

Emerging Leader Institute

Spring 2005 Class

Personal Leadership Philosophy

Grace Hahn

“I would like to truly make a difference” This quote is the answer to the question, what do I want to get out of E.L.I.? and it was posed to my mentor group at the beginning of the semester. I want to make a difference in the world, and hopefully the world of others. Trying to create change initially drives everyone to become a leader. Our survival instinct pushes us to always want to better our environment. Leaders are the people that dare to step out and create that change, hopefully for the better. The difference I would like to make will revolve around my chosen project. I would love to take a larger project on and try to create that amount of change on campus, but I am just developing my own skills right now. E.L.I. has allowed me to grow as a leader through my experiences with my classmates, listening to the speakers, and the actual execution of our projects.

There are so many different memories that stand out in my mind from our class, but one of the most persistent was the personalities of my classmates. I can't help but think that our instructors had something to do with this level of diversity. This class has given me the opportunity of become exposed to other leaders who have faced the same problems as me. People take you for granted, pile more work on you, and criticize you more than they thank you; many of us have learned to take it all in stride. I was able to share this common frustration with my classmates. They taught me how to deal with these frustrations in a different way. Some of my classmates were more laid back and allowed the projects to fall into their hands, while other were more aggressive and took

on a project with a lot of passion. The more laid back leaders could be perceived as lazy, and unreliable if you don't give them the opportunity to present themselves in a leadership situation. While the aggressive leader would seem cocky, ungrateful, and selfish because they don't initially rely on others. Instead of being stuck with our initial judgments of each other, we got to see ourselves grow and learned from each other's dramatically different personalities. When all of these personalities were able to come together then they helped create an extremely successful group project. The realization of these different styles has allowed me to apply their differences to my own situations. There may be a situation where I might have to become a more laid back leader. If I begin a new position and there are other more experienced people around me, then I might need to stay in the back to try and learn from them instead of being initially aggressive. I am going to be a Resident Advisor at one of the dorms next fall and I might have to use the more aggressive style to present an authoritative figure to my residents. They need to know I am their "boss" as well as their friend, and that aggressiveness will allow them to become comfortable with my position so I can get to know them as friends. All of the personalities that were presented can not be copied or replicated; they can just be modeled after when I apply them to my own situations.

Reliability has always been a weakness throughout my leadership experiences. I have always had trouble relying on others because I was always confident in my ability to complete the task. If I knew I could do it right, then why should I allow someone else to do it? I have begun to notice how this could become a problem. College school work is a lot more demanding than my high school course work, and I have more things to consider when I take on a project. At the beginning of our class we decided on a group project and

it took a while for it to get started. I did not initially step up because I felt like I always took the first step. I wanted to become more of a follower in this process so I could develop my skills by observing others. In a class of leaders I was disappointed to find out that a lot of my classmates that I expected to step up didn't. Once the need got great enough I was fed up with relying on other people. I took a role in one of our committees and decided to just give up on other people. Then I looked around my committee and found a lot of people willing to help. So I discovered that I can rely on other people as the role of a leader. Sometimes people just need direction and they will gladly help. I am not much of a follower because I get impatient with a project easily. These helping hands restored my hope that I can receive help from others, but I just need to give a little direction before others are willing to help. This lesson will also become in application when I become an RA again next semester. I will have to rely on the other RAs to cover for me at the front desk and create programs for the entire dorm. I might have to step up to produce some guidance for some of these programs, but I am excited to possibly meet more leaders like myself whom I can work hand in hand with.

It was the beginning of the semester and our group project had been getting off to a slow start. Nothing had really been done to plan or schedule the event. Some of my classmates were getting frustrated and annoyed at the lack of involvement of the students. The missing ingredient from this project was passion. Many of the students didn't feel the drive to work on the project because it wasn't as important to them. Many of us had never dealt with a child with a disability, and we weren't sure how our event would make a difference in their lives. Once everyone began to see who we would actually be helping, the interest peaked. It took the event itself for everyone to gain the passion needed to

make our group project a success. Many of us had been driven by the grade as the only reason to complete this project, but the smile on the every one of the kids' faces was enough for all of us to be grateful for this opportunity. We realized that we were the lucky ones to be able to spend time with these awesome children. Another experience from this class was the exposure to some leaders on campus who were involved in so many activities that they never put everything into one project. They were always jumping from commitment to commitment and they half completed every project. I was looking through my notes from this semester and I came across a question that I had written down from a speaker. Am I becoming the kind of person that others want to follow? I started evaluating these busy students and realized that I did not want to work with someone who wasn't entirely in the project. If I am going to put my all into a project, then I want my leader, or advisor to do the same. I then began to reevaluate myself, and the projects I was taking on. I began to decide which projects I was passionate about in my own life. This allowed me to decide which extracurricular activities I wanted to put everything into next semester. This was my first step in becoming the kind of person others would want to follow. The next step comes when I will carry out these projects next semester.

Passion has not only allowed me to reevaluate my personal life, but my school work as well. Right now I am a pre-pharmacy major and I have always been uncertain as to whether that was the right thing for me. I then began to list the reasons why I wanted to become a pharmacist. Some of the main reasons were to help and interact with people, and a normal pharmacist is not always lucky enough to have customer contact. They are often forced to stay behind the counter and oversee the prescriptions coming through the

pharmacy. I also became so enthusiastic with our group project that I considered that this type of planning and resourcefulness may be something I could consider for a job. I had always loved working with people, planning projects, and seeing them through completion. I got a rush when things went right and was a clear thinker when things did not go as planned. Since I obviously had a passion for this type of work I decided that I should apply this principle to every part of my life. If your not passionate about something, then it is not worth doing or taking on the task. I have decided to change my major to public relations, so I am now able to create projects that will help others. This job change will also allow me to develop more of a leadership position within my job opportunities.

I know that through this class and with many other leadership experiences at this university I will be able to develop my leadership skills and create many important connections. My goal by the time I graduate from college is to establish myself as a successful leader. I want others to look up to me and want to follow me as a leader. I also want to be able to look back at myself and be proud of the changes I have made on campus and in the lives of others around me. While looking through my notes after our closing ceremony I found another interesting quote that I had copied from a speaker. “Leaders initially influence followers toward change through a shared purpose and personal responsibility” This quote is one of the most important things I can take away from this class. Not only do I want to develop change on campus, I would like to see successful leaders take my place to keep up the successful leadership experiences for students on this campus.