

Leadership is a  
dynamic relationship  
theology religion  
essay



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summer, I will be graduating from college. I am a good student. I feel fairly well-prepared to face new challenges in my life. I am pretty sure of where I will be working after my graduation, and I have a vision of my future.

However, it is clear for me now that I need to improve my leadership skills. In a modern corporate environment, leadership skills have been universally recognized as a key ingredient in management. For a student, who is seeking a degree in medical field, the ability to lead is essential. I have a feeling that my leadership skills are relatively undeveloped. I know that I have a leadership spirit. After reading " Nuts!" I am able to understand more in depth how leadership works, and what are the traits that good leaders display. I have an intrinsic interest in leadership, and I try to identify ways for modifying my leadership skills to become a truly exceptional leader."

Leadership is a dynamic relationship based on mutual influence and common purpose between leaders and collaborators in which both are moved to higher levels of motivation and moral development as they effect real, intended change"- the definition offered by Kevin and Jackie Freiberg in their book " Nuts!'"(Freiberg 298). Leaders obtain power from the position they hold and from their personal traits and intellectual qualities. Outstanding leaders combine good management with effective interpersonal skills. Young & Rubicam chairman Ann Fudge, says," All of us have the spark of leadership...The challenge is to understand ourselves well enough to discover where we can use our leadership gifts to serve others" (George).

One good definition of leadership is given by Warren Bennis who is regarded as the pioneer of the contemporary leadership, " Leadership is a function of knowing yourself, having a vision that is well communicated, building trust  
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among colleagues, and taking effective action to realize your own leadership potential" (Moore). Many leaders have mentors. My mentor, Professor John Mulroney from the Department of Social & Behavioral Science, gave me some advices that could help me in my formation as a leader. Professor Mulroney believes that the best leaders are servant leaders: "servant leaders desire first to serve, and then choose to lead... They are empathic, aware, and healing" (Buchanan). They "subordinate their likes, wishes, and preferences to the welfare of the institution" (Lencioni). Lencioni states that "persuasion is the way for servant-leaders to convince others. This element offers one of the clearest distinctions between the authoritarian model and that of servant-leadership. The servant-leader is effective at building consensus within groups" (Lencioni). He is another team member, he helps other team members to meet their goals, and he never uses his position power towards the team members. He is leading by example. He is in tune with the needs of the entire organization, its employees, and customers. He practices a compassionate approach with others and doesn't "rule with an iron fist", but rather with the proverbial "silk glove" in order to influence the behaviors of others" (Lencioni). This is "consistent with Herb Kelleher's own philosophy - leadership is being a faithful, devoted, hard-working servant of the people you lead and participating with them in the agonies as well as ecstasies of life" (Freiberg 311). Emotional intelligence (EI) is defined by Daniel Goleman as: "the ability to manage ourselves and our relationships effectively", therefore "a leader strong in EI possesses self-awareness, which is the ability to understand our moods and emotions and how they impact our work and others" (Moore). It is essential for a leader to balance emotions and reasoning, and behave in an appropriate manner. People feel

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comfortable when leaders have the ability to understand their emotions and maintain good relationships. Herb Kelleher's emotional intelligence, "enormous intellectual capabilities, love for people, playful spirit, and commanding personality all play a vital role in the tremendous Southwest Airlines' success" (Freiberg xix). A leader must lead with confidence. In order to make people believe in my actions, I need to believe in myself. Self-confidence is important because the leadership role is challenging, and setbacks are inevitable. Confident people do not show up as one person one day and another person the next. As a leader, I should know my strengths and weaknesses, and able to view my behavior objectively. I need to recognize my shortcomings, open myself to feedback, and make changes when necessary, be confident in what I need to do in every regard of my life," but not overconfident because it leads to arrogance" (Adair 7). One of the reasons why people have had such fondness for Herb Kelleher is his rare blend of sheer confidence and utter humility" (Freiberg 232). A leader needs to know how to balance between superiority and humility. Leaders are often demanding and uncomfortable because their standards are high. However, it is also important for a leader to be humble, and avoid abusing of power. The idea is to be in the middle of both qualities. Effective leaders treat individuals differently but equally. Southwest employees say, "Herb and Colleen would never ask us to do anything they aren't willing to do themselves...They lead by example and affect change from the inside out" (Freiberg 283). Despite their accomplishments, Southwest leaders "never seem to forget their humble beginnings" (Freiberg 233). Leaders should behave with integrity-be honest, credible, and consistent in everything. "

