

Head Teachers' Leadership Academy | Online

Day Two Introduction to Columba 1400 Core Values

The six Columba 1400 Values: **Awareness Focus Creativity Integrity Perseverance Service** (easily remembered by the acronym AFCIPS) provide a framework, a structure, for us to explore personal and professional values.

When we talk about **Awareness**, we mean a leader's ability to read people, to read situations, to see the big picture but also to see – and be sensitive to – small details (give example).

Awareness also involves **Self-Awareness**: identifying our own beliefs, values, convictions and acknowledging how they shape the way we see the world. But it is also about understanding how our words and actions are received by others. Do we see what we see? Do they hear what we mean?

The other side of the Awareness coin is **Focus**. From the blizzard of information and initiatives and the cacophony of noise that surrounds us, how do we sift and distil to identify what really matters, what is really important? And, having identified it, how do we protect it? How do we ensure the chicken shit mentioned by (Tutor C) doesn't get in the way?

The energy and ideas that flow from Awareness and Focus influence and power Creativity.

There's nothing soft about Creativity. The **Creativity** that is required to find solutions to entrenched problems takes courage. There's nothing harder edged than the ability to create a vision and realise it. As the Japanese proverb has it: "Vision without action is a daydream. Action without a vision is a nightmare."

Realising a vision is not without risk. Norman's vision of having a values-based leadership centre on Skye – and building it in the far north of Skye in Staffin – raised eyebrows in the 1990s. But anyone who has visited it will testify that it was an inspired choice and has now led to thousands of young people and adults benefiting from a Columba 1400 values-based leadership experience on Skye, at Ardoch, Loch Lomond and at Blair Estate in Ayrshire.

The fourth value, **Integrity**, is a more personal one. It can be summed up in three small words: keep your word. Keep your word on the big things. Keep your word on the small things. A reputation for integrity takes time to establish but over time it builds trust. We all know that relationships develop at the speed of trust. Moreover, a reputation for integrity builds a reservoir of trust which leads to commitment and the energy to make things happen. It creates a cultural norm.

Then there is **Perseverance** – essential in the face of negativity, setbacks, adversity. On 9 June 1997 Norman gathered together a small group of like-minded people who supported his vision for a values-based leadership centre in Staffin. In rural areas on still nights, voices travel

far and, as the party dispersed into the darkness, Norman heard a voice saying: "No one has ever raised a million pounds for a building in Staffin." There was doubt right at the heart of the team who had just committed to moving from vision to action.

But worse was to follow. The building was well up when the builders went bust. No one will ever know what that hammer blow cost Norman and Elizabeth Drummond emotionally, far less financially, as they staked everything they had in re-financing the project to ensure the building was completed.

On a wider scale, I often wonder if anything worthwhile has ever been achieved without a deep inner core of perseverance. Beyond all doubt, without Norman Drummond's perseverance, we wouldn't be gathering here today.

These five values – Awareness, Focus, Creativity, Integrity, Perseverance (not originally in that order) – came across the Atlantic with the first Columba 1400 CEO, a young Canadian by the name of Ian Chisholm who had developed them in values-based activities in the United States. With typical thoroughness, Norman and Elizabeth visited Ian on his own patch to see and understand his approach to values-based leadership.

I can just imagine how nervous Ian Chisholm must have been pitching these five values to Norman and the pause that followed while he waited for a response. When it came it was a bit like this: "Yes, I like these but there's one missing...there's one missing...and the missing one is Service. Believing that what we do is meaningful, has purpose, has a positive impact on individuals/families/communities. Working tirelessly for the common good.

You see, Awareness, Focus, Creativity, Integrity and Perseverance all culminate in Service. And it's not linear; it's circular. When you become committed to Service, it widens your Awareness, it sharpens your Focus, it fuels your Creativity, it embeds your Integrity and Perseverance. All that drives a commitment to Service." And that is so true, is it not?

As I said at the start, AFCIPS provides a framework to explore our own personal and professional values. They run vertically through EVERY Columba 1400 experience, sometimes visible, sometimes in background but always there.

And across these values we weave thoughts on culture ...but we can leave that for Day Two and have a well-earned coffee break.