

Responsive leadership in social services: A practical approach for optimizing engagement and performance by S. De Groot

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Anna Stefano

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I normally consider myself an optimist and most mornings I wake up pretty motivated for the day and for the tasks that are in front of me. However, there have been days when I wake up stressed or discouraged and question whether or not anything I do will matter at the end of the day. It's in these type of moments and these type of days that I need to remember Edward Hale's words, "I am only one, but still I am one...I will not refuse to do the something that I can do" (De Groot, 2016, pp. 215). In this moment of my life, when I am looking forward to my last semester of grad school and slightly overwhelmed by not knowing what comes next, I am tempted on my "down days" to wonder if my dreams will come to fruition or whether what I want to do will matter. I feel encouraged by De Groot's desire to validate and further inspire those who are pursuing leadership roles in the social work sector. It's not realistic that every day would feel like I'm on top of the world, but there is truth in realizing that managing the responsibilities and tasks that are in front of me today have deep meaning and purpose that I might not yet see.

I find all of the tips and practical advice from De Groot to be helpful because receiving feedback is crucial to staying humble and teachable and being able to continue to improve. I have begun to develop a plan of action for figuring out next steps. One of my steps is to travel to Rome to meet an American couple who have started a community center to help refugees and immigrants in Rome to learn Italian or English and to have a safe place to meet and connect with each other as they adjust to a new country and figure out what they need. Another step that I have in place is to meet with a woman named Kim Kerr who is the director and founder of an organization that empowers women across North Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia to be able to grow into their fullest potential and overcome the societal barriers that they face in their countries. I am excited to explore future possibilities for where I will live and who I can work for and partner with. I especially want to network with others who share a vision for bettering the lives of displaced women, children, and families and strengthen their resources and care for their mental, emotional, spiritual, and physical wellbeing. Networking is something that will take practice – something that De Groot affirms as important in preparing to be a good leader.

References

De Groot, S. (2016). *Responsive leadership in social services: A practical approach for optimizing engagement and performance*. Thousand Oaks, Sage. ISBN: 978-1452291543