

RUNNING HEAD: LEADERSHIP PHILOSOPHY

Leadership Philosophy  
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Leadership “is the exercise of influence” (Hackman & Johnson, 2004, p. 11). I could not agree more. Looking back over my life, the individuals I see as the best leaders are those who have had the most positive influence on my life. For example, my parents, who took every opportunity during my childhood to influence me to lead a life that is honoring to God. There have also been leaders in my life who have exercised influence in a negative manner. Case in point, one of my best guy friends in college who lead a worship team I was on. He did a great job of leading the worship team, but his influence on my life outside of church did not lend itself to being honoring to God or to one who is serving a congregation. Whether the influence is positive or negative, individuals who lead have the ability to influence those who follow them.

Every individual is a leader at some point in their life because, whether or not one chooses to recognize it, every person has some sort of influence on other peoples’ lives. The amount of leadership one has varies from situation to situation, but no matter the level of leadership, leadership comes with responsibility. It is up to the leader exercising their influence to decide if they desire to use their responsibility of leadership to positively or negatively influence those who follow them.

I acknowledge that I am a leader and I am willing to take on the responsibility of positively influencing those who God has entrusted me with leading. I am a leader in many arenas of my life, including the following: as a youth pastor I exercise great amounts of influence on the students I work with, as a Graduate Assistant I am granted leadership over the development of a new program, and as a mentor I am given many opportunities to speak wisdom into the lives of individuals who come to me for Godly counsel. As one who leads, it is important for me to acknowledge what type of leader I

am and the leadership philosophy I adhere too so that I can make informed decisions about the types of leadership positions I seek to take on now and in the future.

The first and most important aspect of my philosophy of leadership is that I strive to be a servant leader. Hackman and Johnson (2004) state that “truly great leaders serve rather than rule because they recognize that those whom they lead entrust them with leadership responsibilities” (p. 20). Greenleaf (1977) expresses in his writing that the best way to determine if someone is a servant leader

is this: Do those served grow as persons? Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? And, what is the effect on the least privileged in society? Will they benefit or at least not be further deprived? (p. 27).

In my leadership I hope that all of these will be accomplished. As I work in different ministry settings my prayer is that those I lead and serve will grow as individuals and more importantly in their relationship with the Lord. I also pray that my service to others through leadership will assist people in becoming healthy, wise and autonomous.

In some respects, I feel I am a natural servant leader in the eyes of the world. I am always willing to serve others, do the behind the scenes jobs, and accomplish tasks others may not want to do. However, I have found that on many occasions I serve others through my leadership in hopes of being noticed and commended, instead of serving others out of my service to my Master, who is God. This disconnect in my servant leadership (between being a servant of God and serving other masters) is one that I have had time to examine and am in the process of reconciling. My hope is that my actions as a leader will be a pure reflection of the Master I serve. On the outside my leadership may look the same, but internally my attitude and motivation behind being a servant leader will be pure.

As a servant leader who reflects the Master there are three areas of personal development that I am committing to: identity found in Christ, accountability, and integrity. First and foremost, it is critical for my identity to be found in my relationship with my Master as opposed to being found in what I do. Throughout life there are going to be times when I fail according to the world's standards, but if my identity is found in Christ my failures will not cause me to lose all hope. Instead, I will be able to remain secure in who I always am – a child of God. Maintaining my identity will not always be easy, but that is where the second aspect of personal development comes into play – accountability. Accountability to a moral, ethical and God-honoring life and leadership style is critical for me to maintain throughout my life. Because I tend to hold positions that put me in leadership over minors or young adults within the Church, my day to day life choices need to be a pure reflection of God so that I can maintain respect and the privilege of being a leader. To create this accountability, I have (and will continue to) allow several people who I trust to look into the depths of my soul and examine my actions and motives. This process is not always easy, but in the past it has saved me from many mistakes and embarrassing moments so I know it is worth it in the long run. Lastly, I am committed to developing and maintaining integrity within my life. Integrity means that my actions, leadership and service are consistent with who I am in Christ. Integrity is a personal discipline I am pursuing because of my identity in Christ and I am assisted in maintaining my integrity by those who I am in accountability relationships with.

As a person of influence I hope to lead from a platform of “personhood” or in other words having leadership because of who I am (Mannoia, 2008). Leading from a platform of personhood, demands a leader who is committed to a lifestyle of service and

integrity. This type of leadership is something that is created over time, it is not granted simply because one is given a position of leadership. Though there will definitely be times throughout my leadership roles where people will follow me because of my position over them or because of what I have done for them, my hope is that my integrity and being will be the predominate reason people follow me.

