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Powerful Relationships in Leadership: A Collection of Modern Leadership Insights

Dustin S. Anderson

Winona State University, danderson12@winona.edu

Carley Clinkscapes

Winona State University, cclinkscapes11@winona.edu

Stephen Erlandson

Winona State University, Stephen.Erlandson@go.winona.edu

Brad Hak

Winona State University, bhak07@winona.edu

Justin Rude Hanson

Winona State University, jrhanson0169@winona.edu

See next page for additional authors

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Authors

Dustin S. Anderson, Carley Clinkscales, Stephen Erlandson, Brad Hak, Justin Rude Hanson, Patrick Holt, Brittany Kinney, Chenxiao Li, Vanessa Richter, Marcus E. Teachout, Brittany E. York, Jeffrey Thompson, Kenneth D. Janz, and Barbara Holmes

POWERFUL RELATIONSHIPS IN LEADERSHIP

A collection of modern leadership insights

Introduction by Dr. Barbara Holmes

Powerful Relationships in Leadership

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Dustin Anderson
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Stephen Erlandson
Brad Hak
Justin Rude Hanson
Patrick Holt
Brittany Kinney
Chenxiao Li
Vanessa Richter
Marcus Teachout
Jeffrey Thompson
Brittany E. York

Brad Hak, Editor
Dr. Barbara Holmes, Instructor



Leadership Education Department
Winona State University
175 West Mark Street, Winona, Minnesota, 55987

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Review by Dr. Barbara Holmes and Kendall Larson
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Introduction

LDRS 614- Change Leadership provides opportunity for graduate students to explore leadership topics, express leadership views and work collaboratively on leadership projects. In addition, the course incorporates digital teaching and learning instructional activities. During spring semester 2018, change leadership students worked to produce an *e*-book as a communication medium on leadership thinking.

Graduate students chose “The powerful relationships in leadership” for this year’s focus topic. This aligns with the behavioral approach to leadership that suggests that leader actions toward followers are important in moving the leadership agenda forward and fuels the leader’s success. Leaders with successful relationships with followers facilitate the accomplishment of agreed upon goals with followers and stakeholders.

The *e*-book project incorporates many of the fundamental tenets of 21st century leadership: creativity, communication and collaboration. Pedagogically, the *e*-book provides a platform for students to demonstrate these leadership skills along with content mastery. Graduate students also learn project management skills, setting deadlines, coordinating production, establishing quality control mechanisms and procedures, working with resource librarians, and utilizing Pressbooks software.

Creativity required by *e*-book development reinforces students’ self-efficacy working with digital tools and team sustainability. At times, there is a need to negotiate conflict with stakeholders and focus on leadership outcomes. Students have an authentic opportunity to apply their learning to a real world, real time project. The *e*-book project developed by graduate students this semester enables new voices about what leadership means and what it involves. It was a great learning experience for us all!

Dr. Barbara Holmes
LDRS 614 Class Instructor
Winona State University

Preface

The editorials contained in this book are the result of a “Change Leadership” class taught at Winona State University. This graduate studies course covers many aspects and philosophies of leadership and its impact on present day organizations. The *e*-book illuminates the perspectives of the class as they currently view and define modern leadership.

These articles allow the reader a unique opportunity to view leadership techniques through the lens of energetic, up and coming professionals. As the class has learned, leadership is ever changing and its definition and mannerisms will never be set in stone. The ultimate goal of the publication is to provide new insight into how entry level employees view management and the role a leader assumes in society.

We are grateful to Winona State University and Dr. Barbara Holmes for allowing us the time and the platform to collaborate as a group of aspiring professionals. The knowledge learned through our various instructors and lessons are invaluable, and have provided a solid framework for our future endeavors. The contributing authors of this eBook are: Dustin Anderson, Carly Clinkscales, Stephen Erlandson, Brad Hak, Justin Hanson, Patrick Holt, Brittany Kinney, Chenxiao Li, Vanessa Richter, Marcus Teachout, Jeffrey Thompson, and Brittany York.

