

Leader Interview

Jasmeen Samnani

LEAD 704: The Leader's Role in the 21st Century

June 13th, 2020

Dr. Anyango Reggy Gregory

For the purpose of this assignment, I interviewed Dr. Nida Usmani. Dr. Usmani is the leader of the nonprofit organization which is the part of our Islamic community of the Decatur city. She lives with her family consisting of husband and three small kids. I got to know her from one friend of mine who is her close relative. I almost talked with her for approximately thirty minutes and her words gave me motivation and encouragement to become an efficient leader. Leaders are an essential part of company success. Great leaders enable teams to achieve goals through clear direction and support. I interviewed her about her strengths, weaknesses, and I got a glance of her leadership skills.

When I asked her about her strengths, she mentioned that her biggest strength is that she is good at connecting with people and building rapport quickly. She maintains a good rapport with her community and her fellow people. She keeps trust in people with whom she works and is always dedicated to her work. She motivates her subordinates and is always accessible to help them and make them learn. She share her experiences and further states that she have learnt a lot from her own experiences and she feels proud to share them with her companions because she said that sharing our own experiences help others to learn how to act if any similar situation arises or can come up with solutions and share them with other people so that it can be helpful to many people in the world. I agree to her point and I can relate this point with one of the Bollywood movie named “Jai Ho”, where the actor (Salman Khan) named Jai in the movie plays a role of ex-army man. He fights a solitary war against corruption and injustice. With a simple word of helping three people to pay forward and not saying thank you, he starts off by helping one person and forms an ever growing circle of people helping each other. I liked Dr. Usmani’s attitude towards helping others without any expectations of anything getting in return. According to the book “The truth about Leadership”, Dr. Usmani follows the truth number six ‘Trust rules’.

You need to demonstrate that you have the competence, the system, and the processes to make people feel safe and trusting. You have to do it in real time by dealing with situations that might create fear and suspicion. You have to extend yourself by being available, by volunteering information, by sharing your personal experiences, and by making connections with the experiences and aspirations of your constituents (Kouzes & Posner, 2010)

She further mentioned that she is a good listener. She acknowledges that listening is a leader's most important skill. She always keeps her engaged, active during her conversations with others. She describes that every word spoken by others do matter and it has its importance. So it is necessary that we should give respect to what others are saying. “Effective listening, according to Fulwiler, is about words, dance, and music – the other person’s words, tonality, and body language. This is what listening with your entire body is about. It means going beyond someone’s words by paying attention to body language how the words are spoken (music) and putting this into the context of what you know about this individual” (Hersh, 2018). Dr. Usmani further mentions that it is important for an effective leader to be good listener, as listening is the key element and healthy communication between leaders and team members establishes a foundation for trust. I do abide by her point as this is also mentioned as the third truth i.e, Credibility- The foundation of leadership. This helps to share our ideas with our team members, connect with them and work with coordination and collaboration.

She further describes in her interview that she is a visionary leader, where she always thinks of a future and set up goals according and work for getting them fulfilled. She reflects that to be visionary is to have children. I got impressed with her point that “We do everything for raising our children even make sacrifices, but when we want others to take care of our children, for example, nanny or a daycare, we need to pay them. The nanny or the caretaker will not do

sacrifices like a mother for their children. Likewise, a vision is for the leader, we can't force our team to sacrifice anything like the leaders do to follow the vision. She also says that nothing can be done alone. We need a team to get any work done. A good leader is one who believes in his ability and uses it to help, support and manage his team members. A team whose members focus on their own individual tasks may not be as efficient as a team that is working together by helping each other overcome difficulties, troubleshooting problems, and dealing with pressure (Shaikh, 2016). Dr Usmani footnotes that team leader is a person who motivates his/her team to work together with the spirit of unity and sharing their problems and helping each other. There are problems among the team members initially to come and mingle along with different cultured people, but by sharing the ideas and communicating with each other often help to overcome it and the team can work with more companionship and trust amongst themselves.

On interviewing her further, I got to know that she is still taking her some online classes and is eagerly waiting to do some more courses in her medical field. She said that she has always been a great learner and always eager to accept the new challenges and opportunities that come by. She says that she used to have risks in some of the opportunities but she has faith in Lord and she gets her work done. She mentioned one of her experiences. When she was almost due with her second baby, she had an opportunity to do her neurosurgery course. She knew that she was not able to get help as her mommy who was supposed to come from India to help her after delivery to take care of the child and her, had some paper work to do in India and her mother had to cancel her flight. But her dedication to education and the faith in God helped her to go through this hard time and accept this opportunity. She further mentioned that it was hard for her to manage the child as it was a complicated Caesarean Section. But she somehow managed to get up within a month time and by God's grace, her mother's work was done in India and she came

to United States when Dr. Usmani was one and half month post-delivery. She got great support from her mother who used to take care of the children and household help and Dr. Usmani can do her learning. This follows the truth of 'The best leaders are the best learners.' The potential to lead exists in you. If you apply your head, your heart, and your courage, you can learn to lead. Leadership is not preordained. It is not a gene, and it is not a trait. There is no hard evidence to support the assertion that leadership is imprinted in the DNA of only some individuals and that the rest of us missed out and are doomed to be clueless (Kouzes & Posner, 2010). A key characteristic for leaders to have is the willingness to learn and grow in their own professional development. This readiness to learn may not always come easy. Leaders have to believe in themselves if they want others to believe in them.

One of the weaknesses she mentioned in her interview is that she is not good at multitasking. Multitasking is doing many tasks at the same time. With three kids, it is hard to manage her routine along with her care of the children and doing household chores. She always needs extra help to get her work done. But she further specifies that this weakness is ok with her because she feels sometimes that multitasking is not a good idea as there are some work that needs concentration and focus. She shared one of her personal experiences. With twenty years of medical profession experience, she was able to get much knowledge about leadership. She described about a day when she first became a leader. She was very worried about her new position as she had to build trust among her companions. Initially she was anxious, but as time passed by, she used to meet her colleagues more often. Her qualities of honesty, respect and integration helped her to move on. She use to talk with her team like a friend, share the experiences, asks them about their problems and come up with the solution to any problem. She was very polite to others and always in the attitude of helping others. This quality of politeness

was seen in my interview, where I can see her that she was soft-spoken and down to earth character. She never holds grudges on anyone and had a forgiving character. She would organize the team meetings and came up with the initiatives with performance evaluation and motivating the team members to be competitive and encourage them to work in the spirit of togetherness. She used to make her team member understand that she is still a part of the team, even though she is a leader, she is friend of them and always available to help them. This quality helped the team members to work with full enthusiasm and this way she led to the road of becoming one of an effective leader.

Interviewing her was a great time to understand her traits of leadership. She gave me a motivation to work as a dedicated team member. It also helped me to learn about encouraging my team members to work towards the common goals and to work with unity and by sharing our experiences and helping others to solve the problems. Reflecting her interview, I would inculcate the ten truths from “The truth about Leadership” which are the essential sets of quality of leadership to become a great leader. From her interview it is obvious that there are some leaders who still exist who have faith in god, believe themselves and always moving forward to accomplish their goals. There are cultural differences among different leaders and much can be learned by sharing the experiences. “Culture is one of many external variations in which leaders must be enthusiastically engaged. It is another area that requires personal reflection related to one’s own cultural heritage and influences. As in all areas of leadership, successful interaction with others begins with acceptance of self “ (Beare, 2017)

References

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