A leader is elected to lead the government and serve the people. The personalities of leaders have always been the center of political discussions. Some people claim that on official must maintain the highest ethical and moral standards in order to be an effective leader. From my point of view, people with high moral standards will be more inclined to be effective leaders but these high standards do not necessarily achieve effectiveness. In some cases, remaining loyal to high moral principles without any chance of compromise will weaken a leader's effectiveness.

Before going any further, it is necessary to clarify the definition of "effectiveness". Since the mission of a political leader, in my view, is to unite the people, distribute limited resources, and make important decisions to ensure social prosperity. Simply put, an effective leader must promote the welfare of the people he or she serve. With this definition, we can now discuss how moral standards impact a leader's effectiveness.

Maintaining high ethical and moral standards can definitely promote a leader's effectiveness because his or her personality will attract support and cooperation from the public. In other words, his or her political views are more likely accepted by the people, making political goals more likely to achieve. For example, in Chinese history an emperor with high moral standards was usually admired and loved by his or her people. People were more willing to execute the emperor's orders, facilitating the accomplishment of his or her political goals. That is why strong, prosperous dynasties, such as those of the Han, Tang, and Song, were founded by emperor's with high moral principles.

However, effectiveness does not necessarily originate in the moral standards. The possession of high moral standards cannot guarantee a leader will be effective nor can a leader's effectiveness be denied if he or she does not possess superior moral qualities. For instance, imagine a country plagued by terrorism. One of primary goals of the country's leader in this scenario is to defend the people they served. If they could lead the nation to win the war on terror, despite some immoral means taken to achieve this goal, they must be considered effective. Some may argue that without high moral qualities, leaders will be despised or even overthrown. How can a leader be effective when he or she is not in power? Leaders may lose power if they are morally despicable but they are not required to have the highest moral standards. People can be quite tolerant when it comes to their leader's morality. As long as a leader's moral qualities do not jeopardize the people's interests, minor defects can be ignored. After all, given the definition of effectiveness aforementioned, an immoral leader may accomplish his or her mission if he or she is able to identify critical social goals and has the skills to coordinate governmental operations. These are the true sources of effectiveness.

In addition, in some cases adhering to the highest moral standards actually backfires because some high moral principals, such as honesty and integrity, require action that place national interests in jeopardy. If, for example, a nation's leader is asked to reveal confidential and sensitive information concerning national defense, he or she ought to, from a purely moral perspective, be candid and not withhold any information. However, we could easily recognize the danger of revealing such information to the public, which could be abused by terrorists. Some may argue this example is too absolute and rare and thus cannot serve as compelling evidence. This scenario, however, reflects the inherent conflict between moral ideology and reality, in which compromises are often required. Such conflict is ubiquitous in the real world.

To summarize, it is evident that high moral standards qualities do not equate to effective leadership. In some cases, a leader’s loyalty without exception to high moral principles can create serious problems and even harm social interests. That being said, possessing high moral standards can help leaders achieve political missions, because such qualities will help them earn people’s trust and support and facilitate governmental efficiency.