

Christopher F. Thompson - Personal Leadership Philosophy

Over the past few months I have been able to explore what it means to be a leader from a personal perspective. Engaging in class discussions, group presentations and digging deep into my personal strengths and weaknesses. I am still a little bit fuzzy on what my personal leadership philosophy is or what it even looks like. I will take a brief moment to discuss with myself what my personal leadership philosophy could be. I will provide my opinions and above all else, I will provide the vision that is my PLP.

Opinion

When I think of myself as a leader I want to immediately change the subject. Leadership is defined as the act of leading a group of people or an organization. My initial gut reaction is to tell you that I do not want to be a leader of people. I have no desire to put myself into a position of responsibility which could ultimately influence the lives of people around me. I do not like the term 'follower' nor do I care to claim I have 'followers.' I have no desire to carry influence or make judgment calls for those who look to me for answers. And yet I do, and I have been told I fit the bill of being a leader quite well...

If I were to place a feeling towards the act of leadership and the implications of leadership towards me, I would have to choose the term 'reluctant.' At best I am a reluctant leader. I have multiple high level goals for my life and I see the act of being in a leadership role as a means to an end. In order to move up in life and accomplish these goals I must learn about being a leader in everyday life. I participate as a leader in clubs and organizations as a way to meet and exceed the goals I have placed before me. This does not mean I actively want to maintain leadership positions or seek out leadership opportunities; it simply means I understand their importance to my future.

LE-2950

This fall 2014 semester was one of my most introspective and thought provoking semesters I have had the pleasure of enduring. I participated in a Geographical Information course which opened my eyes to the data driven society we are moving towards. I took a history class which allowed me to research historical figures such as Joan d'Arc whom exhibited a leadership style all her own. Last but not least I took LE-2950 as a requirement for my participation as a Civically Engaged Scholar.

I must be brutally honest when I say this: I would not have taken the LE-2950 course if it had not been a requirement of CES. This does not mean I did not enjoy my time within the class; it simply is a class I would not have taken of my own volition. Keep in mind I fancy myself as a reluctant leader and taking a leadership course would have completely ruined my reluctant status!

From the beginning, this course appeared as if it was going to be read a chapter or article and regurgitate the information for posterity. I was completely wrong... We explored multiple topics surrounding an idea called Strengths Quest Themes. I am always skeptical at first when I answer a list of questions and a computer spits out something deep and intimate about my personality. StrengthsQuest was different; after seeing my results I actually felt as if I could see my own personality printed on paper before me.

It called me out as being in the RESPONSIBILITY theme category... perhaps. Next I noticed ACHIEVER and I knew this was on to something. Following after was HARMONY, and then came INTELLECTION and finally MAXIMIZER. How could answering a year long list of snoozer

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questions provide feedback which actually made sense to my brain? Who knows... but it all made a little scratch occur in my head.

I will always consider myself as the reluctant leader; however, I can always admit when I need to rethink my position on things. Please allow me to provide to you my take on what I feel others see in me as a leader. I understand some of this is out of context or perhaps it won't jive with my earlier rhetoric; I just hope this is how you see me...

Vision

My vision as a leader tends to be one of facilitation. I see myself as a leader who guides others to the proverbial water. I will be the leader who is capable of seeing the big picture and having the ability to show this big picture to those around me. I will be the leader who has the answers to as many questions as is humanly possible; if I do not have the answer, I will know where to find it. I will be an emotional leader and a leader who keeps his followers close to his heart.

Consideration

As a facilitator I will never pass judgment on those who are willing to take and give constructive criticism. I will always keep an open mind to the ideas of those around me. I will always do everything in my power to take those ideas and help the creators of those ideas bring them to fruition. As a leader I will also keep stock of the ideas and emotions these ideas will stir within me, no matter if the feelings are negative or positive. I will actively weigh the actions of others while considering their choices as they shape their own visions.

Objectivity

In order for me to become the true leader I know I am capable of becoming, I must keep a level head; an objective heart. I, at times, can be a very personally destructive person. As a self-proclaimed intellectual, I have a tendency to overthink things to the point of mental exhaustion. I must learn to keep this destructive behavior to a minimum or, as a leader, I will drag others into a negative environment. In order to mitigate the losses produced from this type of negative thought process, I have adopted a 'personal mantra' that I can use to remind myself of the need to reverse the negativity; "Embrace the Chaos..." My mind at times has the tendency to be erratic and highly chaotic and this mantra fits most perfectly.

Standards

Standards will always have a different meaning for everyone. My personal standards have been set at such height, they may not be appropriate for others around me. I will work with those around me to identify a standard of quality capable of being achieved by everyone. Once these external standards have been identified, I will then work diligently to assure these standards are maintained by not only me, but those who choose to participate within my realm of leadership. The simple list of standards I will strive to adhere to are as follows:

- Always be a person of your word
- Always be on time
- Always be prepared to work
- Always follow through

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Validation

In today's world it becomes important to offer people validation for the work they produce. As a facilitator, it is my hope by helping someone accomplish their vision and letting them take ownership, this will be its own form of validation. Those who can see and tangibly hold the fruits of their labors will never need me to validate their work; the validation will come from within their own being. My personal validation will come from watching their success become reality.

Conclusion

I will never actively seek out leadership positions. I never want to say I have 'followers.' I cannot allow myself to actively cause change to people's lives unless they ask for my help. I will always seek out those opportunities which bring me one step closer to my goals; taking on leadership roles just happens to be one of those opportunities. In conclusion I prefer to be the reluctant leader and I accept all the misunderstanding which may occur in the pursuit of my future.