

Statement of Leadership Philosophy

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Statement of Purpose

In this document I will explain my leadership philosophy, in other words, the set of beliefs, principles, and precepts that make up the foundation of my conduct as a leader. There are two ways I measure a life, what is accomplished and what is left behind as a legacy. I hope, in the twilight of my life I can take stock of not just material accomplishments and acts, but my legacy as it takes form in the people around me. I believe all physical things by nature are impermanent, the only lasting change occurs when it is embedded in life. I also believe we must act in concert with others to achieve greatness in any undertaking. If there is successful change in thought, people, and patterns there should be tangible results and manifest difference. I choose to work in organizations because I want to change the world, and feel I can have the greatest impact by aligning my effort with the purpose of others. I take as my purpose fostering the growth of knowledge, the development of people, and improvement of the common quality of life.

Guiding Principles & Values

Greater Purpose – Shared Purpose

Working with my colleagues to accomplish great work, I am determined, results oriented, and achievement driven. This drive however, is not about me, but instead directed towards achieving the organization's purpose. I believe we must do whatever it takes to achieve our mission. At the end of the day I get the most satisfaction from hearing what people have to say about how we worked as a team or of the shared result. R.L. Wing (1986) translates Lao Tzu's Tao Te Ching in an inspiring way: "Who then can use excess to serve the world? Those that possess the Tao. Therefore Evolved Individuals, Act without expectation, Succeed without taking credit, And have no desire to display their excellence" (p. 77)

Trust & Respect

Interpersonal trust, or the ability of a person to place reliance on the integrity, ability, and character of people around them, is a fundamental necessity. I believe that you must respect people and extend trust even when you are unsure if the other will reciprocate. “Of those who trust I am trusting; Of those who do not trust, I am also trusting. Trust is power” (Wing, 1986, p. 49). Individuals exchange trust with each interaction, earning or squandering trust based on the expectations and perception of their counterparts. I seek to extend trust and earn trust as much as possible, for to distrust the other will only breed mutual distrust. Communicating values and living the values consistently through my actions builds trust. True leaders “practice their philosophy without words” (Wing, 1986, p. 2). Trust allows for high value interpersonal reliance that enables creativity, collaboration, innovation, and mutuality.

Initiative & Courage

Leadership can encourage initiative, the readiness to act that channels ability into results. Hesitation often leads to missed opportunities, so leaders must often take the first step or support a colleague who recognizes the opportunity. If people are asked to take risks, leaders must support them if things do not go well. Often many failures must be experienced to reap the reward, and the path from idea to payoff can be long and unforgiving (Rosenfeld, 2006, p.56). I value personal courage, to overcome risk-aversion and maintain integrity. Doing the ‘right’ thing is often not the easiest path. Doing something new or enacting change can be difficult even for the visionary. I believe in the Stockdale paradox cited by Jim Collins (2001), that no matter how bleak our reality is, we must maintain faith that we will ultimately overcome and triumph. Thus, my influence as a leader can only be as great as I am resolute in times of trial.

Persistence

Overcoming inertia and gaining momentum requires persistence. Rome was not built in a day, nor was the idea of democracy. Good work and good ideas take time to develop. Excellence requires persistence to achieve. Jim Collins (2001) notes that great companies have values beyond just making money that persist, unchanged, over long periods of time. Our business practices change but our purpose and values that determine our next strategies must remain relatively constant. Consistency of purpose and constant moral values derived from personal and organizational discipline will yield the greatest long-term value for stakeholders.

Sacrifice & Service

Sacrifice comes with self-discipline. Leaders must demonstrate the self-discipline to forego self-indulgence for the benefit of a greater purpose. The organization foregoes opportunities that distract from the mission and purpose or are in conflict with core values. Collins (2005) notes that “to do the most good requires saying ‘no’ to pressures to stray, and the discipline to stop doing what does not fit” (p.27). These critical decisions must be made by each member of the organization, for inaction and action are equally important. Furthermore, as a leader I choose not to place myself above my colleagues. I will gladly forego trappings associated with positional authority. Creating a class system turns the organization against itself. I try to demonstrate that I would not ask someone to do something that I am not willing to do myself. I prefer to act in way that serves my team.

