Personal Leadership Model

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PERSONAL MODEL OF LEADERSHIP

**Theoretical Context**

Each leadership theory has contributed to the field of leadership. Therefore, it is difficult to determine precisely where my ideas of leadership come from. After much thought, I can best describe my personal model of leadership as a combination of the servant model of leadership, transformational leadership, and authentic leadership.

When I look back upon my career, I tend to be drawn to the concept of servant leadership. Servant leaders are concerned about the well-being of others. As a leader, I believe it is important to be involved. I would never ask anyone to do something that I would not do. There should be no task that is too mundane for those in a leadership role. Employees respect leaders who are visible and will do whatever needs to be done.

It is important to understand that anyone can be a leader, regardless of their title. Allowing employees to be creative, without the fear of making a mistake, will only benefit the organization. Involving employees in the decision-making process will allow them to take ownership and be active participants in the changes. Involvement brings acceptance and allows the leader to evolve within them.

As a transformational leader, I desire to inspire others. A combination of transformational and servant leadership would require a leader to balance organizational objectives with the value of the employees. A leader must invest in the development of employees while being sensitive to the needs of the organization.

Authentic leaders are genuine and authentic. These leaders have an inward focus and are not distracted by trying to mirror others. I have a desire to balance the needs of the employees and the organization while being true to myself.

**Personal Definition and Assumptions**

My personal definition of leadership is as follows:

 Leadership is the ability to motivate and inspire others by promoting personal and professional development.

**Word Portrait**

There are many words that I would use to describe the type of leader I would like to become:

trust-worthy

dedicated

smart

encourager

skilled

approachable

responsible

influential

honest

ethical

credible

challenging

internal locus of control

flexibility

integrity

building community

commitment to the growth of people

service

foresight

**Metaphor**

Leadership is like being an actor. You must be able to play the part. This metaphor is related to situational leadership theory. The situation tends to dictate which type of leadership will be demonstrated. Therefore, leaders must wear many hats. At times, a leader may need to keep peace, establish order and enforce standards of conduct. At other times, the leader must act as a cheerleader and be positive to encourage workers. Leaders must act as teachers by educating those around them. Leaders must switch between the role of teacher and student. Leaders must act as politicians by looking after constituencies and forging alliances. Leaders must act as a poet by using words to inspire and motivate others. Leaders must be planners, organizers and disciplinarians.

**Leadership in Action**

Several years ago my employer asked me to move into the position as University Registrar. The former Registrar was well-liked by her staff. The University had moved her out of the position. The direct reports in the department were nearly twice my age. I felt nervous, scared and questioned myself for taking this position.

 To my surprise, the staff welcomed me and made me feel comfortable. I was careful to respect their processes. I did not want to move into the position and immediately make changes. I viewed myself as a consultant and spent the first few weeks understanding the procedures in place. I spent time with each individual to better understand their roles and responsibilities. I sought their input and asked their thoughts regarding areas for improvement.

 I stressed the motto, work smarter, not harder. When the staff realized that many of their processes could be automated resulting in more effective operations, they were supportive and eager for the challenges ahead.

 During this time, the Registrar’s Office successfully went live with an online student system which allowed students to register, view grades, account statements, transcripts and view their progress toward a degree. Many processes were automated. Enrollment and degree verifications were outsourced to the National Student Clearinghouse. Audits on the student information system were conducted on a regular basis to ensure the necessary data fields were populated correctly. Degrees were conferred monthly rather than at the end of each academic term. Certificates for academic honors were mailed on a continual basis and a process for monitoring academic sanctions was put into place. Communication with the students, faculty and staff within the institution improved. The Registrar’s Office had a greater presence on campus and became involved in decision-making. Deans and Directors sought direction from the Registrar’s Office regarding curriculum and student issues.

 I challenged employees to pursue their education and take advantage of the employee benefit of tuition waivers. I often served as their academic advisor and discussed their progress each semester.

 Visibility was important. I visited the different areas on a daily basis so I could have a better understanding of operations. I developed trust and respect among those in the department by being approachable. Team members were empowered to make decisions and take ownership of their areas. If a line developed at the registration desk, I became a registration clerk. If the academic advisors were short staffed, I became an advisor. Employees were appreciative of my efforts to provide assistance

 Employees were encouraged as we took time to celebrate accomplishments. The department’s potluck lunches were well-known on campus and even sparked a department cookbook.

 This role provided me with invaluable experience. I am proud of the accomplishments of the staff during this time period and am amazed at the improvements to the department and its’ processes.

**Leadership Task**

Since the birth of my children, my priorities have changed. The most important role I have to fulfill is the role of a parent. I am responsible for two wonderful children. I want to be a leader in my home by providing them with direction, support, and love. I have a desire that they grow to be caring, hard-working, productive members of society.

 I have a desire to be known as someone who accepted a challenge, inspired others, and was successful in their job.

**Inspiration**

The Bible is an inspiration to me in both my personal and professional life. Philippians 4:13 (King James Bible) states, “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.” Leadership roles can present challenges on a daily basis. I remind myself of my life verse, Philippians 4:13, during these trying times.

A poem which I found to provide a realistic picture of a servant leader is as follows:

The **paradoxes** of being a ***"Servant-Leader"*** poem (p29)

Strong enough to be weak
Successful enough to fail
Busy enough to make time
Wise enough to say "I don't know"
Serious enough to laugh
Rich enough to be poor
Right enough to say "I'm wrong"
Compassionate enough to discipline
Mature enough to be childlike
Important enough to be last
Planned enough to be spontaneous
Controlled enough to be flexible
Free enough to endure captivity
Knowledgeable enough to ask questions
Loving enough to be angry
Great enough to be anonymous
Responsible enough to play
Assured enough to be rejected
Victorious enough to lose
Industrious enough to relax
Leading enough to serve

**Poem by Brewer ---** as cited by Hansel, in Holy Sweat, Dallas Texas, Word, 1987. (p29)

**Visual Portrait**

An image which reminds me of leadership is a picture of a lighthouse with a light beaming out to sea among the darkness. As an effective leader, we must let our light shine to show others the way. We must provide them with the tools and support necessary to be successful in their endeavors.