



Leadership Philosophy

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My leadership philosophy centers around the premise that people and, as such, employees are intrinsically good and desire to do the right thing. In keeping with that philosophy I tend to believe that generally there is an absence of malice in the actions of others. While this gives the benefit of doubt to the employee, unless proved otherwise, I am not oblivious to the fact that human nature can and does deviate from this ideology. This display of trust can at times be a personal flaw, however, I have found that most people respond with a sense of maturity and appreciation which leads to an even higher outcome of performance. Conversely, when that trust is violated I tend to condemn the violation of trust more than the action that was committed.

I believe that leadership is the ability to guide, direct and influence people toward a common purpose and motivation. As such I place a great deal of emphasis on empowerment. Without question, I try my best to give the authority that goes with the responsibility, while at the same time recognizing that ultimately I will be responsible, even though I may not have immediate control over the task, the antithesis of micro management. I believe in setting goals high and challenging people to dare greatly and fall short rather than accomplish moderately. As a leader I also embrace the need to succession plan for the future good of the organization. My task for today is to help shape the future of tomorrow by developing the leaders of tomorrow now. That includes empowering them, providing them the resources they need and allowing them to safely fail at times.

My leadership energy comes from people. The people I serve, the people who work both for and with me, and the people in my personal life. It is through them that I am given the opportunity to lead. Our relationships with others should be respectful and fair. My philosophy is one that recognizes that even a homeless person deserves respect. The personal possessions they have may be meager by our standards but it is the totality of their world. To deprive them of that is equivalent to depriving one of us our entire life savings. That is the type of respect I expect from those who work for me. As such, values such as diversity, integrity, accountability, community, commitment and loyalty cannot be mere words. They must be printed in the heart more than on parchment. There is no greater character flaw than that of not recognizing, respecting and valuing the character of others.

A major message that I have delivered to staff at several department and staff meetings is that honesty and contrition do more to overcome a mistake in action than any punitive measure I can employ. That does not mean that a mistake or wrong doing will go unpunished, but it does minimize the need to provide an external lesson. I have delivered the message that I consider there to be two types of mistakes, one being a mistake of the mind and the other being a mistake of the heart. If one makes a mistake of the mind and can demonstrate that they take responsibility for that mistake and have learned from it, then I am left with a more positive assurance that the mistake will not be repeated. On the other hand, a mistake of the heart - one which is done intentionally - leaves very little room for forgiveness. I have insisted that if a mistake of the mind is made, employees are better off coming to me and convincing me that they have learned from it and will not recidivate. At the same time a professional organization is only as viable as the trust it receives from the people it serves. Thus it is our responsibility to maintain the integrity and trust the public deserves by setting and maintaining high standards through accountability.

In conclusion, I believe that we need to take what we do seriously but not take ourselves too seriously. If the day comes that we value ourselves more than our commitment to our vision then we have lost the ability to lead.