Brad Hak, Editor
Leadership Education Graduate Student
Winona State University

Foreword

Powerful relationships build a strong community. These relationships are articulated both in the articles connected to leadership in this book as well as the relationships that took place in the development of this book. When the Darrell W. Krueger Library at Winona State University started its strategic planning process in the fall of 2015, five pillars were expressed as core to its contribution to the University. These pillars were identified as: Education, Collections, Discovery, Learning Environment, and People. These pillars along with the University's motto of "A community of learners improving our world" provide a mighty platform to leverage the work of our faculty, staff, and students.

This book is a manifestation of these pillars along with the University's motto in providing students a platform to provide contributions to a discipline (a community of learners) and enhancing our understanding of relationships in leadership (improving our world). I know I am fortunate enough to work with some magnificent people at this University and the quality of this work product is a testament to all of those individuals and the relationships developed to make this book a reality.

Kenneth Janz, Ph.D.

Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs, Dean of the Library, and
Chief Information Officer
Winona State University

How Relational Leaders Create Extraordinary Results

Brad Hak

Shaken from my sleep by a tremendous noise at 2 AM, I ran to the window to see what may have been the worst storm that the summer camp had ever experienced raging outside! Trees were falling, roads were flooding, and lightning was crashing. I hurried to put on my boots and rain gear and ran out the door to check on the wellbeing of the campers and to witness the devastation that was occurring. While crossing the camp making a list of concerns, I was greeted in the sideways rain by a single headlamp. Who was out in this type of weather? It was Jack, soaked from head to toe in nothing more than a t-shirt and shorts. As we huddled under an awning, we assessed the situation and decided on the best course of action to deal with the developing problems. We headed to the Arts and Crafts Center, which both confirmed our negative suspicions and answered our desperate hopes. There, standing in front of the Center flooded with 4 feet of water, were eight other camp staff (family members). Each was ready and willing to remedy any situation they encountered. Not only were they willing and ready, they were smiling. Glad to be up at 2:00 am, glad to be soaked to the bone, and happy to be part of the team. This team worked as one throughout the night, digging ditches, bailing water, mopping floors, doing whatever was needed. As the sun began to torch the night sky, it was just as if no storm had ever wreaked havoc on the camp property. While sitting in the 6:45 meeting still soaked to the bone and without a good night's rest, it dawned on all of us that the power of teamwork, no better yet, that the power of family, can take on any adversity.

How can you meet your “Jack” and “got you covered” partners when your back is against the wall? How can you get your staff to choose your common goal over comforts like sleep and shelter? How can you get people to work for you night and day because they want to, not because they have to? The secret

to all of these answers is difficult, but not complicated. To create extraordinary results, you have to create deep relational bonds. This article will introduce you to a successful framework to turn a team into a family.

Winner Winner Chicken Dinner

Gift card rewards, the prize for hard work. The concept was there and foolproof. As we progressed through the year, staff members that observed their peers engaged in hard work could award their fellow employees with gift cards, purchased by the administration. Not leader driven reward, but peer-driven reward. What could go wrong? Apparently, a lot. It took only four weeks until I was notified that one staff member was thinking of quitting. This was not just a new 19-year-old college kid, but a trusted veteran who added a lot of value to our company. Evaluating the situation, it occurred to me that her feelings had been hurt because she had not yet received a gift card. During our conversation, she alluded that she felt undervalued and was second guessing her job performance. In short, she felt as if she was being seen as the worst employee of the group, because a peer had not yet rewarded her for doing a great job.

As a leader, the power of reward can be very beneficial. I mean, who does not like getting free stuff? Unfortunately, the power of reward also sets up an un-sanctioned hierarchy which, in turn, leaves some of your best employees out in the cold.

