

## **Tama Ginn**

I applied to the Emerging Leader Institute thinking I had no chance of making it in. After all, I had never been in a leadership position, and I really did not know what it took to be a true leader. While in the Emerging Leader Institute, I learned that it is not about just being in a leadership position. After all, anyone can be in a leading position, but it takes a true leader to actually steer a group in the right direction.

Barb Koetsier's presentation about the Myers Briggs really helped me realize how different people think different ways. I think the activity during her presentation that sticks out to me the most is when we divided in groups based on our personalities. It was funny to me that the extroverts had such a large list because they would jot down any idea they blurted out, while the introverts did not have as many because they would completely think out their idea before writing it down. That defined the differences of extroverts and introverts. Many people think introverts are loners who do not like to socialize or have friends. They do not realize that it is just that introverts need to be by themselves at certain times to get back their energy, just as extroverts have to be with people in order to gain energy. Dividing into groups just made us realize how these personalities can affect a group and how each person would react to certain situations. An extrovert would have energy after meeting with new people during a social gathering, while an introvert would be exhausted after the same situation. A leader, who simply knows the extroverts from the introverts, knows how to assign certain roles. For example, the leader might decide to assign the extrovert to a position of meeting people to make a sale or to encourage others to join their group. An introvert could be assigned to a position of doing the background jobs, such as treasurer, secretary, or maybe organizing

the social events. These differences can make a huge impact on a group. An extrovert might hate sitting by himself or herself all day as treasurer because it wears them out, while an introvert would gain energy from doing so. If I am in a leadership position, I will be able to take into consideration different personalities like introverts and extroverts along with other personality traits people possess. If I had never participated in this activity, I would not have known what the differences of each personality are. I know now not to take it personally if a person wants to be alone, because that may be what they need to get their energy back. Being an extrovert, I would have never understood why an introvert might want to be alone. Now I understand people cannot help their personalities, and not to take their actions personally, and that it is just who they are.

The second presenter that really stands out in my mind is Lance Brunner on "mindfulness and creativity." The different meditation exercises he had us do really interested me because it was something I had not done before, and was so simple but very effective. It seems college students are stressed and always on the go, and don't get to stop and look at the beauty around them. One basic thing he asked us to do was to open our eyes, when walking on campus, to the different beauties we do not normally see. He believes this is one way of living life to the fullest. I think I found this particularly interesting because I often see beauty in unusual things. Lance mentioned the color of the yellow-painted curb in comparison to the grass that had been colored from the paint. How strange is it to look at something like this and see beauty in it? Now, every day when walking to class (as long as I'm not too late), I like to look deeper at my surrounding. I like to feel the place I am living in and connect with it besides simply looking at it. I feel by doing this simple task, I am living my life to the fullest. Many people would look at

this as a pointless task, but I bet someone who is blind would greatly appreciate the opportunity to look at the world around them. That is why I make sure to take advantage of what I have. This idea can really play into a leadership role because this fact makes a leader appreciate what they have and push every idea to the limit. A good leader with these ideas in mind would never throw out an opportunity or put down a person's ideas. They would feel the other person's passion, and really help them to make their idea a reality.

Bringing an idea to a reality brings up another part of ELI that was very important to me; our individual leadership projects. In short, for my project I wanted to make college students aware of depression, what it was and how to recognize it, because so many college students suffer from depression without realizing it. I had so many ideas of how to raise awareness in college students, but I was afraid of bringing them to a reality. I was literally afraid of making initial contacts. Lance Brunner also spoke about getting to the edge of your comfort zone, the area right before you are completely uncomfortable, because this is what helps you to learn and grow. By finally making contacts and realizing that it was very easy for my idea to become a reality, I was able to grow. I learned that simply researching my idea and subject was a very intricate part in making my project become a reality. After overcoming my fears and researching my idea, I am now able to intelligently talk about my subject and ideas. This small, ongoing project is helping me to gain my confidence in my leadership and start on other leader-oriented projects.

Overall, Emerging Leader Institute was an important learning experience for me. I never really thought myself a leader, but now I know that it just takes someone who is

willing to learn. Yes, many people in this world are naturally leaders, but being willing to improve those skills is what separates a leader from an excellent leader. This class has been very helpful in helping me take the first step into leadership. I may not be ready for a president position, but I started my journey of learning how to get there.