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Code of Ethics for Ministers/Spiritual Leaders of our Unity Worldwide Ministries

Introduction and Intention

Foundational to Unity's principles and teachings is the belief that we are individualized expressions of God; that our spiritual purpose is to give expression to God. This calls us, as Unity ministers/spiritual leaders to live from our Christ nature in all circumstances – thereby, being a healing presence and a role model for those we serve. Because of this, it is our intention to be accountable to a high level of professional ethics.

Our Code of Ethics articulates a vision of ethical behavior grounded in our beliefs and teachings. Its purpose is to provide guidelines for behavior that is both ethical and authentic, and allows us to give full expression to our Christ nature. This document also serves the purpose of allowing us to hold one another accountable to this standard. When we fall short the Ethics Review System seeks to provide a compassionate process that calls us back to integrity and wholeness. We seek to restore, to rehabilitate, and to make amends whenever possible.

We also recognize that there are certain violations of our covenant that must be addressed. Some behaviors are explicitly illegal, and such violations may require suspension of membership from Unity Worldwide Ministries. Some behaviors and attitudes are unethical by our standards and compromise our ability to perform and provide ministry. Other behaviors and attitudes harm us and interfere with our ministry and our own efforts toward wholeness. Ministers/spiritual leaders who act in ways that are inconsistent with our Code of Ethics may be subject to review through our Ethics Review System. We seek to address these violations honestly, directly, and in such a manner as to assist one another in living our highest potential.

Section I and Section II relate to our spiritual principles and self-care. It is recommended that all ministers/spiritual leaders aspire to follow these practices. If a minister/spiritual leader falls short of these practices an ethical review would not be probable.

I. Dedication to Truth Principles

- A.** As a Unity minister/spiritual leader [minister/spiritual leader here and throughout the document refers to those individuals who are credentialed and/or recognized as Unity leaders by Unity Worldwide Ministries] I dedicate myself to the principles of Truth as taught and exemplified by Jesus Christ and interpreted by Unity and Unity Worldwide Ministries [UWM], including:
1. God is Absolute good, everywhere present.
 2. Every human being is an expression of the Divine; the Christ spirit, by whatever name, indwells all people. Their very essence is of God, and therefore they are also inherently good.
 3. Human beings create their experience by the activity of their thinking. Everything in the manifest realm has its beginning in thought.
 4. Prayer is creative thinking that heightens the connection with God-Mind and therefore brings forth wisdom, healing, prosperity, and everything good.
 5. Knowing and understanding the laws of life, also called Truth, are not enough. A person must also live the truth that he/she knows.
- B.** I look to the indwelling Christ for inspiration, to guide, govern, and prosper me.
- C.** I will, to the best of my understanding and ability, bring the freeing truth to humankind. This I will do in a spiritually dignified way, being guided by divine wisdom and good judgment.
- D.** I believe in the power of prayer and I am convinced that, as Jesus said, “All things are possible to one who believes.”
- E.** In consecration to God and the work of ministry, I offer myself as a channel for God’s will to be made manifest that I may honor and glorify God.
- F.** I believe that the true minister/spiritual leader is one who has been called to this work by the spirit of Truth within. I desire only to express this Truth, and to teach others to live it.

II. The Ministerial Relationship to Self – Self Care

Recognizing that wholeness is expressed on all levels of my being I will honor myself in spirit, mind and body.

- A.** Following the example of Jesus I will take time away from the crowds for conscious contact with God, and will maintain a spiritual practice of prayer and meditation.
- B.** I will respect the need to develop and broaden my intellectual and spiritual capacities through personal reading, and professional continuing education programs that are vital and relevant to my growth.

- C. I will endeavor to maintain a program of emotional and physical fitness that includes vacation time, and time off each week for rest and relaxation.
- D. Knowing that ministry makes great demands upon the ministers/spiritual leader's time, I will endeavor to maintain a proper balance between the life of the ministry and the rights and privileges of my family relationship.

Sections III through Section VII relate to standards of behaviors all ministers/spiritual leaders are expected to demonstrate. Failure to do so could result in a review through the Ethic Review System.

III. The Ministerial Relationship with Others

The ministerial relationship pre-supposes certain role expectations; the minister/spiritual leader is expected to make available certain resources, talents, knowledge, and expertise which will serve the best interests of the ministry.

- A. The role of minister/spiritual leader carries with it authority and power. I will fulfill my responsibility and use this power to benefit the people who call upon me for service. I will offer acceptance and support to all people with whom I have contact regardless of age, race, socio-economic status, creed, nationality, gender, or sexual orientation. When people are angry, critical, or unkind I will respond compassionately.
- B. I will conduct my work, private and public, after the standards and in accord with the teachings and ideals of Unity: World Headquarters at Unity Village and Unity Worldwide Ministries without competition and contention, realizing that the more truly I practice the Principles of Unity, the greater will be the good to each and all immediately concerned, and to the community at large.
- C. I will maintain the boundaries of the ministerial relationship, realizing that crossing boundaries is a betrayal of trust. In honor of that trust, I will not exploit nor violate the emotional, spiritual or physical well-being of people who come to me for help or over whom I have any kind of authority. I will not use my authority to defame or manipulate individuals, or groups, or foster division within the ministry. I will not create or cultivate dependencies. I will avoid situations and relationships which could impair my professional judgment or compromise the integrity of the ministry. I will not exploit situations or relationships for personal gain.
- D. As a minister/spiritual leader, I shall work within my professional qualifications and limitations. People with needs beyond my expertise shall be referred to a qualified professional.
- E. **Confidentiality:**
 1. I am honor bound to hold sacred all confidences reposed in me, except that I may choose to comply with local laws if a confidence reveals that the person confiding can pose a threat to self or others.

