Personal Philosophy

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**Personal Philosophy**

An Explanation of Leadership Research Theories, Concepts, Practices, and Styles.

The purpose of this paper is to articulate a personal leadership philosophy. To support the philosophy according to leadership theories, as well as a reflection of personal strengths, weaknesses, and expectations that may apply to me as a future leader. To begin, an attempt is made to explain my leadership style according to the research theories, concepts, practices, and styles presented in the competency “Personal Leadership 2.0” of Brandman University. An explanation, comparison, and evaluation of each of the personality and leadership tools suggested will be covered in the following pages. A dissection of personal leadership faults and weaknesses will be provided along with a few commented strengths. A belief structure will be revealed and noted as to how a leadership philosophy is the foundation of belief and if a belief structure is a foundation for leadership. Lastly, an attempt to provide aclear statement of leadership philosophy as it would be produced from the aforementioned efforts.

An explanation of leadership research theories, concepts, and practices will be covered shortly. First, let us look at some of the competing roles of ethics. Ethics traditionally is said to be something that is ingrained in us by our parents at an early age. While is true to an extent, as a parent I know that my children and I have differentiated ethical standards. Instead, ethics are formed by what we, as people, deem allowable into our lives. Adjusting our ethics removes any guilt that may accompany an action that our parent deemed unethical. Trait ethics is an effect, a symptom of the bigger issue of having a conscious. The idea of the subconscious and the topic of where the guilt comes from according to medical and psychological fields of study are beyond this paper. Instead, we some up the existence of a conscious according to the Bible which states that in the end time God will write His laws in our hearts. (Jeremiah 31:33, KJV). As a person breaks those laws they become increasingly numb in their conscious. Much like one gets used to just about anything. As people sear their conscious they tend to adapt to less stringent codes of ethics—codes that allow for an action that was once in direct opposition to their conscious. Unfortunately, these allowances are occurring at an alarming rate in humanity as a whole. The legalization of marijuana, homosexual marriage, abortion, and the depletion of critical natural recourses in the name of convenience just to name a few. These things in the past would have clearly been on the dark side according to historical ethical boundaries, but today are only questionable and even deemed ok in most societies. Ethics are subject to evolution it seems as they change with time. Many have told me that I have been brainwashed by religion and the Bible. My response? My brain needs a little washing from time to time like everything else. Ethics are also categorical and situational. There are professional ethics, ethics for the workplace, environmental, social, business, religious, and cultural ethic. Most claim the bit of ethics that they like when confronted with it and adapt it to fit in their own personal code of ethics then discard the rest as useless. This is the heart of the contingency theory of ethics. Just as many chose their higher power, they take a little from this religion, some from that religion and salt it with personal preference and call themselves “God-fearing”! The world is following Rome’s example as this is what they did. Isn’t it too bad what happened to Rome as a result! Ethics has a great deal to do with leadership. Leadership might be called an attempt at having the many adopt the ethics of the one. For this reason who one is, as a leader and as a person, really matters.

Transformational leaders align employee goals with the goals of the leader. They have charisma and show inspirational motivation. They are intellectually stimulating and show consideration for their followers (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978). In addition, transformational leaders rely on their charisma, persuasiveness, and personal appeal to inspire by using either active or persuasive management styles. Of course, we all envision ourselves to be transformational leaders. On the other hand, the transitional leader tends to rely on a reward system. In reality, people striving to be good leaders assimilate just as they do with ethics. If normal transformational tactics fail less humane forms of management begin to be used. We try to emulate the “greatest of men” or we attempt to adapt the traits of those we admire; however, in the end, we are who we are. Most big firms still accept transitional style leadership as true. “If we hire the right coach we will win!” There are many different styles of leadership, extroverted, introverted, military, great man, and much more. However, in this paper, we can lump them in only two categories. 1. Self-Centered. 2. Selfless. It seems the only one that is proven to work through the centuries is the only one most avoid. Servant-leadership has as its most successful leader Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus was transformational and believed in building people rather than being contingent. He chose twelve men who knew nothing about his vision and poured his short life into them. “If any would be great among you he must be the servant of all!”(Matt 20:26, KJV). These are the words Jesus told his followers, but then he took it a step further by stripping himself down to just a towel and washing all their feet. Jesus started with twelve, he ministered for three years and today Christians are still dying for his cause-just as He died for ours. From twelve to millions he established a vision that has lasted now two thousand years!