Rewards play a vital role in relationship building. But how we approach rewards in the workplace needs to be handled very carefully. I have likened utilizing monetary rewards to the same manner in which we now view youth sports – participation is everything. We want to reward everyone just for showing up. Now, before you think this is a soft concept, let me explain. As a new administrator welcoming new staff, I can guarantee the outcome of happiness and an open mind if I am proactive in my giving. Being proactive in your giving (giving to everyone before an action has taken place) allows employees to see you as a kind and nurturing individual, and sets the tone that you will care for them. If all 20 employees showed up for the first meeting and were greeted with a welcome letter and 100 dollar bill, I have made everyone happy. People would walk out of the room feeling excited and valued. Conversely, if I would hand out a bonus to a single person every week, those that did not receive the bonus would begin to think less of themselves and their performance. They would begin to resent one or more of their co-workers. Work communities are very fickle and often utilizing monetary rewards upsets the homeostasis in which workers function. I believe that if you want to create

a strong team atmosphere, you must dispense a monetary reward to every member of the team and not to an individual.

I believe in the power of giving, but monetary rewards do not have to play an essential role in your workplace. There are ways to create even stronger relationships, but these bonds have to be genuine and take time and effort to cultivate. In the book “The Amazon Way,” Jeff Bezos talks about the fact that Amazon employees only have one door to use to enter the office. Jeff believes in the power of “Contact Moments” (Rossman, 2014). He knows that relationships are built in the down or passing times which we have in our day. Part of being a leader is being present and interacting. When present, you experience many more points of contact with your employees. During these interaction times, you begin to learn about all of the unknowns that go on with the people you work with. You may learn that an employee is struggling with day care, a family pet has passed, or a treasured grandfather has become ill. This is valuable information in which you can “personalize” reward. These personalized rewards can be as simple as sitting down with the employee to see if you can provide any assistance. Or they could be as complicated as taking this information and creating a solution. Either way, the more you know about the people you work with, the apter you are going to be at meeting their “unrecognized needs.” By meeting unrecognized needs, you build bonds that no amount of money or extravagant gift can hope to forge.

Let’s explore unrecognized needs. Employees are expecting more from their companies. They see companies like Google who provide all you can eat gourmet food, game rooms, personalized hours, and other relatively extravagant benefits. When someone sets the higher standards, it can quickly become an expectation that all companies will follow suit. How can you impress an employee that has come to expect everything – these are unrecognized needs. These powerful rewards can only be doled out when you truly know the people you work with. For example, your secretary, Jenny, loves nothing more in the world than her pet Corgi. Last month, in a passing conversation, she told you that Fluffy’s birthday was on the 5th of next month. When the day arrives, Jenny discovers a birthday cake at her doorstep to commemorate the occasion. This single action has let Jenny know that not only do you listen, but that you care about her happiness both inside and outside of the workplace. It is this type of reward system that creates a positive and highly functioning work environment.

It’s Not Me; It’s You!

After an 18 hour marathon of a workday, I locked my office door and prepared

to head home. To my shock, there was still one employee out and about. Observing her, it was apparent from her body language that something was wrong. She frantically moved about talking on her cell phone. After waiting for Kelly's call to end, I approached her to see if I could be of any assistance. Startled at first, she shrugged off my offered help telling me that she didn't need to "burden me with her problems." Seeing her visibly upset, I talked with Kelly hoping to learn more about her situation. Eventually, she broke down. She shared that her grandmother, the person who had raised her, was just diagnosed with cancer. Kelly's seasonal job had her not only missing home, but also left her with a lack of resources to help cope with the situation, including a listening ear. Kelly and I sat up for hours chatting about her life and that of her grandmother. Jointly we began to problem solve about where we should go from this point on. We both left the conversation exhausted but content with our solution. Not thinking much more about this moment, my time of summer employment came and went. About a week after returning home, I received a letter from Kelly. It was a picture of her and her grandmother with a note of appreciation regarding the night we had chatted. In the letter, she expressed that our face to face was what kept her from quitting and making the biggest mistake of her life. Overall she relayed that she knew she could count on me to put her needs in front of my own.