Honesty is the cornerstone of all success, without which confidence and  
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ability to perform shall cease to exist," says Mary Ashe, founder of Mary Kay Cosmetics (Parachin). Integrity is the correspondence between actions and words. Integrity promotes trust, and not much is accomplished without trust. Leaders never sacrifice their long-term benefit for some immediate short-term gain by compromising ethics, morality and reputation. " In an industry riddled with broken promises and unmet expectation [people] believe that with SW leaders ...their word is their bond. And their word means everything" (Freiberg 304). Every leader needs a set of values to follow - a solid sense of right and wrong and strong guiding principles. People can't directly see the level of integrity, but they judge it pretty accurately based on actions and words." Credibility builds on integrity and creates a powerful force in the marketplace. Because of it credibility, there is a perception that when Southwest comes to town, good things happen" (Freiberg 266). Trust is a key characteristic of any successful leader. Warren Bennis defines trust as " the glue that binds followers and leaders together."(Adair 12) If a team has no faith in their leader and that individual never established trust with them, this will place barriers. A leader would not give his people big responsibilities if he does not trust them. On the other hand, his people would hesitate to follow their leader's commands if he betrays trust, breaks promises, tells bad things, and gossips. Knowledge of the business, industry, company, and technical matters is the real key to success in leadership. A leader is " one who knows the way, goes the way and shows the way" (wagls. com). We do not know everything. We are continuously learning in every place we go and with every people we meet . In order to equip employees, a company must become a learning community. Our mind is so spacious that it is impossible to fill up completely." Vera, be willing to learn. Maintain a broad focus on <https://assignbuster.com/leadership-is-a-dynamic-relationship-theology-religion-essay/>

things around you. Read a lot, talk to many, share interests with friends, read newspapers, watch movies and television programs, and educate yourself", says professor Mulrone. Leaders understand that teaching people how to learn is much more important than conveying content. Leaders" are learners who teach"( Freiberg 318). Effective leaders are persistent. They live by the wisdom of this Japanese proverb: " fall down seven times, get up eight times." When they receive a resounding " No!" they see it merely as one word on their path to a resounding " Yes!" ( Parachin). The whole history of SW is an example of persistence. Effective leaders have the courage to act in situations where results and success are uncertain. They are willing to risk. They have strong character. Character is what guides actions and produces the words we speak. Character is our unique identity, our personality, the sum total of our individual characteristics. A person strong in character is someone who stands for what is right, who has the " backbone". A person with right character does what he says, and says what he does. His reputation is solid. I need to start taking control of my actions and develop the right strength of character. To develop a character, I need to believe in myself and in what you can do. I need to see myself the way I want others to see me. I need to develop mental toughness and never be oversensitive. No one can lead without getting criticisms and discouragement from other people, but I need to learn how to treat criticisms as constructive. The example of persistence and strong character is " Southwest Airlines' fighting spirit that kept them going during the tough yearly years" (Freiberg 164). Being a hard worker is also essential for a leader. There have been thousands of cases in which smart people have failed because of being lazy, but hard working people are the ones more

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likely to triumph. The " best leaders are consistent and predictable. But when it comes to decision making they are infinitely flexible" (Adair 32). Being a leader requires a great sense of responsibility for his team's success and for any failure. Making excuses and blaming something or someone else for failures is not a quality of a good leader. It is normal to make mistakes. He who knows how to accept them shall be able to work on them. In fact, mistakes are opportunities to learn something better. The greatest inventions and accomplishments have creative individuals behind them. A great leader knows how to break the rules when necessary and be creative. They constantly strive for higher levels of achievement. Some leaders do not make changes because they are afraid to step out of the comfort zone. President Harry Truman said, " In periods where there is no leadership society stands still. Progress occurs when courageous, skilful leaders seize the opportunity to change things for the better" (Adair 67). Roy Spence, the chairman of the advertising agency GSD& Idea City says, " Herb and his team have always succeeded on merit because they are well prepared –they do more research than anyone"(306). " Leadership is about the two R's: results and relationships" (wagls. com). To become a leader, it is important to know how to deal with people by effective communication. Bringing people together and under a reasonable control is what leaders are supposed to achieve. Communication involves knowing the teams' needs. Communication is able to connect to people's heads and hearts, inspire and engage them around key goals in spite of obstacles and challenges. Leaders must be willing to listen, and listening sometimes requires a leader to hear things he doesn't want to hear. They know when to talk and when to listen. Good leaders have the ability to articulate their thoughts clearly and concisely, yet

