

Essay on reading assignment 5

Experience, Responsibility



In the article "John Deere and the Bereavement Counselor" the writer juxtaposes the evolution of the farming process in the Western lands of the United States with the development of bereavement counselor. Using the story of John Deere, the technology that allowed the settlers in the Prairies to farm the marshland and waterlogged areas west of Indian and Wisconsin, the writer makes an appeal at our emotions evoking the idea of ethical responsibility and the idea of conservation ethics. While the majority of the article talks about the conquest of the European settlers over the Sauk Indians and the struggle over land, the premise is that the settlers failed to learn ethical responsibility from the natives. Because of the over-excitement with the use of the magical tractor John Deere, the settlers were able to over-use the land and render it useless for farming activities. The story is thus a powerful analogy on how people can learn the idea of ethical use of land, community engagement, and the process of using power for the benefit of the society.

Interestingly, the technology, invented by John Deere in 1837 for the sole purpose of ploughing the Midwest ignored traditional methods of farming that had been useful for the Indians of the plains. The ethics of the land use and the pain of the traditional Sauk Indians was not a subject of discussion. In the contemporary society, John Deere is replaced by the bereaving counselor. The bereaving counselor is the replacement for the community that would function as support group for a member who loses a family or a friend. The question that remains is whether the role of the bereaving counselor is really necessary? Would the traditional models be much better? Perhaps the rush for new technology is actually a rush to disaster just

as highlighted in the case of John Deere.

The article “ John Deere and the Bereavement Counselor” leads to the question of responsibility. This answer we find in the chapter Administrative Responsibility “ The Key to Administrative Ethics”. Here, the author argues that leaders have the responsibility of creating an enthusiastic and loyal following basing on their actions and how they best use their leadership positions. In the words of the writer, “ good followers are created partly by leaders who understand their requirements and obligations for developing people.” This is a complex task but is created by a tactful leadership approach that embraces the idea that leadership is not about authority. Instead, it is created by a balancing act that recognizes the ability of the followers to make independent decisions and not follow the leader like “ passive sheep.”

However, understanding that the leader is human and capable of making mistakes is vital for the healthiness of a relationship. A realistic view of the leader is helpful in building trust based on mutual understanding as opposed to an idealized based trust and expectation. Second, leaders can make the mistake of portraying themselves as saints in the eyes of their followers by covering up their mistakes and weaknesses. While covering up the leaders mistakes is important for the wellbeing of the organization, it is important for the leader to appear normal to his followers and thus allow to be corrected when in wrong. Though, for the most part, only leader’s positive things should be shared by his followers. When a leader is forward and ready to admit his mistakes, it becomes easy for the followers to be constructively

critical of his approach. An opportunity for open disagreement is key for the organizations well being.

References

- McKnight “ John Deere and the Bereavement Character”
- Administrative Responsibility: The Key to Administrative Character”.