How does putting others needs before your own create stronger relationships? This action builds a level of trust between the leader and employee. It allows the follower to feel comfortable that the leader is always going to do what is right for the staff member. That is, the follower comes first, not the leader. Simon Sinek mimics this notion in a book called "Leaders Eat Last." The book's title is born from the idea that in the Marines, officers always eat after the cadets. Not only "is this a symbolic gesture it has great importance," it shows that officers understand and respect the cadet's role in the system. Jointly, it shows that an officer's job cannot be fulfilled without the action and support of those cadets (Sinek, 2014).

Still not convinced that Leaders should eat last? Consider a 5-minute video from Derek Sivers, named "How to start a movement." His short talk shows an individual at a festival, dancing on his own. Now this individual is nothing more at this point than a shirtless man dancing in the grass. This man does not gain "leadership" status until followers join him. By nurturing and encouraging the first few followers, more and more people join in until the "movement" has begun. Derek Sivers is correct that leadership is over glorified. It is actually the work of the followers that create the power in any situation (Sivers, 2010).

Effective leaders create strong relationships built on trust. By utilizing the

“It’s not me, it’s you” concept, you put your employees at ease in the workplace. As a manager in any situation, you cannot do it all yourself. Nor can you micromanage every situation. Trusting your employees to know and do what is right is critical. When you put your co-worker’s needs before your own, you create powerful relationships, and powerful relationships create integrity in your workplace.

What You Talking ‘bout Willis

You pick up leadership traits wherever you go. I recently went on an ice fishing trip to South Dakota with a group of friends. The lodge we stayed at allowed their dogs to roam around the area freely. After a dismal day of poor fishing, we returned to the garage to clean the few “volunteers” we had caught for dinner. As our host came down to feed these hunting specimens, I zeroed in on the two new pups they had just received a week earlier. It was amazing to watch them meander about with the other five dogs waiting for their feast. The lesson in leadership came once the dog food was dished out. Every single dog sat in front of their bowl, jowls watering, while the owner said a prayer. This included the two brand new additions. As soon as our host said Amen, the dogs went to work devouring the food in their bowls. What was the lesson here? It is about the power of communication. That communication is much more than just the words that we speak. These new puppies had not been there long enough to be trained by their owners. They had been trained by watching their canine companions each day. Human organizations tend to operate similarly. People react not only to what is said but also to what they see and experience.

When leading, clear and concise communication is key. No different than your relationships with friends or your significant other, relationships that last rely on structured communication to navigate all of life’s ups and downs. As a leader, whether seasoned or just beginning, you will have employees come and go. With each new hire, you must be ready to change your communication strategy. That’s right; proper communication is dependent upon the person you are working with. Though your thought process and core information may stay much the same, the way you relay that information is very dependent on the employee’s personality. In this section, we will discover what proper interactions look like, sound like, and feel like when taking the role of a relational leader.

What is the point of communicating? Communication is set up to relay information to produce an outcome. When dealing with a short-term transactional issue, the main idea is to make your communication clear, concise, and direct. For example, when ordering fast food at a drive-through, you need

to be very clear about your order – do you want pickles or not? Once you have placed your order in a clear fashion, you may want to go the extra mile and review that order to make sure there are no mistakes. In a transactional situation that is the expectation. You pull through, pay your money, (flash a smile if you feel up to it), and receive said order. That would be completely acceptable for this interaction. When it comes to leadership and working with people in a long term commitment, the process of communication becomes more involved. The work place needs to be made up of relational communication, not transactional communication.

Relational communication is about more than just words. In fact, the verbiage of your communication is minimal compared to the other aspects at play. Let's consider an old Tony Robbins clip. He talks about a leader's ability to build rapport through communication. He says that people like people who are like themselves. Tony goes on to talk about certain mannerisms that you can mirror to increase your relationships, therefore making communication more effective (Robbins, 2016). I work with people from all over the globe in my job as a camp administrator. How I communicate with a 21-year-old male from England differs immensely from my conversation with a 40-year-old female from Florida. The long and the short of it is that you have to be willing to take on different approaches that fit the profile of those you are working with. By no means is this asking you to become fraudulent. It says that to build powerful relationships you need to relay your communication in a way that feels familiar to your co-workers.

