - Cultivate flexibility & forgiveness
 - Discover moral healing & live a purposeful life

WYATT R. EVANS, PhD | ROBYN D. WALSER, PhD
KENT D. DRESCHER, PhD | JACOB K. FARNSWORTH, PhD

The Role of
the Chaplain
in Addressing
Moral Injury
FREE webinar
April 17, 2 PM Eastern



With Harold Koenig, MD

ChaplaincyInnovation.org

CHAPLAINCY
Innovation Lab

Virtual Health
Informatics

CENTER FOR SPIRITUALITY,
THEOLOGY AND HEALTH
DUKE UNIVERSITY

Moral Injury Recovery Today

GENERALS

AND ADMIRALS,

CRIMINALS

AND CROOKS

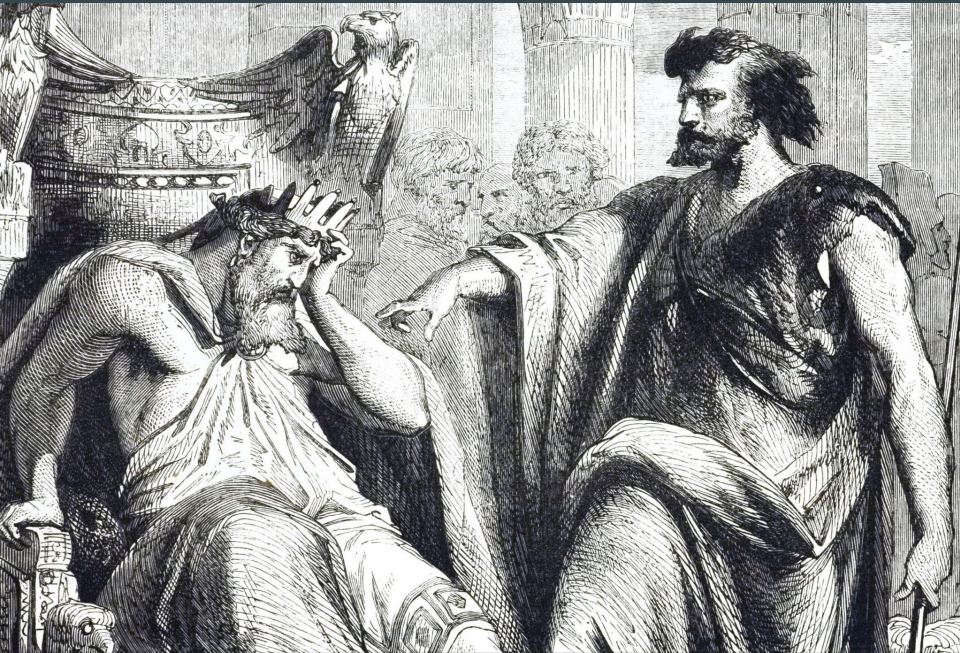
**DISHONORABLE LEADERSHIP
IN THE U.S. MILITARY**

JEFFREY J. MATTHEWS



Organizational Recovery???

David and Bathsheba



The Bathsheba Syndrome

- Ludwig & Longenecker (1995)
- Success as an antecedent to ethical failure
 - Complacency
 - Power to manipulate outcomes
 - Increased access to resources and privileged information
- “Success as the Ultimate Goal of Leadership”
- Solutions:
 - “The Nathan Solution” - Advisor providing “constructive resistance”
 - Ethics Education - “Teaching virtue makes a leader wholly virtuous”

The Bathsheba Syndrome, Revisited

- Reinterpreting the Story through Moral Injury
 - Silent persons/narratives
 - Uriah, Bathsheba, Joab, Nathan, Citizens of the kingdom
- *What if these persons/narratives were part of David's decision-making BEFORE making them?*
- Syndrome, revisited: “rather than viewing it strictly as a leader blinded by their successes, the Bathsheba Syndrome arises from an insufficient understanding of oneself connected to a wider context that includes others.”

Goal of Ethical Leadership: service to fellow servicemembers, nation & public

Ethical Leadership, Revised

- Expand leaders' understanding of their moral compass beyond a fixed set of internal values and virtues applied unilaterally.
- Voices and perspectives that leaders do not often hear or always have access to must “speak” within their moral compass as they make ethical decisions.
- Ethical leaders must develop a means to “hear” and earnestly consider the impact of their decisions on those they pledge to serve, rather than asserting individual moral authority in isolation and disconnected from them.

Ethical Leadership, Revised

- Moon (2026)
 - Moral Disorientation as Moral Injury
 - Moral Orienting Systems (Moral Compass)
- “Applied” Morality/Ethics
 - Moral Ecology, Pragmatic Ethics
 - Contextual Models (Molendijk, 2025)
 - Moral development - moral experiences and theoretical virtues inform each other to form requisite moral and ethical character
- Revising Solutions:
 - Advisor role - “Nathan”
 - Military Ethics Education

The Bathsheba Syndrome & Ethical Leadership: Summary

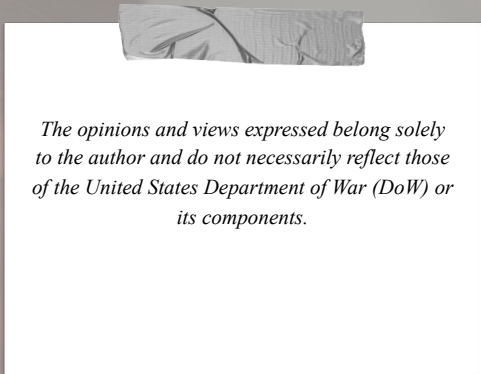
	Ludwig & Longenecker	Revisited
Bathsheba Syndrome	Product of success & its benefits	Insufficient understanding of self & others within a moral context
Ethical Leadership	Moral Authority - personal and professional success	Interconnected moral agent considering broader context

Ethics Education	One-directional application of organizational virtues/values	Symbiotic relationship of experience & virtue/value - negotiate contexts
“Nathan”	Whistleblower - Conflicted “Truth to power”	Facilitator & supporter of leader’s moral compass



When leaders perceive themselves as **integral to a collective**, and when others similarly recognize leaders in this manner, with **both acknowledging** the significance of the other in their moral compass, ethical leadership evolves into a shared commitment.

This commitment sustains trust, reduces harm, and alleviates moral injury, all of which contribute not just to a leader's personal and professional fulfillment, but also **to the entire team and organization.**



The opinions and views expressed belong solely to the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the United States Department of War (DoW) or its components.