

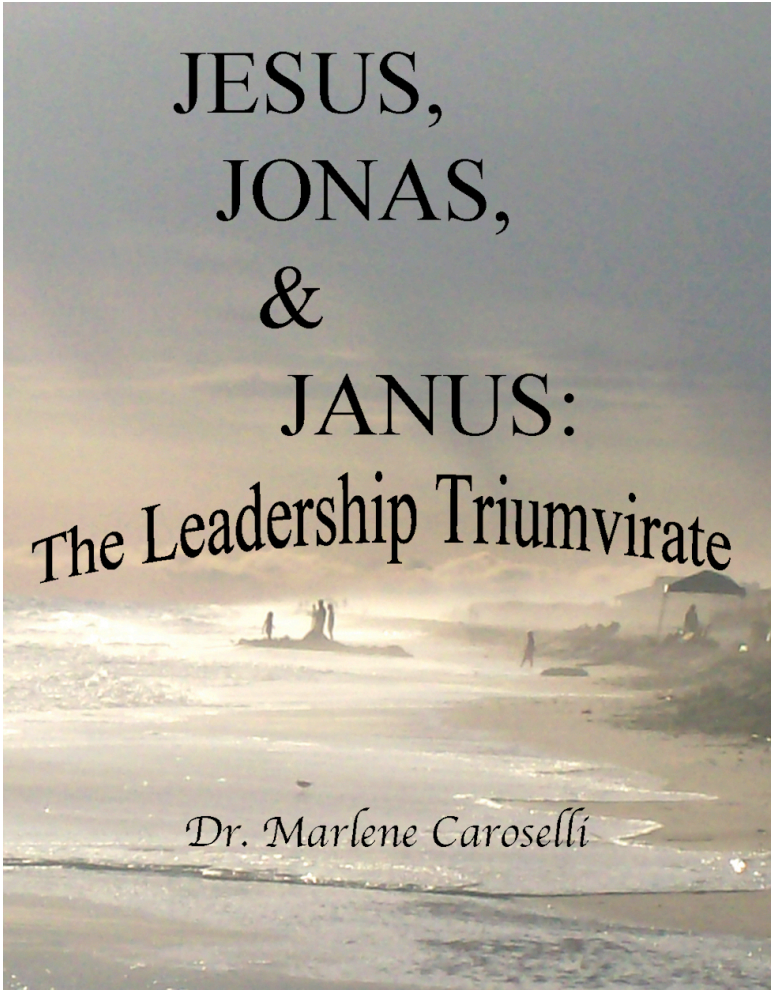
"Jesus, Janus, & Jonas" shares three critical elements for aspiring leaders.

Jesus, Janus, & Jonas: The Leadership Triumvirate

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A photograph of a beach at sunset or sunrise. The sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and grey. The ocean waves are breaking on the shore. In the distance, several people are visible on the beach, and a lifeguard stand is on the right. The text is overlaid on the image.

JESUS,
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&
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Dr. Marlene Caroselli

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PART I: Jesus and Principles

Our Scriptural authorities – Luke, John, Mark, and Matthew – were not archivists. They had no training as historians or journalists, no access to the resources that abound today. Instead, each of them told the story of events surrounding the life of Jesus of Nazareth, as he saw them, interpreted them, remembered them. Thus the material sometimes seems contradictory. On occasion, it lacks the cohesion that we have come to expect of storytellers. And yet, there are surprising similarities in the way the Gospels are written, especially the synoptic Gospels of Luke, Mark, and Matthew. We are fortunate to know as much as we do about a man who only lived for 33 years.

After being baptized by John and having the Trinity revealed to him, Jesus fasted for 40 days and then began his work as a minister, starting in Judea. He was soon performing miracles in various places, including Galilee. As His fame grew, so did His desire to be in Jerusalem, where he was crucified.

All four Gospels share the same information about the last week in the life of Jesus, including the famous Last Supper and his betrayal by Judas. His death, the ascension into Heaven, and subsequent reappearance are familiar stories. Even more familiar, though, are the principles he espoused, principles that guide people all over the world to this day.

1. Treat others the way you want to be treated

According to the Gospel of Luke 6:31), when Jesus preached his Sermon on the Plain, he asked his followers to treat one another as they wished to be treated themselves. You need not be religious to understand and apply this exhortation in your everyday life. This profound message carries weight for today's leader – no matter what the circumstances, where the leadership is needed, or how small the followership.

The words work. They are simple, honest, and psychologically insightful. Integrity is embedded in them. So powerful are they, that they have been transformed into the Golden Rule, by which millions of people live their lives.

There is no doubt about Jesus' ability to influence others. In fact, influencing others is a daily occurrence for most of us. It's much, much harder, though, to influence ethically, which is what Jesus and centuries of other great leaders have done.

A QUESTION OF CHOICES

Whether you persuade for a living or you simply "sell" your ideas in the normal course of learning and living and working, you have already discovered influence techniques that work. Persuaders, in effect, are sellers. And vice versa. If you merely wish to improve the influence techniques that help you persuade others to your point of view, you can find numerous guidelines, primers, and recommendations.

One reason ethical persuasion is such a studied topic lies in the many possible definitions of key words, like "integrity." Is it, as the dictionary denotes, a question of honesty? Is it a matter of sincerity or of uprightness, as the dictionary also suggests? Would you perhaps equate integrity with sound moral principles? If so, what exactly are those principles?

Some people regard integrity as the decision to live according to the Golden Rule: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." Is this your belief as well? And what if you were seeking to measure your degree of integrity, as well as define it? Would you assess your actions as ethical ones if they brought improvement to existing situations? If not, what gauge would you use? The choices for determining what integrity means are multiple and mingled – they overlap with many other factors.

THE VALUES-DRIVEN CAREER

In the simplest sense, "integrity" means living according to specified values. But, of course, simplicity is usually and deceptively complex. Living by specified values involves numerous ramifications and interpretations. One workable definition of integrity involves ever-widening circles. The more integrity you demonstrate, the more widespread the benefits to others.

In other words, when you act with integrity, you are widening the sphere of influence, you are using power tools to achieve powerful benefits for those who "buy" your concepts or your commodities.

If your actions are taken for your own advantage exclusively, then you are following a narrow moral code, one that places your needs above all others. You no doubt operate within the letter of the law but perhaps not within the spirit of the unwritten laws that govern our behavior as human beings. If your actions are self-serving, you are not concerned with serving others. Consequently, your ethical influence is limited.

On the other hand, when your actions benefit other people, you are operating from a higher-level moral code; you are living by, and influencing others with, generally accepted principles of correctness rather than your own interpretation of specific rules.

Robert Frost once wrote that one could do worse than be a swinger of birches. Using the exhortation from the Bible – treat others as you wish to be treated – you can be even better than a swinger of birches. You can be an effective leader.

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