

Leadership



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Leadership in Dead Poet's Society Introduction A person with a personality that directs and guides a group of people in their desirable direction is referred to as a leader. Leadership is much more than the ability to influence, direct, and guide people. Though people want to follow their leaders, they are usually not free to do so. The vision of a good leader is usually infectious in guiding his people. To be a good leader, a person must possess many traits that require the leader to wholly commit himself/herself to their position. Reciprocating and positive relations are essential elements in leadership as people easily sense authenticity, and want a real leader. In the film *Dead Poet's Society*, by Peter Weir, Mr. Keating, is an English teacher at an old preparatory school, who steers his students to greater heights, by teaching his students, through experience, how to think critically.

Dead Poet's Society

Dead Poet's Society features a leader, Mr. Keating, an English teacher, who is very disturbing, but at the same time curiously inspiring. Mr. Keating steers his students to love learning and poetry, completely changing their controlled and structured academic existence. He crosses boundaries that should otherwise not be crossed by someone traditionally demanding of respect and authority.

He arrives at Hillside Academy, a preparatory school for old boys, to start working as an English teacher. He is an inspirational and involved teacher, who uses declarations, " *Carp Per Diem*" to conquer the day. Among others, he quotes Whitman Walt and relates his overall theme of rising above mediocrity and convention, to these literary passages. He encourages his students to approach learning through a more intuitive and deeper

understanding of life from literature, as opposed to rote memorization and structure.

Mr. Keating illustrates two different methods of leadership. It displays individual reactions to each other, and the consequences of these leadership methods. The leadership approach of Mr. Keating's creates a strong student-teacher bond thus empowering them to be successful. In his classroom, students have no other choice than to think for themselves. Keating's actions and words strengthen his personal connection to his students as well as a sense of trust. Trust goes a long way in creating respect, concern, fairness and understanding.

However, he at times sets up himself as the only one who can lead students to this greater understanding, but his motivation is wholly admirable. This attempt, unconscious about his part, paradoxically creates a similar situation that he cautions his students about; that is, blindly following the authority. He places himself as the authority that his students need to follow. When his ideas contradict with the reality of the lives of his students, albeit minor, a part is played by these ideas, like the tragic suicide of Neil Harrison, a student.

In this film, Mr. Keating demonstrates the inspirational teacher's role in two sides. The highest praise goes to his ability to lead his students not to simply study literature, but experience it. However, his unconscious student's exploitation of their desire for change and charismatic leadership is questionable, on how far an instructor should move outside structures and guidelines that are established in their attempts to inspire and motivate students.

Conclusion

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Good leadership must positively impact on the lives of the people being addressed. The leadership analysis in the film *Dead Poet's Society*, Mr. Keating is a good leader to his students since he gives them more than guidance, influence and direction, but trains them about real life experience. He leads them to greater heights of education by understanding life through literature. However, crossing the set guidelines and structures is questionable. However, he is a model teacher.

Work Cited

Dead Poet's Society. Dir. Peter Weir. Touchstone Pictures and Silver Screen Partners IV.