Developing Your Personal Leadership Style

Identify your Strengths
The first step is self discovery which includes identifying abilities, strengths, and weaknesses. Everyone brings a different combination of strengths and weaknesses to any group or situation. It’s important to remember that strengths can become weaknesses if overemphasized, and some weaknesses can be considered strengths by others.

Example: If you are detail-oriented, that can be a terrific strength in helping a group organize a presentation, or it can be seen as negative if it slows down a group brainstorming session because you naturally begin to work the details for each idea, rather listening to the ideas.

Reflection:
1. What things do you do well? How do you feel when you’ve done a great job?
2. Pay attention to things you see others doing. Be aware of others strengths and styles. Think about someone you know who has a skill you would like to acquire.

Working on your Weaknesses
We don’t have to put pressure on ourselves to try to overcome all our challenges, unless there is a specific challenge that continues to impact your performance in negative ways.

Example: You feel uncomfortable speaking in front of groups and have been elected president of an organization. In this role you will be responsible for facilitating weekly meetings that include twenty members. In this case it will be important to work on finding ways to work on your public speaking skills.

College is a great place to work on challenges because you are in a safe and supportive setting with friends, advisors and campus resources. In this example, the student could ask the groups advisor for advice on how to develop more confidence in this area. Also, since the student was elected to this position, her peers have demonstrated their faith in her ability. The president might consider sharing with the group that it is her goal to improve her public speaking skills, and ask for feedback periodically throughout the year.

Developing Self-Esteem and Confidence
How you feel about yourself is the energy that drives your motivation. Confidence is knowing you can rely on your strengths, skills, and abilities. Our self concept is how we objectively describe ourselves.

Example: I am an older student; I am a mother of two starting school; I am a creative person who enjoys art and music.

Your self-esteem is enhanced when you can identify your strengths and challenges and know that you’re growing in the areas you want to improve.

High Self Esteem = Valuing your self concept
Low Self-Esteem = You expect something better or different than you feel.

Factors that shape your identity (pgs 115-16)
1. Consider how your ethnic, racial, or cultural background has shaped you.
2. How does your gender impact your beliefs or behavior?
3. How does your age influence your interests, views, opinions?
4. How has your birth-order position in your family shaped you?
5. How has your spirituality and/or religion shaped your views on the world?
6. How has your family’s socioeconomic stratus influenced your development?

Ethical Decision Making

The Josephson Institute of Ethics proposes six characteristics that are essential to practicing ethical leadership:

1. Trustworthiness – be honest, demonstrate integrity
2. Treat others with respect
3. Responsibility – accepting accountability for your own actions
4. Fairness – being open-minded, willing to listen, confront your own biases
5. Caring – concerned for others well being
6. Citizenship – as a member of a community you have a responsibility to contribute to the well-being of the group

Understanding your Personality Style

It’s important to know how you think, relate to others and find personal meaning. In one of your initial Ursuline Studies classes you completed the [Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)]. This instrument identified preferences in how we take in information, relate to others, make decisions and learn.

This is a very useful tool for leaders in understanding self, others, and the dynamics of relationships. Identifying your personality preferences can help move you further toward self-awareness. As your awareness grows, you may become interested in building additional skills and utilizing various decision making methods and improving conflict resolution strategies. Re-visit the MBTI and think about the preferences in terms of leadership.

Adapted from:


MISSION STATEMENT

To create a vibrant campus environment by educating and empowering student leaders through implementation of campus programs and the celebration of Ursuline Traditions.

NOTES: