

Growth through Emerging Leaders

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There are many components to being a successful leader, whether it be knowing when to push someone to their limits, knowing when you have reached your limits, stepping up and taking control, or sitting down and shutting up. All of these different aspects of being a leader is what makes one grow as a person. Coming into ELI, I was one of those people that did not always speak up in a large crowd; large being bigger than 10-15 people. I like making everyone happy and if that means not making people step outside his or her comfort zone then I am not the one to push him or her to do so. However, I did not realize how many ideas I had that were being ignored because I was scared to make people reevaluate the way he or she looks at a certain aspect.

At the beginning of the class this spring, we took a leadership role personality test. After taking the test I was found to be an "iD". An "iD" is an influence and dominance leader. The "i" (influence) says that I emphasize on shaping the environment by influencing or persuading others and the "D" (dominance) says that I emphasize on shaping the environment by overcoming opposition to accomplish results. I really evaluated myself as a leader after taking this test. I truly believed that I was an influencer because I see it in my everyday life, but being a dominance I did not really see fit due to the fact that if I

am in a large crowd I do not like to stand up and argue. I always felt that my argument was not going to be as strong as the opposing person. After taking this class, I have realized that no matter what there is most likely going to be more than one way to solve the problem.

At first I was afraid to step out of my comfort zone so that I would make friends and not offend anyone, but as time pasted I realized that just because I make someone go out of his or her comfort zone he or she is not going to dislike me for it in the end they may actually appreciate me more because of it. Everyone has her or her great ideas, I just had to learn how to present mine in an effective manner. Being an "I", I tend to be a good persuader. When I read that description I just laughed because of how much it was really reflecting my leadership personality. Presenting my idea effectively was something that this class really helped me improve on. It not only gave me confidence to say even if nobody else agrees with me, I will get this done. And I made sure to stick to it.

Showing people that you are responsible and that you follow through with commitments is also another way that Emerging Leaders Institute has helped me grow as a leadership. Time management has always been a huge problem of mine. I get so many things on my plate that I tend to push them off until the last second, but in the end it is always accomplished. Now that I have learned how to better manage my time and how to be effective with my time, my life has become much less stressful. At the end of the day I can actually go to bed without worrying about waking up three hours before class because I have to finish something that I did not get finished the night before.

Along with time management I learned a whole new style to planning events and projects. Many times before I would have just tried to start things on my own, but working with my peer mentor group and the rest of the class, I have found that talking things out with other people helps me focus on things that I would have never thought to consider. Many times I would start working on a project then after I had most of the major details worked out I realized there were many minor details that I did not have worked out which then kept me from accomplishing my project.

Another thing that I have learned from this class has been how to deal with problems that may arise while planning a project or working towards a goal. I will never forget the words that Lee Edgerton said to us, "Get what you need." During this presentation, I learned how to debate and fight for what I want and believed in. This helped me later on while I was trying to plan my project. I had reached some dead ends on my path to success in my project, but fortunately I had made connections within the group and was able to make ends meet.

The people in ELI have given me a whole new group of friends to go to when I need something done or need to find something out. Networking has been one of the greatest aspects of this class. Everyone that I have met has given me some kind of new connection with someone or some group that I have never had before. Each member of ELI has his or her own desires and passions as well as their own amazing characteristics. At one point or another, I have used each one of them to either re-evaluate my project and make it better or to see a side of compassion in them that I had never seen before.

Seeing everyone's presentations on his or her personal project made me realize how different each of us are, yet we all show such passion for one thing. Seeing the presentations made me want to help each person with their project and watch them succeed. For my proposed project I was going to put on a tennis camp for the inner-city kids and have the coaches from UK and some of the pros at The Lexington Tennis Club help me put it on. Then I realized that that would be an awesome experience, but one day was not enough. If I really wanted to make an impact on these kids it was going to have to last longer than one day. So I decided to do my project for the whole summer. Since I am so compassionate about tennis and working with the inner-city kids I decided it would be my own little project. I have decided to work with these kids for 6-8 weeks on Tuesdays and Thursdays. I am hoping that at the end of the summer I will be able to set up a clinic and have the coaches come teach the kids then.

These kids need to know that there is something to do besides being on the streets. In my presentation, I wanted everyone to realize how important these kids are to and how they can help. All of the members of Emerging Leaders Institute are involved in so many different aspects of college, I wanted each and everyone of them to realize that they too can help teach these kids what college is all about and how to get there. I was very excited to see that my project was not the only project working with the inner-city kids. I believe that each and every one of my classmates realized how much these kids need our help and during our presentations we all did brainstorming with the rest of the class to give everyone else ideas that they could use to work with these children. I really feel

that my project is going to make a difference and I think that was my main goal coming into Emerging Leaders Institute.

Coming into the Emerging Leaders Institute everyone has their own idea of what it is going to be like and what they want to get out of it. The best advice I can give is go into the class with an open-mind and ready to learn. There maybe times you feel like you are not learning anything new in the class, but listen and learn from each other.