Passion & Creativity

We each must find elements of our life that we are passionate about. Somewhere to be found there is always something that creates a strong affective response that fuels our enthusiasm. Finding elements in work that create intrinsic motivation brings out the best in

people allowing them to thrive even in the face of adversity. Passion spreads from person to person and can enliven colleagues, so I try to be open with my excitement and positive in my outlook. Robert Rosenfeld (2006) believes that passion is the hidden ingredient in innovation, and when it meets obstacles, passion serves as “a catalyst that creates even more creative energy” (p. 83). Rosenfeld also cautions that “Managers know that passion can disturb an entire department, generate unpredictable events, and upset the comfortable. And Passionate people have been know to be wrong, sometimes disastrously wrong” (2006, p. 84) Despite these risks leaders must foster passion, and find ways to protect the passionate person from being stunted or assimilated by the organization while mitigating risks that passion can introduce (Rosenfeld, 2006). Leading means sharing your passion, and helping people find things they are passionate about, while positioning people so what fires them up also fuels the enterprise. Leaders must provide people protection from the status-quo and dominant thought to harness passion and creative thought. Only then can we unleash the creative power in those around us.

Debate & Openness

A group unwilling to make their assumptions, motives, and ideas transparent to each other invites conflict. Patrick Lencioni observes “teams that fail to disagree and exchange unfiltered opinions” often “find themselves revisiting the same issues again and again” (2003, p. 37). Rick Ross and Charlotte Roberts (Senge et-al, 1994, p.253) recommend balancing advocacy and inquiry in skillful discussion. I seek to facilitate dialogue between team members, encouraging others to set aside their need to persuade and convince for listening and understanding. I seek to foster a safe environment where organizational members are free to “engage in unfiltered conflict around ideas” (Lencioni, p. 189). By continually stating my

assumptions, showing openness to new ideas, and making myself a peer I can include everyone in creating knowledge and making decisions.

Participatory Management

If we all participate in creating the debate, we can all participate in selecting the solution. If we all participate in selecting the solution, it naturally follows that we will all participate in implementing it. By consenting to a group decision or endorsing one of the options provided my authority remains indirect. “When the command comes from afar and the work is done, the goal achieved, the people say ‘We did it naturally’” (Wing, 1986, p. 17). I believe Michael Marquardt is correct in stating that “Leaders of the future will be more comfortable asking questions of their followers. They will encourage thought and guide with questions” (2005, p.174). Sashkin & Sashkin note that “if leaders rely on their own actions alone, rather than the actions of followers, they are likely to fail as leaders” (2003, p. 130). Likewise I find it true that leaders must rely on followers’ knowledge and decision making ability for the organization to succeed.

Transformational Leadership

I seek to avoid the false simplicity of transactional leadership concepts cloud my perceptions. Situational leadership (Northouse, 2007, pp.91-100), for instance, offers easy to diagnose cases for followers needs that offer simple prescriptions for leadership behaviors. While many leadership theories teach us important principles, such as the need for adaptation of style to context, care must be taken to not allow them to treat people as a means to an end. People have inherent value and should be treasured for their potential and ability to grow and adapt. Valuing people authentically leads to many returns, in place of valuing simply the next objective and treating people as replaceable. I prefer invest in developing people and transforming them into leaders in their own right who can peer-lead and lead upwards.

Key Paradoxes of Leadership

I have a need for power, which compels me towards leadership opportunities. I share my power with those around me, because my purpose and intent is to further the goals of the organization and contribute to a common good. Sashkin & Sashkin (2003, p. 135) observe that the most important way a leader employs power is in sharing it by empowering others, teaching them to apply power in productive ways. By releasing my power to those that are best positioned to apply it to organizational needs, I enable the whole system's agility and responsiveness. Sashkin & Sashkin lay out a critical paradox, "leaders must have a high level of cognitive capability to construct the organization's future. However, it is followers – in whom leaders help to develop increased capability – who think through, identify, and take specific ... actions that result in the desired future outcomes and results" (2003, p. 137) Only by investing myself first in the development of my colleagues can I hope we will achieve great results together. Using this long-view lens I view both the potential of my fellows and the lasting value of our contributions.

Appendix - Personal Characteristics

(Based on psychological assessment instruments)

ENTP Myers – Briggs Type (My Personality Info, 2008)

ENTPs are logical, innovative, curious and downright inventive. They see possibilities for improvement everywhere and possess the ability to understand complex concepts. ENTPs are introspective and carefree nonconformists. They often neglect the more common areas of life while pursuing new solutions. ENTPs can be good conversationalists and exciting company.

Change Style Indicator (Discovery Learning, 2001, p.4)

As a **strong originator**, I prefer a fast and comprehensive approach to change. I am comfortable with taking risk and with uncertainty. I may appear to be somewhat unconventional. Some people might see me as undisciplined, but I see myself as open to a better idea or way of getting things done. I will change the rules when they don't fit the circumstances. I may be seen as a visionary, but at times as unpractical. My strengths derive from my ability to effectively see the big picture, generate a vision, and create excitement and motivation in coworkers. This makes me an advocate for and initiator of change. My challenges include focusing on individual effort instead of teamwork and failing to share information or build consensus. Sometimes I fail to stay the course long enough to realize benefits of my new strategies.

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