**Assessment Evaluations**

**SWOT**

My personal strength lies in Christ. So many times I find myself at the end of my rope just to have him carry me through. Other than that we will wait until later to comment further on this topic.

**Oceans Big 5**

In in a video about Costa & McCrae's Big 5 theory Laci Green spells out the categories. 1. Openness: Overt levels of creative energy, curiosity, and insight into new ideas. They have the ability to accept and value critical feedback and are more prone to explore and act on entrepreneurial opportunities. 2. Conscientiousness: These show a high level of thoughtfulness, meeting timelines and commitments, high impulse control, and good organization and attention to detail. Those who score high on conscientiousness are predicted to have increased rates of effective leadership experiences. 3. Extraversion: These show an amount of excitability, sociability, talkativeness, and ability to assert one’s self. Extraversion also allows leaders to naturally navigate business and social situations with ease and comfort, especially with new people in new situations, excellent timing when asked to critique ideas and activities, good emotional intelligence, a giving nature, and high levels of affection and ability to trust others. 4. Agreeableness/Tact is seen in leaders who can quickly assess a situation and ascertain what behavior or style is indicated--and then act accordingly. They will avoid interrupting or being dismissive, and show low neuroticism and stability under stress 5. Neuroticism: Neurotic people are prone to negative emotions and are less likely to calm and balanced; they also tend to make it all about them (DNews, 2012). Oddly enough in a paper called “Leader-Follower Dynamics”, the author puts most leaders today on one of three constructs. The first, Machiavellianism, is a construct characterized by cynical views of humanity combined with a deceitful and calculating interpersonal style (Christie. R., Geis, 1970). Secondly, the Psychopathy construct is characterized by grandiosity, no empathy, and a manipulative interpersonal style combined with an antisocial lifestyle (Hare, 1991; Harpur, Hare, & Hakstian, 1989). Thirdly is Narcissism. This construct is characterized by exhibitionism, a sense of self-importance, interpersonal exploitation and an entitlement mindset. (Raskin & Hall, 1979; 1981). Narcissism and neuroticism seem to be closely related. Both of these are unstable highly emotional constructs, without a doubt, a leadership style that is all about gain. Personally, my scoring within the big five is as follows.

*Moderate in Openness* with a score of 63%. This could mean that one does not stand out as either a particularly imaginative, or a particularly conservative person; is not particularly creative or unconventional.

*Moderately Conscientious* with a score of 68%. This may indicate a fairly average tendency to respond to impulses. Long-term goals are fairly successfully pursued but can be sidetracked when a particularly attractive diversion presents itself.

*Moderately Extraverted* with a score of 58%. This is an average motivation to seek out social rewards. One may have some desire for admiration, influence, and prestige, but one can also be content when not winning recognition from others.

*High in Agreeableness* with a score of 80%. Kindness, Sensitivity, Cooperative, and Compassionate. Agreeableness is a good predictor of the quality of relationships: people with high tact are more likely to keep friends.

*Lower in Neuroticism* with a score of at 38%. A fairly typical tendency to experience negative emotions. One probably feels sadness, worry, anger, and guilt about as much as the average person. One is neither overly reactive nor especially resistant to the stresses of life (Tuity, 2017).

In a self-assessment done in a milestone, I scored as follows: “I am some sort of Highbred. I show Openness traits but sometimes I am not too good at taking feedback, nor am I quick to take advantage of entrepreneurial opportunities but have some creative energies, curiosity, and insight. Conscientiousness-- I am a thoughtful man and count honesty and loyalty very high but sometimes show lack of impulse control and usually have to force extroversion. I am low in Neuroticism and usually can handle some stress, but sometimes do emotionally escalate a situation even to the point of being unreasonable. Agreeableness/tact is where I am mostly weighted. Kindness and giving defines me, however, it is hard for me to trust others especially once betrayed. On the flip side, I do have the ability to allow people a chance although I may not trust them.” Amazingly the two agree.

