



## **Code of Ethics for Unity Leaders**

In harmony with Unity Worldwide Ministries Ethics Policy, this Code of Ethics applies to the following:

- All credentialed leaders
  - Licensed or ordained Unity ministers
  - Licensed Unity teachers
- All non-credentialed leaders serving in the capacity of a credentialed Unity leader
- All ministerial candidates from all affiliated Unity schools
- All member ministries and expansion ministries
- All members of the UWM board of trustees
- All UWM staff members
- All individuals certified to serve as consultants to our ministries
- All members of UWM Ministry Teams

### **Introduction and Intention**

Foundational to Unity's principles and teachings is the belief that we are individualized expressions of God. This calls us, as Unity leaders to live from our Christ nature in all circumstances thereby being a harmonizing presence and a role model for those we serve. Because of this, it is our intention to be accountable to a high level of professional ethics.

Our Code of Ethics articulates a vision of ethical behavior grounded in our beliefs and teachings. Its purpose is to provide guidelines for behavior that is both ethical and authentic; and encourages us to give full expression to our Christ nature. This document also serves the purpose of holding one another accountable to this standard.

We also recognize that certain violations of our Code of Ethics must be addressed. Some behaviors are explicitly illegal, and such violations may require suspension of membership from Unity Worldwide Ministries. Some behaviors and attitudes are unethical by our standards and compromise our ability to perform and provide ministry. Other behaviors and attitudes harm our movement and interfere with our effectiveness in achieving our mission. Leaders who act in ways that are inconsistent with our Code of Ethics may be subject to review through our Ethics Review System. These violations will be addressed in a consistent and open manner which assists us all in living our highest potential.

**Section I and Section II Ethics are grounded in spiritual principles and self-care. It is recommended that all leaders aspire to follow these practices.**

### **I. Dedication to Truth Principles**

- A. As a Unity leader, I dedicate myself to the principles of Truth as taught and exemplified by The Christ and interpreted by Unity Worldwide Ministries [UWM], including:

1. God is Absolute good, everywhere present.
  2. Every human being is an expression of the Divine; the Christ spirit, by whatever name, indwells all people. Their very essence is of God, and therefore they are also inherently good.
  3. Human beings create their experience by the activity of their thinking. Everything in the manifest realm has its beginning in thought.
  4. Prayer is creative thinking that heightens the connection with God-Mind and therefore brings forth wisdom, healing, prosperity, and everything good.
  5. Knowing and understanding the laws of life, also called Truth, are not enough. A person must also live the truth that they know.
- B. I look to the indwelling Christ for inspiration, to guide, govern, and prosper me.
- C. I will, to the best of my understanding and ability, demonstrate Truth in my personal and professional life.
- D. I believe in the power of prayer.

## **II. The Relationship to Self – Self Care**

- A. I will articulate an awareness of the need for self-care by designing, implementing, and maintaining a plan for my life of regular renewal.
- B. I will care for my body with good nutrition and exercise and express an awareness for the need of physical self-care.
- C. I can say yes and am able to say no in order to prevent burnout by identifying strategies and taking action to avoid this condition.
- D. Leading by my strengths, I model and teach self-care and living a balanced life.
- E. I am comfortable asking for help when I recognize the need, and model and teach the value in doing so.
- F. I balance work, relationships, and recreation by developing and implementing a plan for balanced living; maintaining adjustments as required in any balancing practice.
- G. I exhibit a mindset of ongoing renewal and conscious evolution by developing, implementing, and maintaining an ongoing program of spiritual growth.
- H. I will keep in mind that the welfare of the ministry is paramount. Should I experience any personal crisis, the consequences of which could affect the ministry, I will confer with my board of trustees and a representative of Unity Worldwide Ministries. I may also choose to seek counseling or confer with colleagues.

See “Appendix Self-Care Standards and Rubrics” for further details applied to this section.

**NOTE:** Increasing virtual accessibility makes defining ministries only by geographical space obsolete and necessitates a higher call to *professional courtesy* rather than solely relying on ethics “rules.”

**Sections III through Section VII relate to standards of behaviors all are expected to demonstrate. Failure to do so could result in a review through the Ethics Review System.**

## **III. The Leader’s Relationship with Others**

The ministerial relationship pre-supposes certain role expectations; the credentialed leader is expected to make available certain resources, talents, knowledge, and expertise which will serve the best interests of the ministry.

- A. The role of leader carries with it authority and power. I will fulfill my responsibility and use this power to benefit the people who call upon me for service. I will offer acceptance and support to all

people with whom I have contact regardless of age, race, socio-economic status, creed, nationality, gender, gender identity, or sexual orientation. When people are angry, critical, or unkind, I will respond compassionately.