Looking at McGregor's Theory X and Theory Y Leadership Theory I would claim to lead from a perspective of 90% Y and 10% X (Hackman & Johnson, 2004). I identify with Theory X because I am very task oriented. I always have a "to do" list on hand and I prefer having a detailed schedule of what needs to be done each day so at the end of each activity or event I can check it off my list. However, as I become more experienced in leadership I identify more and more with a Theory Y perspective on leadership. Though I am task oriented, I am also very people oriented. Relationships are a high priority for me and I have been able to create a healthy balance in my life of completing tasks while also developing and maintaining solid relationships with those I lead. I find that I identify with Theory Y because my personality drives me to have self-control, be self-directed and see achievement as a form of incentive (Mannioia, 2008) and therefore I tend to believe those I lead are capable of having self-control, of being self-directed and seeing achievement as an incentive to work. In the majority of cases, this outlook has served me well and it also tends to give a sense of empowerment to those I serve. For example, by allowing the high school and college students I work with to have responsibility within the ministry and allow them to put their ideas into practice I find that events and programs flow better because the students are fully invested as opposed to just attending. I admit, that my mix of X and Y tendencies can leave me frustrated at

times when the tasks on my list do not get accomplished because I relied on those I lead to be intrinsically motivated. However, I have never regretted investing more in relationships than in tasks and I do not believe I ever will.

In regards to Blake and McCauley's Leadership Grid I tend to be in the "Team Management" part of the grid with "Country Club" (Hackman & Johnson, 2004, p. 51) tendencies. Mannoia (1996) defines a leader in the Team Management portion of the grid as "team-oriented with people involved in the task" and someone in the Country Club portion of the grid as "people-oriented using a 'country club' style of pleasing people" (p. 104). As stated previously, I am both task and people oriented, which makes me more of a team manager, however I do have a tendency to want to make people happy which puts me more towards being a Country Club leader. I know being a servant leader does not mean being a people pleaser, and therefore that is an aspect of my leadership I am striving to improve upon. In this leadership theory I would hope to meet the standard that Hackman and Johnson discuss for Team Management: "nurtures followers so that they are able to achieve excellence in both personal and team goals" (p. 51). Nurturing those I have influence over so as to accomplish tasks with excellence, I do not think there is much more I could strive for.

George Barna's Leadership Profile gives great insight into my leadership style. Barna profiles four types of leaders: "Directing" leaders set the vision, "Strategic" leaders are able to set the direction for how the vision will be fulfilled, "Operational" leaders set in motion all the specifics of obtaining the vision, and "Team Builders" are focused on keeping the team together in the process of obtaining the vision (Mannoia, 2008). I would say that I am 60% Operational, 10% Strategic, and 30% Team Builder. However, others

would say that I am more balanced between all four categories as 45% Operational, 20% Strategic, 20% Team Builder, and 15% Directing. These different observations (mine and others) of my leadership style intrigue me. The reasoning behind my perspective of my leadership profile is that I thrive off of the details (being an Operational leader). As soon as a vision is cast, my mind instantly goes to making lists of every task that needs to be accomplished to make the vision come to fruition. In that operational mindset I sometimes slip into being strategic and seeing the bigger picture and leaving the details for someone else to come up with, but I do not see that happening often. Because of my relational side, I also tend to be concerned with the team as a whole and making sure everyone is healthy and happy.

Others also see me as being very operational! I was hired at a real-estate development and management company purely for the purpose of developing and managing several filing and billing systems. However, several leadership positions I have held have been Directing and Strategic in nature and those who I worked with in these positions have informed me that I am gifted in these areas. As I examine why others would say these areas are ones I excel in, yet I do not see them as part of my leadership style, I am struck by the fact that these areas are not where I thrive. Yes, I can lead in these areas, but I would much rather prefer (and am a lot happier) leading from an operational stance.

Within organizations I am one of two people, either a builder or a reformer, which I find to be an interesting combination. Builders lead organizations when they are moving from a movement (chaotic) to a system (channeled energy). This aspect of my leadership philosophy flows perfectly with my operational leadership style. I want the organization

to be successful and to help the organization get to that point I am able to see all the little details that need to be put in place to make that happen smoothly. I also have played the role in organizations as the reformer, which goes against my operational style but plays into my directing and strategic styles of leadership. This role also rings true to my dedication to integrity and high moral and ethical standards. When organizations need reformation they have become bureaucracies and often find themselves doing what they do purely because it is what has always been done and not because it is right. In the reformer role I tend to be the leader who is setting the vision, but has no part in the operational aspect of accomplishing the vision. This role is not necessarily one I enjoy, but I take it on because I am not okay with just standing by and letting injustices occur simply because it is tradition. (Mannoia, 2008)

The last aspect of my leadership philosophy is that I am committed to surrounding myself with individuals who have different leadership styles and functions than my own. I fully embrace the type of leader God has created me to be, but I also recognize that I need others with other styles of leadership to help me see situations and decisions from different perspectives and to assist me in being the best leader I can be.

Though my philosophy on leadership may change throughout my life, the stated philosophy above is where I stand as of now and I believe it serves as a good foundation for my current and future practice. My desire is that no matter what changes occur in my philosophy of leadership, I will remain true to consistently serving and ministering to those I have the privilege of leading.



References

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