**The LMX Assessment**

In the LMX assessment, the goal is to explain the effects of leadership on followers, groups, and organizations. This theory suggests that leaders form bonds of trust. Emotional and respect-based relationships form with team members, but not with others. Further, LMX claims treatment of each subordinate will be different (Dulebohn et al, 2012). This test was provided directly out of the competency with the following instructions.

Answer the following questions using 1 = not at all, 2 = somewhat, or 3 = fully agree.

I like my supervisor very much as a person. **3**

My supervisor is the kind of person one would like to have as a friend. **3**

My supervisor is a lot of fun to work with. **2**

My supervisor defends my work actions to a superior, even without complete knowledge of the issue in question. **2**

My supervisor would come to my defense if I were "attacked" by others. **2**

My supervisor would defend me to others in the organization if I made an honest mistake. **2**

I do work for my supervisor that goes beyond what is specified in my job description. **1**

I am willing to apply extra efforts, beyond those normally required, to further the interests of my workgroup. **3**

I do not mind working my hardest for my supervisor. **3**

I am impressed with my supervisor's knowledge of his or her job. **3**

I respect my supervisor's knowledge of and competence on the job. **3**

I admire my supervisor's professional skills. **2**

These scores place as follows: High LMX in terms of liking. Average LMX in terms of loyalty.

High LMX in terms of contribution. High LMX in terms of professional respect.

**Emotional Intelligence**

According to the competency emotional Intelligence assessment scores aspects such as self-awareness which refers to the ability to know one’s strengths, weaknesses, motivations, and drives. Next, it scores self-regulation which involves being able to control one's emotions, social skills, and the ability to manage relationships. Finally, empathy scoring refers to an ability to consider another’s thoughts and feelings and to ability to put oneself in their position. When I took the assessment my scores showed an average emotional intelligence rating. People with an average score on emotional intelligence are good at understanding interpreting, and acting on emotions. They are quite good at dealing with social and emotional conflicts, emotional situations, and expressing feelings. While one has some solid emotional skills, one might find themselves feeling overwhelmed by emotionally charged situations or conflict. A slightly above average EQ leaves room to grow! One is sensitive to the emotional climate of people one works with, friends, family or key clients. An awareness of the effect personal behavior has on people is present. Often while tuning into the climate of others this person may easily forget their own needs. Therefore do not be afraid to honestly communicate difficult needs or feelings. One of the most important aspects of Emotional Intelligence is the ability to skillfully air grievances (Cherry, 2016).

**Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)**

MBTI helps one to predict “hard-wired” connections to the Big 5 characteristic traits. The five “OCEAN” traits are presented in the MBTI as either occurring naturally or needing to be consciously perfected, and practiced. Further, the MBTI searches the relationship between paired traits and evaluates if an individual’s personality falls between those paired traits. An example might be Extraversion -vs- Introversion or Sensing –vs- Intuition where one places in the range between the two effectively dictates leadership types (Portolese, 2014). My result for the assessment are: Extraverted 63%, Observant 59%, Feeling 52%, Prospecting 64%, Turbulent 59%.--Entertainer Personality (ESFP, -A/-T). Entertainers get caught up in the excitement of the moment. No other personality type is as generous with their time and energy as Entertainers. They are encouragers. No other personality type shows such irresistible style.

**Beliefs That Influence My Leadership Philosophy**

I personally believe in leadership. I believe in Jesus and he is a great leader. Being the main leader in my life Christ Jesus has influenced my life and my thoughts to the point of change. When I began to follow His leadership I was homeless, a high school dropout, a drug addict, I smoked, drank, cussed and endeavored in many other bad habits. My wife at the time had left me to become a prostitute and my kids were in the custody of Child Protection Services. I was also in trouble with the law. Within two years after beginning to follow Jesus all that was gone. I no longer drank, smoked, or did any type of drugs. I had attained my G.E.D. and was working, paying rent, owned a car, and had taken care of any legalities I had. Further, I had recovered my children and though I was now a single parent I began to raise them. Today they are all grown with families of their own—I have five grandkids. I went to Bible College after attaining my A.S. and received a degree in Theology. Later I returned for an A.A. in music and am now attending Brandman. If one judges by success by fruitfulness then Jesus’ leadership is a success. To continue, the Word of God renews one’s mind and helps one to control unwanted thoughts. The battle for the mind is the biggest battleground for any Christian and the understanding that all thoughts and mental pictures do not all originate from self is an equipping truth. This truth arms one with the ability to understand that a mental picture can be rejected, and denied without guilt--as any mental picture that is in opposition of one’s self-image is only owned when such an image is claimed.

