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## **My Personal Leadership Philosophy**

### **Introduction:**

When I had applied to Emerging Leader Institute I had heard mixed reviews. I heard it was the best experience of people's lives and the worst experience they have ever gone through. Walking into this experience I had mixed feelings. I never thought of myself as a leader because I was never out in front being the person always recognized for the work. This class taught me that all leaders are not out there being seen. In fact, as it was said many times in class, people will not remember your name but they may remember what you did. I always knew I would never have my name attached with a leadership project but what I do hope is that I will be able to leave something that people can remember.

When I was told that we had to do a personal leadership project I was overwhelmed. I started to brainstorm and wanted to take on a project that would take too long to even implement. I eventually settled on doing a toy drive for children that normally do not get gifts from Santa on Christmas. The problem with this was I still did not feel like a leader. As class went on, we started to talk about different leadership styles and qualities. This caused me to realize that leadership is not ordering people to do different tasks; leadership is about trying to make a difference by working with others. When Dorothy Edwards came to talk in class, she did an overview of leadership. The

five basic leadership qualities are model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act, and encourage the heart.

### **Chapter 1: Model the Way**

Model the way is basically following what you preach and set a good example. To model the way takes a lot of work especially when put in the college scene with friends always out, not caring about others and just themselves, and focusing on the school work that needs to be done. I found it hard to even focus on my project when my friends were giving me opportunities to not do my project and do work for others. I needed to have people believe in my efforts and not look at me as a hypocrite. Therefore, I needed to take time out of my schedule to start researching different issues. Once I was able to come up with a project from my research, I needed to also donate toys. I could not ask others to do something that I was not willing to do. I found people getting annoyed when I asked them to try and donate new toys but when I mentioned different ideas on places to go where you can get a good deal on new toys because that is where I went to buy some toys, their tones changed. Once they realized I was willing to spend my money on these items they figured they would be able to scrounge up some money for a toy as well. I also showed that taking the time to help others allows people to see that I care about the issue. I would never be able to get people involved if it was not for the fact that I went and spent money for toys.

Modeling the way does not just end with participating in the donations of my projects. I also need to lead a life that shows I care about others. In my basic day to day activity, I always need to keep in mind that people may be looking at me for examples. I

also had other obligations that required me to model the way. Being in a sorority, I need to always keep in mind that I am a representative of my organization. In doing so I need to make sure my actions do not live up to the negative stereotypes that people have of sorority girls. I also needed to remember that we gained many new girls who also look up to me to see how they should act. If I was always out drinking and partying, they would think that was acceptable behavior and would emulate the behavior. Model the way is not the only leadership quality you need to possess when trying to be a leader.

### **Chapter 2: Inspire a Shared Vision**

Inspiring a shared vision means getting others to buy into your idea. In order to do this you need to find something you are passionate about. As Dorothy said, “You need to find the fire in your belly.” Others will want to help if they feel you are passionate about the project. Since my project is not exactly what I wanted to do, I was not very passionate about it. Because of this, I found it hard to do my project. Not only did I not want to motivate myself, but it was hard to motivate other people. No one seemed excited to help. Once I finally learned about my topic, I started to become more passionate about the project. Once I found the passion, I started to have other people interested in my project as well.

### **Chapter 3: Challenge the Process**

Challenge the process is basically not taking no for an answer. When you receive a no you need to ask why. You may never find out about different opportunities if it is not for the basic question of why. Just because something works does not mean that something may work better. One of my favorite things we talked about is one of the

definitions of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expect different results. I find that in my sorority we do things the same way over and over again and then wonder why things are not improving. You can not be afraid to change things to try and improve things. When it came to preference today during recruitment, some people thought it would help to change the song so the members would not get so emotional and the girls going through would not feel uncomfortable. This made the members, especially the older ones, very upset. As result of the change, the day went better than previous years and we gained more new members than in previous years.

#### **Chapter 4: Enable Others to Act**

Enabling others to act is allowing others to work on the project. Get people to help you by allowing them to use their different strengths to the best of their abilities. If you find that a specific area is not being covered, find the person that best fits the job and let them work. The more people who help the easier it is for you as the leader to get the job done and explore the best options for implementation. With my project I did not use people as well as I should have. I did however tell people about my project and then allowed them to spread the information by word of mouth. Many of my friends have told me that they informed their different organizations about the project as well as try and get others to work on it. I did accept help from my roommates when needed. Since one of them is majoring in advertising, I had her help me with the flyers to make sure they would be eye catching and get the word out.

With the sorority, we have offices that you can petition for that you will then be assigned to. The council then gets together and talks about who would be best for the

different appointed offices. Because of this, the different sections of the organization accomplish the most they can.

### **Chapter 5: Encourage the Heart**

Encourage the heart is my favorite leadership style. It is also the one I embody the most. Encourage the heart is always being positive and acknowledging every ones accomplishments. I do this by always telling people when they do a good job. In my sorority we give the Smarty Pants Award to a person who got an A or B on tests, quizzes, or essays in the past week. This encourages people to work hard on their assignments and study hard. I also have seen that just acknowledging people's accomplishments makes people happy and makes them want to continue the work. People will always want to help if you are kind to them.

### **Conclusion:**

As I went through Emerging Leader Institute I never thought of myself as a leader. I thought I was just someone who worked well behind the scenes. The thing I learned was people do not have to be out in front in order to be leaders. I learned that I have a more comforting style of leadership that I never thought would be considered leadership but just a good team player. I have learned that being a leader takes a lot of work and time but in the end it is rewarding and fun.

\*note: I would not like this posted\*