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Leadership

My personal leadership definition of a leader is someone who motivates others to make a positive impact on their surroundings. Leaders are those that are able to see the bigger picture and are able to see areas that need their attention. A leader is able to define a vision and inspire others to achieve it. A leader does not have to be charismatic, but they have to have a goal.

Part I

Positive

First of all, leadership has to make a positive impact. In our class we discussed people being able to lead others toward a negative end, but the ability to lead does not necessarily make someone a leader. True leaders are those that positively influence those around them and their environment.

Seeing the Bigger Picture

Before one can make a positive impact on others and their environment, they must be able to see the bigger picture. A leader has to see the bigger picture so that they can open their eyes to opportunities to lead. This is part of what makes leading a continuous process. The other will come later. Leaders must continuously see what is going on around them and be open to things that need to be changed or things that they can do to help.

A Continuous Leadership

The second part of what makes leading a continuous process, is that leaders must always portray their personal values. A leader cannot be on one minute and off the next.

We discussed a leader who had a reporter come to a party and write poorly of him, but this is just part of the role. A leader is constantly looked up to so they should constantly be portraying their values. One who portrays good values when they want to and abandons their public values in private is not a true leader.

Leadership as a Process

In class, we decided that leadership was a continuous process. This is completely true, because we are constantly leading and going through a continuous process. In a leadership role, there are various stages to go through such as planning and evaluating. We do not lead in a single minute, but over time. One grows as a leader as they go. No one is a perfect leader. We can always learn to be better.

Part II

Important Attributes of Leaders

First of all, it is important that a leader knows what he or she stands for and believes in. Otherwise, they can go either way on issues and their followers don't have an understanding of the shared values. Second, a leader must have a vision. If a leader doesn't have a vision, they will accomplish nothing and be forever stuck in the present. Also, the followers really need an outlined vision. If the followers don't really know what they are working toward, they will most likely go in their own separate directions. Thirdly, it is imperative that a leader is able to strengthen others. I don't feel that someone can truly lead if they don't build up their followers. The example of this in class was that of a leader leaving the company and it crumbling. There were mixed beliefs on whether this made someone a leader or not, but I feel that a leader has not truly led unless they leave a lasting impact on their followers. Their followers should be able to lead in

their absence. Lastly, a leader must be able to see the valuable attributes in others. A great leader will be able to see the strengths of others so that they can utilize them and allow their followers to recognize their strengths. This allows for doing the best possible on leadership tasks.

Part III

My Journey

A Leader Must Work Around Roadblocks...

When I decided to work with recycling I began to research. I saw that glass took even longer to decompose than cans and bottles. This made me even more passionate about getting it started on campus. Unfortunately, upon meeting with the physical plant division, I realized that this was not possible, because they could not get rid of anything but clear glass and were set against it. I recognized the problems that arose with glass recycling and set my sights elsewhere. This was a lesson for me, because it made me recognize that roadblocks were going to come up and I wasn't always going to be able to do exactly what I wanted all of the time. At this point, I decided to enhance recycling on campus. I had two recycling bins added to the Chemistry/Physics building and one to the Student Center. I found that these areas were lacking in can/bottle recycling bins and had them placed there. This was the beginning of what I hope to be a long relationship with Tom Gregory, at the physical plant division.

Another huge roadblock for me was that the physical plant division was out of recycling bins. It took two and a half weeks to make new ones and pushed the completion of my project back. This was annoying, but I kept in constant contact with Mr. Gregory in order to make sure that everything possible was being done to get the bins out. I made

myself available in case my help was needed and my phone calls served as a reminder to him that the bins needed to get out.

A Leader Recognize the Strengths and Weakness of Others...

When I began trying to contact Tom Gregory, I realized quickly that he was not an extremely organized man. He had multiple phone messages that he hadn't responded to littering his desk and took forever to get back to me. For this reason, I set up personal visits with him so that I couldn't be forgotten and wouldn't be waiting around for him to get back with me. Upon meeting Gregory, I realized that he was a kind man and was very passionate about campus recycling. Here, I recognized he had a weakness when it came to organization, but a strength in that he really cared about University of Kentucky recycling.

A Leader Must Be Persistent...

After countless phone calls, emails and a few meetings, I was extremely frustrated with my project. I wanted what I wanted, and I wanted it immediately. But, I kept going and eventually got the bins placed where I asked for them to be. I saw this in many other people's projects as well. Sierra's was one example. She kept running into dead ends, but didn't let it stop her. I think that everyone learned a lesson in persistence this semester. One cannot simply give up; they must instead persevere until their goal is accomplished.

A Leader Must Be Passionate...

With my individual project, if I hadn't been passionate, I would have given up quickly. I really cared about recycling and that is what kept me going. Looking at myself, I have found that I am passionate about other things as well. These include, safety,

children, the elderly, and the health of others. These are various different areas that I could and intend to, positively influence in the future.

A Leader Must Have Defined Values...

I value honesty, persistence, and timeliness. I want people to be upfront with me. Don't waste time with lies, or circling around the truth. I want to know the truth in order to improve my leadership as well as to accomplish my goals. I also value persistence, because people who persevere do so much more than those who don't. Without persistence, we would never have the things we have today. Lastly, I value timeliness, because I like to see results in a timely manor. If something should only take a certain amount of time, then it shouldn't take any longer. I hate wasting time, because that wasted time can be put to good use elsewhere.

Part IV

Me As a Leader

This semester, I have learned that I am a very dominant leader. I tend to like to do things my way and be the one in charge. Recognizing this, I have been able to focus on being more open to outside viewpoints and the help of others. I have also learned that I am very obsessive. If I am going to do something, I want it to be absolutely perfect, but this is not always possible. As Dorothy Edwards said, I must remove the Diet Dr. Pepper from under my shirt. I cannot let little things bother me. If I take everything personally, I will be emotionally drained and unable to persist in my efforts. This is an aspect that I am working on. I see its negative impacts in all that I do. Even if I am just writing a paper, I cannot stand to have it only represent half of my capability. I need to distance myself somewhat from the negative and focus on the positive. This is not to say that constructive

criticism is not beneficial, because it is, but we must take it in stride and not take it as a personal attack. Perhaps the biggest thing I have learned this semester, is that leaders are all different. There is not set model of a leader. A leader can be loud, or soft-spoken, tall or short, a genius, or just the average person. I feel that too often, we try to fit the molds others have set, rather than recognizing the strengths we have. Because everyone has different strengths, we will have different styles of leadership. No one is exactly the same and this is a good thing in leadership.

The Future

In the future, I really hope to work with the Student Volunteer Center on campus. I will be a UK Fusion leader in the fall and am looking toward this experience. I will also be an RA in the fall and I cannot wait to begin. I want to develop programs that will be beneficial to UK students, such as setting up study groups, facilitating the exchange of books, and performing service projects as an RA. Also, as a future resident of North Campus, I hope to begin working with the Hospitality House on a continuous basis. For now, I am focusing on the summer and the opportunities it brings for service to my home community. I would like to work with hope ministries and the youth at my church. The future holds so many possibilities; I hope that I can take part in as many as possible. I would like to continue developing as a leader and help others to become leaders as well. The Emerging Leader institute has left me with the courage to step out of my comfort zone, and take on new challenges. I have learned so much about leadership in general and myself personally. This course has been very worthwhile. I end with my personal leadership philosophy. Leaders are able to motivate others to make a positive difference

in their community. They have defined values and are able to communicate these to others. A leader can change the world.