There have been several key leadership experiences that have informed my thinking. Leading a worship team, being in the pastorate and working in a public school are on the forefront. Artist can be very touchy when dealing with their art. Musicians, singers, and songwriters view their art as an extension of self. As such, most critique is viewed as an attack on their person. One must learn to be intentional about qualifying any critique as to avoid hurt feelings. As a pastor one may find oneself counseling on topics outside of their expertise. Leading a troubled marriage workshop is difficult for someone who has been single for most of their life. In a public school one never knows how much influence one has on forming personalities. I find kids take to heart much more than they let on.

Leadership is both positional and non-positional in my experience. Many times the office one fills requires leadership and demands respect from others. This is a positional application. On the flip side, I was once taught that the loudest message that will ever be preached is the way that one lives one’s life. The definition of being true is being the same person no matter what or where one is. This can be a struggle as many times people tend to put on ‘hats’. They are not the same person in their chosen profession as that are at home with a loved one.

When do you share your vision as a leader? I believe it is important to share your vision as a leader right from the beginning. Further, it is important to re-enforce that vision often. People need to adopt the same vision and goals a leader has in mind. If someone is in opposition to the set vision it is important to manage the damage through early identification. This helps with any risk that may come into play.

Risk is subjective, therefore one must know the risk as-well-as the context before knowing if the circumstance mandates the risk. Order of importance plays a big part in risk-taking. Most of us have no problem saying no to giving a kidney to someone we don’t know, in fact, we do it every day. Every day there are people in need of what we have but most stay blissfully ignorant. However, if one's child is in need of that same kidney things change. A child is much more important to us than a stranger so now the risk is commanded by the circumstance.

When speaking of which personal principles I am not willing to violate there is a kind of two-edged sword. The perfect answer is to say that the list is long and that I have perfectly clear boundaries. However, I know that in the right circumstances there is nothing that is off limits. I have proven to myself that Christ and His influence is all that keeps me on the path of righteousness – or since many do not understand that term—the path to the right. Being a husband of a very unfaithful wife I was determined never to be with a married woman. I believed this was something that I was not capable of after being on the other end of such a thing. Unfortunately, while in college I found myself in such a relationship, and though I ended it, the truth about what I was capable of was evident. Negating that fact, typically in normal life I don’t lie, or steal. I treat people with respect, I don’t say “I promise” but instead just do what I say, yes means yes and no means no. Lastly, I no longer believe things should be written in stone, but believe that mercy reigns over justice.

The process of my decision making. This is something I am still working on. As a pastor, I should deliberate in prayer with Jesus about every important decision. The truth is sometimes I do what I want regardless of what He says. I heard him one time so clearly tell me not to buy the car I was about to purchase. I rejected his instruction saying, “I just want a nice car”. The end result was not good. The car never did run, and I not only lost the money I paid but also much more. The largest cost was after that I did not hear him so clearly on things. I am still working on reclaiming that former glory. So basically now I follow open doors. When I find an open door I do a heart and spirit check to try to sense a direction and then go through it. Most times, however, if I have worked to receive something or go somewhere I do regardless of the consequences.

Decisions made individually often differ from those made collectively. Individually made decisions are normally ones that concern a person or a person’s life. Collectively made decisions are normally those which concern an entire team, when one is asked to function in a group or a team, or when the decision affects an entire family or a segment of a family. For instance, if the decision is based on what happens to a group then the group should take part in the choice. Most people are unaware that every decision made effects all those around them like ripples in a pond. My personal belief structure helps illuminate such truths. There was a time when all my choices were made without consultation, however, I found that the end result was usually troubling. After many failures, I came to the conclusion that Jesus’ way was much better and ended with better results. A common saying of one of my former pastors was, “love God and love people, it is not rocket science.” Generally if one puts the needs of others in front of their own needs things go a lot better. The philosophy of Jesus and God are the foundation and cornerstone of my Leadership and decision-making process.