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with enough humor and empathy to see other points of view. They are able to read even non-verbal signals from his people. A leader needs to know how to make others work together and as a team in order to get results. Leaders cannot succeed alone; they must create dynamic partnerships, alliances, and networks to generate innovative ideas and solve complex problems. In good and bad times, they must always express a positive and energetic attitude. After their hardest days, leaders find comfort in being with people on whom they can rely. At Southwest, Herb Kelleher surrounded himself, at all levels, with very talented people. Mr. Mulroney says, " Vera, if you want to know people better, you need to socialize with them. Give people chances to express their viewpoints especially during problem solving and decision-making. A great leader must be genuinely concerned with the well-being of his team and defend it if things go wrong. Make them feel that they are individuals in a great team. Share with them your hopes, intentions and ambitions. It is good idea to mingle with people, have lunch or an after-work party, especially when a staff member has a birthday or there are other reasons to celebrate. Assess your people . When you know a little more on their personality, you will be able to know what to expect from them. See their potential. Find out their strengths and weaknesses. Criticize with love, admit faults, and forgive". With a healthy environment in place, a leader would be able to motivate a team. People want to be motivated. Leadership is often defined as the ability to influence others to do something they might not have done without the leader's persuasion. In the words of John Quincy Adams, sixth President of the United States, " If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more, and become more, you are a leader.

Leaders must be close enough to relate to others, but far enough ahead to  
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motivate them" (wagls. com). Leadership " should be more participative than directive, more enabling than performing" (wagls. com) " Good leaders make people feel that they're at the very heart of things. People feel centered, and this gives their work meaning"( wagls. com ). I need to learn what motivates them because the same rewards don't motivate everyone. I need to learn what inspires them so that they'll " go to the ends of the Earth" to give their very best. I must be able to empathize with them and make their jobs challenging, exciting, and meaningful. People like meaningful work and fun, as we can see that at Southwest: reward good performance, " celebrate corporate heroes and heroines for their contribution to the business" (Feinberg 190). At Southwest..." leaders raise people to higher levels of motivation by showing them how their individual contributions are linked to the major purposes of the organization" (Feinberg 313). Although a certificate, letter, or a thank you may seem small, they can be powerful motivators. Southwest leaders " believe their actions help create a work environment that is motivation and morally uplifting. Through leadership, Southwest employees have built a community known for drawing out the best in people. An organization rises to greatness when the otherwise latent talents and energies of its people are evoked by the power of leadership" (Feinberg 312). Leaders grow leaders. By growing, I mean being able to produce other leaders from the team who can help to carry the load. Peter Drucker, a leader in the development of management education, said, " No executive has ever suffered because his people were strong and effective. In fact, it is also you who benefits as you get brilliant minds to help you make decisions, organize the team, and develop more leaders...again" (earnies-world. com ). An effective leader should be able to impart his wisdom, skills

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and abilities, and mold people to be as effective and successful as him, if not better. He must create a corporate culture, nurture people, and train them with the best knowledge and skills. Herb Kelleher and Colleen Barrett have" developed a generation of future leaders who daily live the core values and business principles that have contributed to creating and preserving the Southwest culture" (Feinberg 164). Vision is the foundation on which any future is constructed. Without a vision, the events of life will keep unfolding. Good leaders create a robust and attractive vision of the future that people will respect, believe in and enthusiastically follow. Vision comes from the leaders past experiences, desires, and dreams. If he has a vision in mind, he will know what to aim for. Warren Bennis said, " Leadership is the capacity to translate vision into reality." Great leaders do not stop when obstacles arise. They continue because they can see the big picture beyond the problem. Even before any unexpected events happen, they already know what to do next. Southwest leaders" shared the vision of building an airline of their own choosing, an airline that allowed them to be themselves, to use their brains, have fun on the job, and provide highly valued service. It was a vision that allowed many of them to shape their future" (Feinberg 309). A good leader demonstrates love. Love is affirming, patient, and generous. It believes in people. At SW, people feel themselves special, loved and excepted. Herb Kelleher witnesses: " I found my Fountain of Youth in the employees, the people of Southwest Airlines. Because every time I have the opportunity to be with you, it reminds me how wonderful you are, it rejuvenates me, restores me , and refreshes me"(Feinberg 221). Although Kelleher and Barrett treat their people like family, they sometimes exercise " tough love" by telling people the truth that hurts, the truth that can help them avoid <https://assignbuster.com/leadership-is-a-dynamic-relationship-theology-religion-essay/>

