

# Good essay on leadership

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According to Northouse's questionnaires, it takes many different facets of an individual to make an effective leader. They cannot simply enter a situation with the propensity for taking control. They must also understand the emotions of others, and be able to cultivate creativity and understanding amongst team members, among other habits. Having learned that there were so many more aspects to leadership than I had originally assumed, I was eager to find out whether I fit the mold as a leader. Prior to this class, I believed leadership only took a forthright attitude, or courage under the right circumstances, but I now understand it also takes emotional intelligence, creativity, a proclivity for dealing with conflict, and many other characteristics that are not found in every person. Leadership, essentially, is a rare quality that combines every necessary trait it takes to inspire those around you.

As I took the assessments, I was surprised to find that I am quite fit to lead a group. My strengths are many. However, this was not immediately something I celebrated. According to an article published in Journal of Virtual Leadership one of the most significant strengths a leader can have are their weaknesses. For example, my emotional intelligence rated very high according to the Northouse assessment. I answered with fours and fives on most of the questions involving emotional intelligence. This, however, was because I read emotions as a computer might read them. I do not take into account the reason for the emotion, only the emotion itself. While this has made me efficient in the past, in a leadership position I fear it may be a weakness that cannot be converted into strength because it will prevent me from making a connection.

Another weakness of mine, in a way, was the ability to motivate my subordinates. I did not avoid doing this intentionally, but rather waited for my group to inspire me, when placed in a leadership position. Ideas and creativity coming from unified group work inspires me greatly but after examining my test scores and speaking with those who have experienced my leadership, I was able to realize that I have little to offer when it comes to motivation and inspiration. As a result, the group members sometimes influenced each other too often, which caused more conflict than necessary. I was then forced to devote more time than was needed to extinguishing conflict than leading the group.

Enforcing stern ground rules is an unfortunate leadership weakness of mine. I have continuously made the mistake of assuming that individuals enter a group understanding what is to be expected: I will set an example and give them tasks, and they should work. This method has worked in the past, but only seldom has it succeeded without struggle. Many times, I found myself reminded team members of what they should be doing, and even why they should be doing it. Setting basic ground rules in order to better develop a team structure and claim a definite role as leader never occurred to me until I evaluated my test scores for this portion, which were lower than I would have liked.

I also found that personal decision-making and setting group tone was a personal leadership strength that I possess. Most of the questions pertaining to this category were answered with high marks, and I scored in the very high range over all. I have always believed, when placed in a leadership position, that if I make decisions for myself, I am able to set an example for my group.

This, in turn, sets a tone for the group's future work ethic. As suggested in supplementary materials, I have always strived to set a strong work ethic as an example by choosing to work diligently, turning in work only when it was polished .

While I sometimes lack in motivating team members, I am always pushing them to be creative. It could be that I am pushing them to be creative in order to fulfill my own desire to be motivated by them, but regardless, I always attempt to cultivate creativity in team members by being creative myself. I am not limited to the group work when being creative either. I also attempt to be creative when solving problems or working out communication issues within the group. I believe there is room for creativity everywhere and try to teach this to everybody.

In sum, I learned a lot about how I operate as a leader, where I struggle, and where I succeed. Despite my faults, my team always manages to pull together, making up for what I lack. I consider this a sign of effectiveness. To be a more successful leader, however, I will need to work on how I process the emotions of others, my ability to motivate, and setting firm ground rules in an effort to create structure. Especially if I had created a firmer group structure, many arguments could have been avoided and the work could have been completed sooner. I am now more understanding of how other people in groups think and feel, and will attempt to be sensitive to that as I learn about leadership roles in the future.

## **References**

Northouse, Peter G. Leadership: Theory and Practice. Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2004. Book.

Rodriguez, Joel O., Scott W. M. Burrus and Melanie E. Shaw. " Models of Performance Improvement for Strategic Planning, Relationships, Communication, Competencies, Training, and Management in the Workplace." *Journal of Virtual Leadership* (2011): 10-22. Article.