How one responds when their leadership beliefs or practices are challenged is a sure fire way of telling character. Often it is not how we act when things are going right but how we act when things are a mess that shows real character. The mountaintop is good and everybody loves a mountaintop. In Christianity most want to live on the mountaintop—myself included. However, a true and intimate relationship with Jesus is found in the valleys. The valley is the place that one learns to trust the Lord and recognize His voice. Many times how one responds to this challenge depends on the situation. In my teams, there is an order of operations for such things as critiques and issues. I require that if there is a problem with a decision or my style of leadership than one has the responsibility to bring that to my attention. However, this should be done privately. In public, I require one’s support whether pro or con. If there is a critique or something needs to be changed then the process is to first bring it to my attention privately, if it is not resolved, schedule a small meeting between me and two or three others, if then there is still a problem we can schedule a meeting with me and my supervisor and go from there.

**EVALUATION**

**Assessment Recap**

LMX: High LMX in terms of liking. Average LMX in terms of loyalty, High LMX in terms of contribution, High LMX in terms of professional respect.

Meyer biggs: Extraverted. 63%, Observant 59%, Feeling 52%, Prospecting 64%, Turbulent 59%.

Big 5 Ocean: Open-mindedness 72%, Conscientiousness 66%, Extraversion 58%, Agreeableness 85%, Negative emotionality 45%.

EQ or EI: Average EQ rating, sensitive to the emotional climate of the people, adept at tuning into other’s needs.

**SWOT**

So according to these, I am Likable, loyal, tend to contribute more than my share and have respect for others. I am highly agreeable and easy to get along with, open-minded, conscientious, extroverted, observant and prospecting. I tend to think of others first and can tune into other’s needs. Finally, I am sometimes turbulent and rarely have negative emotions. All this according to these assessments. I only wish that was all true. I know that I am given to negative emotions and have a big problem with rejection. I do not have many friends and do not trust easily. I tend to be quieter and more introverted and must many time force myself to go to fellowships. On the flip side, I agree with the rest.

Confession time. My first pastorate failed. After two years I was asked to resign and the building was sold by the denomination. I remember having to attend a service and submit to the authority of the pastor that was tasked with the sale of the building. He was holding services in the church preaching from the pulpit that had formerly been mine. Needless to say, I was very emotional that day. At first, I blamed everyone else for the failure. I had been falsely accused of preaching heresy from the pulpit. The truth is that I had made some very bad choices. Further, I ignored God when He told me to step down a year earlier. Many times when what we need to do does not line up with our idea of success we make excuses. In this case, I called God the devil and went on with the vision that I had of what “God” wanted me to do. What He really wanted me to do was something else entirely. We learn much more through failure than we do success—if we allow it. When I was the student body president of my college I thought I would change the world this also ended in failure. My weakness? Trying to fulfill my own selfish vision. The main thing that I have learned is this. If one really wants to succeed one must put others first. It is an echo of Jesus’ words, “if any would be great among you he must be the servant of all.” This is the second time I quoted the same scripture. Before I interpreted that scripture as a way for me to succeed. How did you as the reader interpret it? Now, this is how I interpret it—it is not about me or my success! It is about the success of those I lead! Revolutionary huh! Obviously, I am still learning. Another weakness is that I tend to interpret truths according to this selfish vision of success. The only thing that I can do to address my weaknesses is to fail, and then learn from my failure. UHHGG! I hate failing because I tend to set my value according to my successes. True leaders do not do that. Here is why, when your goal is someone else’s success you cannot fail! If you were able to help them great if not still you feel good for trying—and so do they.

