

Leadership should be born out of the understanding of the needs of those who would be affected by it.

Marian Anderson

**The quote above truly speaks to the type of leader I have become.**

**Due to all that I have learned about myself, and leadership as a whole in**

**ELI, I have found that I am a leader who finds it essential to have a**

**deep understanding and personal connection to the endeavor at hand.**

**From this quote I also get a sense of passion. I believe the quote is**

**stating that understanding and passion are key elements for any leader.**

**I am confident that if I hadn't been so deeply affected personally by**

**violence against women, then I would not be who I am today and I**

**would not be involved in ELI or Women's Place. It is necessary for a**

**leader to carefully think about what it is they are trying to change, and**

**how their tactics, or the change itself will affect those involved. I believe**

**that my leader profile is comprised of characteristics such as passion,**

**dedication, drive, understanding and willingness to listen. I know that**

**preventing and educating about violence against women is my one true**

**calling in life, because I was able to make it out alive. I know that it is**

**my duty as survivor to do any and everything I can to help other**

women. I know what victims of violence go through, it is my life.

When I learned that I was accepted into ELI fall 2006, I was a little hesitant to schedule the class. I knew that I had credibility as a leader in my own sphere of influence, however I was extremely unsure of my leadership credibility outside of Women's Place. I understood that planning and executing UK's first ever Take Back the Night march was a tremendous achievement for Women's Place and more importantly for me, but I wasn't sure if that alone was good enough for ELI. Ultimately, I realized that experiencing ELI could do nothing but help me and I decided to schedule it.

As it turns out, ELI has been without a doubt the most valuable class I will ever take here at UK. Throughout my time in ELI I have been able to reach and educate a very wide range of people about the issue of violence against women. ELI has taught me so much in regards to my own leadership styles, as well as the people I work with on a daily basis.

Thanks to ELI I learned that my personality type is DI, which means I'm equally dominant and inspirational when it comes to my leadership style. A lot of people in the class were displeased with what the DISC test told them, due to its rather blunt format, however I

**embraced everything it said. I know and have always known that I am a very opinionated, stubborn and determined person, and I will be the first to admit it. In addition, I know that I can have great influence over people, when it comes to my supporters. I believe the DISC test was one of the most valuable things we did this semester because it forced me to look at every aspect of my personality and strengths and weaknesses as a leader.**

**I also gained greatly from some of the presenters we were lucky enough to hear speak. The presenter that resonated with me the most was Dorothy Edwards. She is a woman I have worked with day in and out for going on two years now- I know a great deal about her. Yet, hearing her speak to a room full of people who may not already be on her side was truly inspirational. I love her energy, her passion and her strength. She truly is a remarkable woman and leader. It amazes me how captivating she is to hundreds upon hundreds of people at UK. I've been lucky enough to work with her and learn from her practically since she arrived at UK. She embodies everything I aspire to have as a leader; passion, courage, determination and flare. She is without a doubt my role model.**

**My overall ELI experience has been filled with learning**

**experiences. I've learned that my personality tends to get the best of me, and I want to change the world all on my own. I have learned that that however, is not possible, and I must accept the help of others. ELI has taught me that it is O.K. to do things such as challenge processes and think outside the box. I've found that challenging the process and inspire a shared vision are probably my biggest strengths. I have been able to take the lessons learned in ELI and apply them to everyday life.**

**For example, when I went to Columbus for the CALCASA conference, I found that to create a shared vision, one must first listen very carefully to their opposition's opinions no matter how bleak or infuriating. In one particular situation one of my Women's Place colleagues found themselves in a heated argument with another person. As I sat there watching the catastrophe I thought back to ELI and remembered, "Inspire a shared vision." Then it dawned on me! Why would anyone want to listen to someone barking their thoughts and beliefs at them. My friend was not creating a shared vision; she was simply missing out on an opportunity to change people's minds. In order to create such a vision you must put yourself in that person's shoes and come at them from their perspective- not your own. You must first understand where people are coming from, and respect it. Once**

**you've done that, you have given the opposition a reason to listen. Then I remembered how Dorothy talked about how she became close with the police department and how relevant that story was in this situation. It was at that conference that I realized just how vital ELI has and will be to me, as a leader.**

**ELI has given me a clear and concise personal definition what a leader is. A leader is someone who is not afraid to challenge the process and think critically, but who is also very aware of their supporters and has their best interest at heart as well. A true leader does not lead for vain recognition or personal gain. A true leader leads because they cannot rest until change is created, lives are bettered, or justice is found. Leaders must have vast knowledge and passion for whatever it is that they are trying to improve. As a leader, it is essential to be able to influence and make people think and look beyond the box. Finally, leaders cannot lead alone, they must be able to seek help from their supporters, and in turn allow those supporters to take credit where it is due.**

**ELI has given me so much more than I ever thought possible. I have made true friendships with many of my classmates. ELI has given countless opportunities to spread the word about Women's Place and**

**educate about violence against women. I believe that I have learned more from ELI than I will learn from any other class I take here at the university. Now, I am able to step back, and look at a situation and apply lessons such as encourage the heart or model the way to just about any situation. I believe that ELI has without a doubt reinforced, and encouraged me to use critical thinking in every endeavor I find myself in. I'm so thankful that I decided to enroll in this class.**