



# RESPONSIBLE LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

## SHAPING OUR FUTURE

### **Professor Jack Wood asks: How much do our own values influence our actions?**

*February 2, 2009*

In a workshop session at the Responsible Leadership Summit, Jack Wood, IMD Professor of Leadership and Organizational Behavior, challenged participants to reflect on how much their own set of values (moral, ethical, cultural, etc.) influence their day-to-day behavior as individuals, managers and leaders.

Participants broke out into four groups to examine real case histories where sophisticated, experienced managers from developed countries are presented with a very difficult and emotionally-charged situation. How would they respond? Will their actions be over-influenced by their own culture and experience? Are they applying their own standards to a completely different situation?

In such contexts one of the workshop mediators, Jeanne-Pierre Heiniger, recommended that managers facing difficult dilemmas in an unfamiliar environment first take stock of the situation. "Don't rush in and do the first thing that comes to mind, which may be too emotional and/or influenced by your own experience and culture. Remember your first actions in a given situation are some of the most crucial and can have an enormous impact on the longer-term success or failure of your endeavors."

When all the session participants re-grouped for the plenary session they were shown a video that graphically illustrated the individual's dilemma of knowing when to take "orders" from his/her hierarchy (however "painful") and when his/her moral values intercede and say "stop!"

Professor Wood concluded with a quote from Carl Jung, the eminent Swiss psychiatrist, influential thinker and the founder of analytical psychology. "The individual, who wishes to have an answer to the problem of evil as it is posed today, has need, first and foremost, of self-knowledge, that is, the utmost possible knowledge of his own wholeness. He must know relentlessly how much good he can do, and what crimes he is capable of, and must beware of regarding one as real and the other as an allusion."