My leadership style? I still tend to lead by example mostly. I have not seen a lot of fruit from this. Jesus said that he was not able to do many miracles in his own area. The problem may be that those we love the most have seen the worst of us. This has the effect of discrediting our words. My children were all raised going to church. Today they rarely attend, and when they do they do not connect with the Lord. I have spent my life attempting to provide a heritage that they do not want. It is sad to say but it is normally the case. I have a great impact on people that have not seen my failures though. Every day is a new beginning and an opportunity to do right, to impact someone for the good. Many times it is all one can do to bring a smile, other times one may have a divine appointment. After hundreds of failures in attempting to create the light bulb, Thomas Edison was asked why he did not give up. He proclaimed that he had not failed but found hundreds ways not to make a lightbulb.

**One Person Can Change the World!**

Throughout history, there have been world changers. Julius Caesar was one man but invented the first Senate that worked, then we killed him for it. Joan of Arc was a single sixteen-year-old girl that freed a nation, then we killed her for it. Jesus revolutionized the world with the doctrine that promoted women to be equal to men, paved a way to find forgiveness, and changed our idea of who God was, then we killed him for it. In the numbers sixteen in the bible, Aaron the brother of Moses was faced with a choice. He was ninety years old when the wrath of God broke out over the children of Israel. A wave of death was supernaturally going over the people and thousands of people were dying. He went to an altar and got some fire, put it in a censer and ran out amongst the people toward the wave of death. He was a priest and all he knew how to do was spin a censor with incense so that is what he did. One man against an invisible threat that was killing thousands. The Bible proclaims that the wave of death stopped where Aaron stood waving the censer of fire. I do not know if that angel of death stopped in pure amazement of a little ant with a censer or what—but the death stopped. Hundreds of thousands of lives were saved that day. I am sure that Aaron believed he had little chance of surviving but still he went. This is leadership. To count others more important than oneself. Even today we give out the Purple Heart to someone who risks it all for others. Transformational leadership cannot be self-centered. I so want to be Transformational but the pathway to this is through Servant-Leadership.

**My Philosophy**

To Serve. It is a hard philosophy to put others first. This is against the natural flow of the world. Most are out for me and mine. In fact, my goal of why I am in college is sometimes in question. I am still learning and will continue learning. Maybe there is more to “it is all about the climb” than I thought. Research continues to validate the positive effect on behaviors and attitudes that servant-leadership has on all involved. Indeed many authors argue in favor saying that leader purposefulness is related to servant-leadership. In studies that aim to position leader purposefulness as part of servant-leadership, we can find historical evidence that a shift from leader-centered models to servant-leader approaches are within transformational leadership theory (Irving, Berndt, 2017). So according to this study servant-leadership is transformational leadership. Stone et al argued that servant leaders focus on followers, as a result, the benifit of the organization is the outcome. Giving bonuses for management reaching a goal is counterproductive. The bonus should be given in measure of subordinate success! Empirical data shows that servant leaders produce more satisfied, dedicated and accomplished subordinates (Carter and Baghurst 2013; Liden et al. 2008; Mayer et al. 2008; Neubert et al. 2008). And it does not matter where you are at. Jesus taught servant leadership two thousand years ago. The bible says he came in the “fullness of time”. Think about this, because of Alexander the Great everyone had a common language. One of his biggest accomplishments was to put libraries up everywhere he went. Even the bible was translated to Greek. Jesus mainly used the Septuagint which is the Greek translation. Because of Rome and Caesar, there were roads everywhere for the first time. Everywhere Caesar went he put in roads. This is when Jesus brought His message. At any giving Passover, there were people from countless nations all speaking Greek all assembled for the first time. It was here Jesus introduced servant leadership. Dierindonck et al are able to establish the factorial validity across eight countries and languages. They shows the servant leadership has internationally and cross-culturally been successful (Dierendonck et al 2017). Further, over the last decade, empirical research has brought out the value of servant leadership as a management style enabling firms to develop and sustain a competitive advantage. To add, LMX studies demonstrate servant leadership enhancing relationships between subordinate and supervisor. (Newman et al 2017).

In conclusion, evidence that servant leadership is transformational, productive, and fulfilling for organizations, subordinates, and leaders all three has been evidenced since the time of Christ. We today are only figuring this out but the studies formally mentioned support these findings. This is the path to success, however, just the fact I put it that way shows that I am still learning. As I said it is a hard philosophy to put others first. So as leader philosophies go I feel the best one is the servant leader model. This model is transformational and selfless.

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