Here are some traits for you to consider when seeking out relational communication:

Listening – I know this sounds standard, but this is one of the most important aspects of leadership. All too often leaders are the first to talk and express ideas. Once a leader or manager offers their opinions, it puts the employee in a position to automatically agree due to the leader's positional power. A work place would often be much more effective if leaders were the last to speak. Effective listening involves more than just letting the words of others go in one ear and out the other. You need to truly listen by processing the information being offered and seeking out its value. One main difference between a manager and leader when it comes to communication is that managers have already solved the problem. Receiving team feedback is just part of going through the motions. However, relational leaders (though they have a thought process) involve their team in the actual decision making because they value their staff's diverse knowledge, experience, approach, and opinions.

Body Language – Covey used to say “Begin with the End in Mind...” (Covey, 2014). Nowhere is this statement truer than with communication. Before you engage in any interaction with employees you need to focus on what you want the outcome to be. By being proactive in your outcome, it helps you control and direct not only your words, but also your actions. I believe that body language is more important than the words that you speak. This is why face to face communication tends to succeed more frequently than online interactions. Your body language should be dictated by the person you are talking with. Like a fighter in the ring, you should always be evaluating your coworkers to learn their traits and their likes and dislikes. By learning your staff’s actions, you can better mirror their movements which will provide clearer relational communication.

How we speak – Most of us know that our tone of voice dictates the reaction that we receive in any communication, whether it be over the phone or in person. You could be giving someone a compliment, but if you are shouting that compliment with negative sounding tone, the recipient will see it as sarcasm. Make sure your tone fits your words. Let’s take how we speak a step further. Going back to mirroring and the example from Tony Robbins, he shows that mimicking not only tone but also speed and terminology, help create a more effective rapport and effective interaction.

Touch – We have to be very careful about how we approach this. But, there is no way to build quicker deeper relations than the power of touch. In our very politically correct (PC) world, many leaders are scared to utilize this method of communication. That is often a mistake. To hone in on the power of touch, let’s look at the example of a common handshake. Say you met a new co-worker for dinner and over the course of the meal and drinks you developed a good rapport. But when parting ways and saying goodbye, your co-worker refused to shake your hand. How would that feel? Would you still feel that strong, budding relationship? Of course not. The same can hold true for a gentle hand on the shoulder, a pat on the back, and, dare I say it, even a hug. The touch approach drives home the importance of your interactions. You might think of it as an exclamation point at the end of the sentence. For many people, these small physical actions create meaning way beyond that of voice.

Communication can be likened to a chameleon. It is about learning the habits of your co-workers and mirroring those habits during all interactions. As a leader, you need to always be in control of your emotions. In times of conflict, it will be especially important to focus on your projected outcome

so that your sentiments do not get the best of you. Be patient in all communications and let others express their ideas and feelings first. Last, but not least, do not fear the tactile approach. As long as you know your colleges and utilize this method correctly, you will be successful. By following this communication protocol, you will be able to communicate effectively on both the conscious and subconscious level. By connecting on both levels, you will be able to establish a deep rapport resulting in effective communication.

Be the First Egg in the Omelet

I once taught a 10th-grade Physical Education class where cardiovascular fitness was a focus. Every week, students would complete a timed run. The run was not based on mileage, just the ability to keep your legs moving for a certain amount of time. On the last day, students were offered the opportunity to take part in a new challenge – The Iron Man. We had worked up to a 40 min jog at that point, but in the Iron Man, they were welcome to run for as long as the period allowed. The only stipulation made was that I (the teacher) would not stop running until the last student decided they were done. As the whistle blew at the 40 min mark, the first thing that all students did was to look to their peers. Who was going to stop? After the first few “leaders” stopped, 16 of our 40 kids followed suit. They did what was required nothing more nothing less. The next 24 runners continued around the track with different goals in mind. Remember there are no rewards here, just the idea of “Can you do it”. Within the next 20 minutes, 4 more participants bowed out. The final 16 runners ran for a total of 1 hour 35 minutes as a 10th grader! What was the beauty of the finishers? None of the participants that ran the entire time were celebrated athletes. In fact, only 3 of the students considered themselves to be in good shape. The students that conquered the race were simply kids with a mindset of success and motivation.