2. I will never mention, without permission, either privately or publicly, the name, residence, or locality of any person under treatment in the past or present in illustration or verification of Truth principles.
 3. I will not use privileged information for personal gain.
- F.** I will refrain from sexual contact and/or sexualized behavior with a congregant, client, or employee with whom I have a professional and/or pastoral relationship, realizing it is unethical and is deemed clergy misconduct. (Clergy misconduct involving sexual abuse and/or sexualizing a professional relationship is defined as sexual activity or contact, not limited to sexual intercourse.) [Refer to Unity Worldwide Ministries Sexual Conduct Policy.]
- G.** I believe that more is taught by what a minister/spiritual leader is than what s/he says. Therefore, I will seek to keep my morals above reproach. I will exercise good judgment in regard to my social conduct. My relationships will be such as to command only the highest respect. I am conscious of the fact that to be pure in heart is to be pure in conduct also.

IV. Relating to Colleagues

- A.** I will hold all ministers/spiritual leaders in esteem and respectful regard, and use all rightful means to protect the personal and professional honor of all other ministers/spiritual leaders.
- B.** I will not interfere with the work of another minister/spiritual leader.
1. If I am asked by a member of a Unity ministry in which I am not serving to conduct a special service or provide pastoral care, I will consult the minister/spiritual leader of that ministry before accepting.
 2. I will not accept an overture from a ministry whose minister/spiritual leader has not yet resigned.
 3. I shall provide cooperative assistance to other minister/spiritual leaders as they endeavor to do ministry, including when working as part of a Unity Worldwide Ministries Ministry Team.
- C.** When assuming the leadership of an established ministry, I will avoid criticism of the former minister/spiritual leader or her/his work. In those rare times when an ethical lapse by a prior minister/spiritual leader has occurred, I will be truthful and compassionate while maintaining confidentiality.
- D.** After leaving a ministry:
1. I will modify my relations with members of a congregation which I have previously served in order to support the highest interest of the current Unity minister/spiritual leader and the ministry.
 2. After relinquishing my work to another minister/spiritual leader I will not participate in that ministry in any way without the approval of the ministry's current minister/spiritual leader.

- E.** When I am disturbed by the activities of another colleague, I will communicate directly with that colleague. When I am disturbed by the activities at another Unity ministry, I will communicate with the appropriate leaders of the ministry.
 1. If necessary, I will consult with other Unity Worldwide Ministries representatives who could include any of the following – my Regional Representative, my Regional Judicatory Representative, and/or Unity Worldwide Ministries staff members.
 2. I will hold the situation in prayer.
 3. If guided, I will file an Ethics Review System complaint.

- F.** As assistant or associate minister:
 1. I will give the senior minister/spiritual leader full support and cooperation.
 2. I will not criticize the minister/spiritual leader in any way, or discuss the minister/spiritual leader in a negative way with any ministry member, board member, or person outside the ministry.
 3. If a problem arises, I will discuss it directly with the senior minister/spiritual leader.
 4. In cases of perceived violations of the Code of Ethics, I will seek input and guidance from Unity Worldwide Ministries’ representatives which could include my Regional Representative, Regional Judicatory Representative and/or a representative from Unity Worldwide Ministries’ staff.
 5. If an Ethics Review System review of the senior minister is initiated, I will cooperate full with the review process.

- G.** I will be ethical and respectful in my conduct and attitude toward other ministries or denominations, organizations and metaphysical groups.

- H.** Ethics Review System members and relevant Unity Worldwide Ministries staff must be able to speak frankly about ethical violations in Ethics Review System reviews, in Ethics Review System training, and in evaluations of the Code of Ethics. Performing these activities is not to be construed as a violation of the Code of Ethics; nor is engaging in communications with the Ethics Review Team about a Minister/Spiritual Leader when a review is in process to be construed as a violation of the Code of Ethics.

V. Relating to Ministries

- A.** I respect the free will of members to transfer membership away from the Unity ministry I serve and will accept such requests without hesitation or inquiry.

- B.** I will keep in mind that the welfare of the congregation is paramount. Should I experience any personal crisis, the consequences of which could affect the ministry, I will confer with my Board of Trustees and a representative of Unity Worldwide Ministries. I may also choose to seek counseling or confer with colleagues.

- C.** I will not attempt to draw members or congregants away from any other established ministry or group.

- D. I will not use the ministry for personal gain. Any funds or assets that have been raised in the name of Unity will be registered in the name of Unity and not in the name of an individual. I will take care not to mishandle or appear to mishandle funds.

VI. Relating to Our Unity Worldwide Ministries

- A. I will not attempt to carry on Unity work in any city without first obtaining the full approval of the local Unity Worldwide Ministries for such work and without seeking the cooperation of already active and recognized Unity leaders in that vicinity.
- B. I work in harmony and accord with Unity Worldwide Ministries in my speaking and teaching programs.
- C. I will, to the best of my ability, communicate the Unity Worldwide Ministries' values, mission, vision, and goals in service to my ministry.
- D. I will adhere to the policies and bylaws of Unity Worldwide Ministries.

VII. My Pledge

I sincerely devote myself to living in accord with this Code in letter and in spirit. I recognize our Unity Worldwide Ministries and this Code of Ethics as a framework in which I individually agree to function. I recognize that such an agreement augments our mutual and individual effectiveness. If I find myself contemplating or actually functioning outside of this framework, I agree to seek the kind of help described in Section V. (B). Failure to seek such help will mean that, by my own choice, I am functioning outside of the framework of this Code and consequently placing myself outside of Unity Worldwide Ministries.

Signature

Print Name

Date