Throughout my work experience, I've encountered diverse leadership styles that have shaped my understanding of effective management. Let me share two contrasting situations that highlight the difference between people-oriented and task-oriented leadership approaches.

In my role at a local non-profit organization, I worked with Sarah, our volunteer coordinator, who exemplified people-oriented leadership. When organizing a major community cleanup event, Sarah prioritized building relationships and ensuring everyone felt valued. For instance, she spent time getting to know each volunteer's motivations and skills, then matched them with tasks they'd find meaningful. During the event, she consistently checked in on people's wellbeing, provided encouragement, and fostered a supportive atmosphere.

Sarah's approach proved highly effective and ethical. By focusing on people's emotional needs and creating a positive environment, she inspired volunteers to give their best effort naturally. The event exceeded its goals, with many volunteers expressing interest in future participation. Her leadership style demonstrated how prioritizing people can lead to exceptional results while maintaining high ethical standards.

Conversely, I experienced task-oriented leadership during my internship at a tech startup. The project manager, Mike, focused solely on meeting deadlines and achieving targets. When our team faced challenges with a software launch, Mike's primary concern was adhering to the timeline. He extended working hours without considering personal commitments, dismissed concerns about burnout, and created a stressful environment fixed on task completion.

While Mike's approach did result in meeting the deadline, it came at a significant cost to team morale and wellbeing. His leadership style, though perhaps effective in the short term, raised ethical concerns. By prioritizing tasks over people, he risked long-term consequences like high turnover and decreased job satisfaction. The situation taught me that pure task orientation, without considering human factors, can be detrimental to both individuals and organizational success.

Looking at these experiences through an ethical lens, I believe Sarah's people-oriented approach was more ethically sound. She achieved objectives while respecting and valuing human dignity. Her leadership style aligned with ethical principles of respect, fairness, and care for others. On the other hand, Mike's task-oriented approach, while not inherently unethical, veered into questionable territory by disregarding the wellbeing of his team members.

As I advanced in my career, these experiences have taught me the importance of finding a balance between tasks and people orientation. Effective leadership isn't about choosing one over the other, but rather understanding when to emphasize each aspect. The most successful leaders I've observed can adapt their style based on the situation while maintaining ethical standards.

Given the textbook's emphasis on behavioral approaches to leadership, I believe both scenarios demonstrate how leadership style directly impacts team dynamics and outcomes. As Maxwell

(2007) states in his book "The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership," true leadership influence comes from not just achieving goals, but also from how we treat people along the way.

Based on my coursework and these real-world experiences, I've learned that ethical leadership requires:

1. Balancing task completion with people's needs

2. Creating a supportive environment while maintaining productivity

3. Adapting leadership style to different situations

4. Considering both short-term goals and long-term impacts

As I continue my professional journey, I aim to develop a leadership style that effectively balances both people and task orientation while upholding strong ethical principles.

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