

My Personal Leadership Development Plan

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Authors Note

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Define Leadership Development

In his second edition of “The Making of a Leader,” Robert Clinton, provides the reader with a broader and deeper understanding of what constitutes authentic leadership. Generally known as one of the leading scholars in leadership development, he also takes the reader through a very realistic look at “what it takes to become the leader God wants you to be” (Clinton, 2012). According to www.yourdictionary.com, “leadership development is defined as a program or activity that makes people become better leaders.” Someone by the name of Olatunde commented with this “It is a process that provides individuals with the opportunities, training, and experiences for them to be effective leaders in their organization.” Clinton defines leadership development as “A measure of a leader’s changing capacity to influence, in terms of various factors, over time; also used to indicate the actual patterns, processes, and principles that summarize development” (Clinton, 2012). I agree with them all!

My Ministry Philosophy

My ministry philosophy is servant leadership. It is based on many of my life experiences, observations, successes, and failures. With my love for interacting with people, I feel naturally inclined to serve or help them; and that was before I aspired to be in a leadership role. As leaders, our God-given responsibility is to influence and lead others towards God and His purpose for them. To me, servant leadership is more about character than style. Our influence should be the dominating factor, not our position or title. One cannot truly be a servant leader if he or she does not really like people or like serving them.

In order to play a role in leadership development, or be an effective leader, we must sincerely treat people the way we want to be treated. In his book “Be a People Person,” John Maxwell wrote and I believe that: “The Golden Rule is the perfect rule” (Maxwell, J. C., 2004).

That quote was based on Matthew 7:12. Another nugget that Maxwell believes and shares is that “Great leaders are great givers: real leaders have something to give and they give freely” (Maxwell, 2004). It is not about being served, it is about serving others. We have heard this cliché said often “people will make you or they can break you,” and it can be true. But let’s face it, difficult people will always encounter us, but how we respond to negativity and criticism is totally up to us. When we, as leaders, do an honest evaluation and admit “we do not always have it together; our attitudes are not always sweet; our conversation is not always godly, then we will be able to love others through their struggles and shortcomings.

Helpful Training Mechanisms

I learn in many ways but my two desired areas of training are hands-on and mentoring (school setting). Hands-on training helps bring me comfort when someone shows me what the job or responsibility will be like and then step aside and allow me to do it. I watched my leadership and fellow employees and mimicked some of what they did in order to complete the job. But I learn quicker by doing the job (or assignment) than watching someone else do it. When I was in management, one of my responsibilities was to train new hires, this method of hands-on training worked best because the employees learned at their own pace and were allowed to ask questions while being supervised. This resulted in motivation and active participation.

Clinton makes a powerful statement when he writes “We can develop as persons using spiritual gifts and natural abilities right up to the level of potential that God intends. Skills that enhance our gifts and abilities should be learned and used” (Clinton, 2012). Mentoring and/or classroom training is another helpful training mechanism. Training workshops, educational exercises, and discussion sessions help me feel safe enough to ask questions and confident that they will be respected.

Leadership skills are not developed overnight, it is a daily process. I thank God for the two mentors that He placed in my life. I have one in the corporate arena and one in the ministry arena. I allow them to take the lead in the relationship but they both respect me as a mentee (or participant) as well as my experiences in life. They encourage me to take risks, share my ideas, opinions, and knowledge. Both are trained in what they do and I respect the time they take to pour into me. They do not seek to make me obey but their goal is to teach me how to be a decision-maker and self-directed learner. I value and respect them for their experience and perspectives. My mentors listen to what I want and need then recommend events, webinars, books, and other materials that will continue my growth.

My Personal Plan

As stated in one of my discussion board conversations—my goal is to live a life above reproach and/or criticism. I want to help others grow in this area as well. I know that we cannot control what others feel or think but we must “avoid the temptation to retaliate. There is a time to walk away and avoid a wrong response that would only disgrace yourself.” (Para 20). God told His children “Do not answer a fool according to his folly, lest you also be like him” (Proverbs 26:4). Just as God comforts us through hardship and trials, comfort others as well; I want to live what I teach and preach; I want to let love be the ruling principle in my life. My desire is to speak the truth in love and trust God to deliver me. I desire to live above the circumstances I face (knowing that God is with me). Therefore, I will remain strong under pressure and obey God, not man! I will also seek opportunities that allow me to serve others and help them grow.

Supporting Books

In addition to reading *The Making of a Leader* by Robert Clinton, I have read “Integrity: The Courage to Meet the Demands of Reality” by Dr. Henry Cloud. Because this book is so

useful, I find myself going back to it from time to time. One important trait that I learned from this reading is “building trust through vulnerability” (Cloud, 2006.). Cloud reminded me of the importance of being strong regardless of past failures. He said “if a leader, for example, is weak, people lose faith. We do not follow incompetent leaders, for we do not feel that we can trust them with our lives or futures” (Cloud, 2006).

My Personal Core Values

Over the years I have embraced and responded to the things that are most important to me personally and to my family. These things are who I am and who I want to be. I am learning that when we have a defined set of values, we are able to pursue a life of purpose and accomplishment. My core personal values are the things that drive my behavior...they include:

- Integrity and trustworthiness
- Experience, diligence, responsibility, and accountability
- Showing appreciation, and gratitude towards others
- Getting involved by contributing to my church and community
- Respect and support for others

These values are unique and speak to who I am now. They describe my strengths but also reward (or compensate for) my weaknesses. In his article, Business Coach, Scott Jeffrey writes: “individuals experience greater fulfillment when they live by their values. And when we don’t honor our values, our mental, emotional, and physical state suffers” (Para 2). Although I look up to other great leaders that I serve and encounter, it is not about emulating or competing with them. It is about knowing my purpose by identifying what is important to me; it is about what I stand for, and the importance of making the right decisions in life and leadership. I desire to be who God intended me to be—His chosen vessel!

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