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### **Kari's Leadership Philosophy**

There is an extremely broad definition of what leadership actually is, but through the Emerging Leader Institute, I feel that I have created a good enough definition for myself that I will be able to go on to be an effective leader. The class has forced me to recognize that not all people are the same and that they respond to things differently. Realizing this, leading groups of people takes a lot of thought and consideration. I will explain my philosophies about leadership and what I believe it takes to be a good leader throughout the next five chapters.

#### **Chapter One: Relationships within the Group**

The first step in becoming an effective leader is creating a good relationship with the people you are working with. It is extremely important to gain credibility in order to get people to trust you. If the people you are trying to lead do not take you seriously and do not trust you, then you are not going to accomplish as much as you could as a leader. Not being perceived as credible can be devastating to you as a leader because people will question your thought process, will be more likely to wonder if there is a better way to do things, and will constantly criticize you as a leader, all of which will bring down the moral of the group. When people are working for someone, they want to be reassured that they are working for someone who is competent and will be able to accomplish the task that they are working towards.

Gaining credibility can be done in many ways. One way is to be knowledgeable. It is important to keep up with what is going on in the group and be aware of everything that is happening with the project. People want to feel that they can come to their leader with any

questions that they may have and that they will be answered correctly. A leader should do research on whatever task they are working towards and make sure that they are knowledgeable in every way, shape, and form about the group, organization, or whoever they are working with. It is also important to be knowledgeable about the people who are working for you. Building a relationship with these people can be extremely helpful because you can figure out what styles of leadership they respond to. Some people like to be bugged about completing a task, and others like to be left alone to complete in on their own. By getting to know these people and learning about their values, a leader can assess their characteristics and figure out what the best way to approach a situation would be.

Another way to gain credibility is to set an example for the group of people you are working with. It is important that a group sees their leader doing nothing less than what that leader expects of them. By a guest speaker in the Emerging Leader Institute, I was told to ask myself “Am I becoming the kind of person who others want to follow?” I think that this question pin points my thoughts on example setting in leaders. If a person would not want to follow him or herself, then why would anyone else want to? A leader needs to hold him or herself to a higher standard and exemplify more than what is expected of the team. If a team sees their leader slacking off or doing something that they themselves are not supposed to be doing, then the team will become discouraged by the hypocrisy of their leader. A leader needs to be someone that makes his or her followers strive to be a better person in order to allow the team the opportunity to be the best that they can be.

## **Chapter Two: Having a Vision**

Knowing what he or she wants is an important quality of a leader. Nothing will ever get accomplished if there is not a common goal. In order to create a common goal, a leader must be enthusiastic and motivate others to want to work towards that same goal. As we have heard over and over again in the Emerging Leader Institute, it is important to have a “fire in your belly” when working on a project. This fire gives a leader a much easier way to stay motivated and more of a reason to stay focused and complete the task. Transferring this fire into the team members’ bellies is helpful as well. A project is so much more effective if the people working on it are motivated and excited about doing the work that it will take to reach the goal. Pep talks and good communication can help to keep the vision in mind and keep the group motivated to accomplish the goal.

While the leader needs to stay motivated and enthusiastic, it is also extremely important that he or she not become emotionally attached. As our speaker, Dr. Dorothy Edwards told us in class, a leader needs to put him or herself on the outside of the project rather than emotionally inside of it in order to more effectively evaluate it. Being emotionally attached to a project can lead to taking personal offense to anything that may go wrong. If you have no emotional attachment to a project then it is much easier to make room for change and accept the fact that something may go wrong.

### **Chapter Three: Making the Most of What Is Given To You**

An effective leader must utilize every opportunity that he or she comes across. It is important to make the most of every situation that gives an opportunity to change, grow, or improve. When trying to reach a goal or accomplish something, more than likely things will not go as they were originally planned. Being able to adjust to whatever obstacles come your way is

an important quality of a leader. When coming to a bump in the road, if a leader becomes discouraged and quickly gives up, the rest of the team will do the same and then absolutely nothing will get accomplished. It is better to accomplish something, even if it is not your original goal or vision, rather than nothing at all. Changes along the way are inevitable, so to grow and improve from those changes shows a good leader. A leader can analyze why the change that was made had to be that way and hopefully improve him or herself in order to plan or avoid that obstacle for the future.

Learning from mistakes that are made is important as well. If a leader makes the same mistake repeatedly, he or she will begin to lose his or her credibility. Mistakes are bound to happen at some point, so learning from those mistakes in order to prevent them is a productive way to go about the situation. Learning from other people's mistakes is productive as well so that you can be sure you do not repeat that mistake. Mistakes happening over and over again can be discouraging to the team, so learning from them in order to prevent them is extremely effective.

#### **Chapter Four: Collaborating With the Team**

Collaboration is an essential part to being an effective leader. It is impossible to accomplish every task by yourself, so it is important to use the people on your team as resources and to not be afraid to give them responsibilities. When collaborating with others, many times there are things that you have not particularly thought about or things that have slipped your mind and these people can be there to catch those overlooked details. Other team members may also have additional ideas or connections that can help in the completion of the project and reaching the goal. Also, team members may have particular strengths or talents that you did not

know about that can also help ease some of the stress that a leader may have. By passing off some responsibilities to other group members, you are giving them the opportunity to show and develop their leadership skills. Making leaders of the people that are following you is extremely important because it will help make your group the best that it can be.

### **Chapter Five: Showing Appreciation**

Showing appreciation towards all of the people that have helped you along the way is vital to the success of your project. Being grateful towards anyone you have come in contact with will help keep them motivated and make them want to continue doing work for you. A worker that feels unappreciated or unnoticed is less likely to help in the future or complete a given task. Any given person will say that they like to feel appreciated for any time or effort that they have put in when working on a project. A simple thank you takes so little effort, but can make all the difference when working with a person.

Also, at the completion of a project or overcoming a milestone hit along the way, it is important to celebrate the success. Celebration is another easy way to keep people motivated and make them want to work for you again. Celebrating gives people a chance to take a deep breath and look back at everything they have done and reward themselves. When a person can see what he or she has accomplished, it is more likely that he or she will feel a success inside and inspire them to continue working because they now know what kind of difference they can truly make.

I have learned so much from the Emerging Leader Institute and am truly excited for all of the opportunities that have been put before me. I am glad that I have gone through this course

and learned so much about different qualities of leaders and what makes a successful leader. I look forward to holding leadership positions in the future and putting all of my new theories to the test. Hopefully I will take learn to take advantage of the skills that I have learned and make a difference in some way, shape, or form.