- B. I will conduct my work, private and public, after the standards and in accord with the teachings and ideals of Unity World Headquarters at Unity Village and Unity Worldwide Ministries without competition and contention, realizing that the more truly I practice the Principles of Unity, the greater will be the good to each and all immediately concerned, and to the community at large.
- C. I will maintain the boundaries of the leader's relationship, realizing that crossing boundaries is a betrayal of trust. In honor of that trust, I will not exploit nor violate the emotional, spiritual, or physical well-being of people who come to me for help or over whom I have any kind of authority. I will not use my authority to defame or manipulate individuals or groups, or foster division within the ministry. I will not create or cultivate dependencies. I will avoid situations and relationships which could impair my professional judgment or compromise the integrity of the ministry. I will not exploit situations or relationships for personal gain.
- D. As a leader, I shall work within my professional qualifications and limitations. People with needs beyond my expertise shall be referred to a qualified professional.
- E. Confidentiality:
  - 1. I am honor bound to hold sacred all confidences reposed in me, except if a confidence reveals that the person confiding may pose a threat to self or others; I will abide by law mandating or authorizing reporting to agencies. In addition, where law shields from liability voluntary disclosure of suspected possible child abuse, elder abuse, dependent adult abuse, or animal abuse, I will make a good faith report of such abuse to the appropriate agencies whether or not reporting is mandated by law.
  - 2. I will never mention, without permission, either privately or publicly, the name, residence, or locality of any person under treatment in the past or present in illustration or verification of Truth principles.
  - 3. I will not use privileged information for personal gain.
- F. I will refrain from sexual contact and/or sexualized behavior with a congregant, client, or employee with whom I have a professional and/or pastoral relationship, realizing it is unethical and is deemed sexual misconduct. (Sexual misconduct involving sexual abuse and/or sexualizing a professional relationship is defined as sexual activity or contact, not limited to sexual intercourse.) [Refer to Unity Worldwide Ministries [Sexual Conduct Policy](#).]
- G. I believe that more is taught by what a leader is than what s/he says. Therefore, I will seek to keep my morals above reproach. I will exercise good judgment in regard to my social conduct. My relationships will be such as to command only the highest respect. I am conscious of the fact that to be pure in heart is to be pure in conduct also.

#### **IV. Relating to Unity Ministers, Credentialed Leaders, Spiritual Leaders, Ministry Coordinators and Lay Leaders**

- A. I will hold all leaders in esteem and respectful regard, and use all rightful means to protect the personal and professional honor of all other credentialed or lay leaders.
  - 1. I will honor & support the work of other credentialed or lay leaders.
    - a. I will refrain from conversations with member(s) of another community that undermine the decisions or actions of the ministry's leadership. Should members of that community come to me for opinions, input, or advice about their ministry, I will encourage them to talk to the ministry's leadership.
    - b. I will reach out to the Regional Representative or UWM Member Services to process concerns I might have about the leadership of another ministry.
    - c. I will provide cooperative assistance to other leaders as they endeavor to do ministry or serve on a ministry team.

2. When assuming the leadership of an established ministry as a credentialed, lay, or Board of Trustee leader, I will avoid criticism of the former leadership or their work. In those rare times when an ethical lapse by a prior ministry's leadership has occurred, I will be truthful and compassionate while maintaining confidentiality.
  3. After leaving a ministry I will relinquish my work with that ministry. I will modify my relations with members of that ministry to support the highest interest of the current Unity ministry and its leadership.
    - a. I will not directly participate in that ministry in any way without the approval of the ministry's current credentialed leader (or leadership team in the absence of a credentialed leader).
    - b. I will refrain from actively soliciting the participation of this ministry's members in any new ministry endeavors I begin without the permission of the current credentialed leader (or leadership team in the absence of a credentialed leader).
  4. When I am disturbed by the activities of another credentialed or lay leader:
    - a. I will communicate directly with that leader.
    - b. If necessary, I will consult with my Regional Representative and/or UWM Member Services.
    - c. I will hold the situation in prayer.
    - d. If guided, I will file an Ethics Review System complaint.
  5. When I am disturbed by the activities of another Unity ministry:
    - a. I will communicate with the appropriate leaders of the ministry.
    - b. If necessary, I will consult with my Regional Representative and/or UWM Member Services.
    - c. I will hold the situation in prayer.
    - d. If guided, I will file an Ethics Review System complaint.
- B. As an assistant or associate minister or a licensed Unity teacher:
1. I will give the senior credentialed leader full support and cooperation.
  2. I will not criticize the credentialed leader in any way, or discuss the credentialed leader in a negative way with any ministry member, board member, or person outside the ministry.
  3. If a problem arises:
    - a. I will discuss it directly with the senior credentialed leader.
    - b. In cases of perceived violations of the Code of Ethics, I will consult with my Regional Representative and/or UWM Member Services.
    - c. If guided, I will file an Ethics Review System complaint.
- C. Ethics Review System members and relevant Unity Worldwide Ministries staff must be able to speak frankly about ethical violations in Ethics Review System reviews, in Ethics Review System training, and in evaluations of the Code of Ethics. Performing these activities is not to be construed as a violation of the Code of Ethics; nor is engaging in communications with the Ethics Review Team about a credentialed or lay leader when a review is in process to be construed as a violation of the Code of Ethics.

## **V. Relating to Ministries**

- A. I will not directly attempt to draw members or congregants away from any other established ministry or group without the permission of the ministry leadership.
- B. I will not use a ministry for personal gain. Any funds or assets that have been raised in the name of a Unity ministry will be registered in the name of that ministry and not in the name of an individual. I will not mishandle funds or give the appearance of mishandling funds.
- C. I will be ethical and respectful in my conduct and attitude toward other ministries or denominations, organizations, and metaphysical groups.

## **VI. Relating to Our Unity Worldwide Ministries**

- A. I will first seek the full approval of Unity Worldwide Ministries before initiating a Unity ministry (church or alternative).
- B. I will work in harmony and accord with Unity Worldwide Ministries.
- C. I will, to the best of my ability, communicate and embody the Unity Worldwide Ministries' values, mission, vision, and goals.
- D. I will adhere to the policies and bylaws of Unity Worldwide Ministries.

## **VII. My Pledge**

I sincerely devote myself to living in accord with this Code in letter and in spirit. I recognize our Unity Worldwide Ministries and this Code of Ethics as a framework in which I individually agree to function. I recognize that such an agreement augments our mutual and individual effectiveness.