greater pain and hardship in the future"(Feinberg 231). Southwest leaders have created an environment in which " fun, humor, and playfulness are the low-cost antidotes for the harmful side effects of the stress and seriousness that pervade much of the corporate community" (Feinberg 140). A leader should think funny, be first to laugh and laugh with people because " humor and creativity go hand in hand-HA- HA leads to AHA!"(Feinberg 212)Leadership can be taught - it involves skills " possessed by a majority, but used by a minority"(Adair 34 ). I use " Nuts!" and my mentor advices for developing my own action plan that would help to improve my leadership skills until I possess the winning leadership qualities. I will:- Follow examples of great leaders - I will manage my emotions- Display integrity and trust. - I'll try to develop a stronger character- Learn to expand my knowledge - I will be social and approachable- Study people - Express love- Learn how inspire and motivate them - Think and behave as a leader- Develop a vision and creativity

A short course on leadership can be represented by the following verse: The six most important words..." I admit I made a mistake." The five most important words..." I am proud of you." The four most important words..." What is your opinion?" The three most important words..." If you please" The two most important words..." Thank you." The one most important word..." We" And the last, least important, word " I" (Adair 52)

The Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu summed leadership up in the sixth century before the Christian era:" To lead people, walk beside themA leader is bestWhen people barely know that he exists; Not so good when people obey and acclaim him; The next, the people fear; and the next, the people hate; Worst when they despise him. Fail to honor people, They fail to honor you. But of a good leader, who talks little, When his work is done, his aim fulfilled,

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They will all say, " We did this ourselves"(wagls. com ). The most effective leaders I know have put themselves on a continual process of self reflection and willingness to confront the underdeveloped skills sets. The greatest opportunity for leaders to grow comes from hardships, failures, and career setbacks. My favorite leader is Abraham Lincoln. He was a man of integrity and tenacity, rising from poverty to become the greatest of all American presidents. Lincoln demonstrated courageous leadership by tackling the nation's greatest problems with fearless determination. We admire him for his achievements in preserving the Union when challenged with civil war, putting an end to slavery and modernizing the nation's institutions. I also admire Lincoln as a person. He was persistent and resilient. Throughout his life, he remained down-to-earth, approachable and engaging. Everybody knows his life and accomplishments; I just want to present some of his great quotations:" I am not bound to win, but I am bound to be true. I am not bound to succeed, but I am bound to live by the light that I have. I must stand with anybody that stands right, and stand with him while he is right, and part with him when he goes wrong."" Always bear in mind that your own resolution to succeed is more important than any one thing."" Die when I may, I want it said by those who knew me best that I always plucked a thistle and planted a flower where I thought a flower would grow" (Bennett). Most leaders are not born, they are made and they are made through effort and hard work. Leadership comes from the enthusiasm to become the person other people will follow." Leadership is a discipline that must be practiced every day, sometimes without obvious reward, the same way a pianist has to spend hours alone at the keyboard, or a golfer has to spend time practicing on a green", says Joel Kurtzman , a columnist at New York Times(George). <https://assignbuster.com/leadership-is-a-dynamic-relationship-theology-religion-essay/>

Each one of us influences at least ten thousand other people during our lifetime (earnies-world. com). Like any other human relationship leadership is not easy to do well or to do consistently. Improving the leadership skills is a lifelong journey, but it's a fun and rewarding journey. Now, as I begin implementing the ideas found in " Nuts!", I feel more confident in my ability to lead others I hope that upon completing my plan I would be the person I want to be. If I work really hard at leadership, my " skills will become more habitual or unconscious. Then people will call [me] a natural leader" (Adair 4)

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