Though the feat in itself is amazing, the leadership message was relayed when I followed up with the runners. On a post-run survey participants were asked to respond to the question, “Why did you choose to keep running?” The two most recorded responses were, they did it to push themselves, and they could not let their teacher down.

Being the first egg in the omelet means, lead by example! When I reflect on the event above, I often wonder how many, if any runners would have continued if I was not setting the example? Jointly, I wonder if all participants would have completed the run if those few first students would not have dropped out. Leading by example is the most powerful trait of true relational leaders. When a leader walks the walk, they set a standard that they find

worthwhile to benefit the organization. Leading by example also begins to develop a deep level of trust that you are not only invested in your group's mission but also the work of your employees. Below we will explore a group of traits that are pivotal in setting a positive example for your place of employment. Though the list is by no means all-encompassing, it will give you a strong foundation on which to build your repertoire of communication and leadership skills.

Humility- When you work in a place of employment that contains the normal hierarchy of positions, it can be hard for a leader to stay humble. Humility is one of the biggest differences between a relational and positional leader. Relational leaders know that there are, indeed, others that can do certain jobs better than they can themselves. These exceptional leaders have no problem taking a back seat when others, no matter what their position, can make their company thrive. When an employee is in a low-level position, it is common for him to feel somewhat inferior to those in the higher ranks. Leaders that allow themselves to be seen as “just another human being” help generate levels of trust and the belief amongst their entire team. Heads of organizations that crave long-term success should always start with this mentality of service as opposed to ego.

Positivity- It is very disadvantageous for any leader to focus on the negative. Whether this is a short term or long term problem it is a waste of time and effort to be angry and spiteful because “something bad” happened in the workplace. A leader would be much better off spending their time and effort utilizing compassion and optimism to solve the problem that has arisen. Negativity can be a quickly spreading cancer among an organization, and in most cases, the leader of the company is the one that creates the culture. Due to things like mirror neurons humans are hardwired to be sympathetic or repeat actions that others exhibit. Heads of companies are responsible for their own “Ripple Effect”. Therefore, demonstrating positivity is not an option, but an obligation of a relational leader.

Forgiveness- Everyone makes mistakes. This includes the leaders themselves. As a leader, there is nothing more dangerous than holding a grudge. When you hold a grudge, you create work tension that will not only slow down productivity, but also increase the likelihood that either you, your employee or both of you burnout prematurely. Forgiveness is key in any relationship, professional or otherwise. When dealing with interpersonal mishaps, a leader

can either get over the stress or engage the stress. No matter what, positive leaders do not create a third situation, which is simply staying upset.

Along with being forgiving, a strong relational leader knows how to apologize. Leaders will make mistakes, strong leaders acknowledge these mistakes, apologize for them, and take the necessary steps to make them better. When you apologize, it shows others that you live your life with integrity, and take ownership in any situation, negative or positive. When leading with integrity you create relationships built on trust, satisfaction, and loyalty.

Loyalty – Nothing will cause a relationship to sour faster than being unfaithful. As a relational leader, you owe it to your co-workers to support and back them when the time is appropriate. Loyalty, though, is deeper than just support, loyalty is an innate feeling that no matter what a person is going to do right by you. True loyalty cannot be gained in a day, possibly not even months. It takes years of ups and downs and appropriate responses to work events to prove to others how you feel. When you exhibit loyalty in a leadership role, you can trust that your co-workers will go the extra mile for the company.

Being a relational leader is no easy task. Leadership is an ever-expanding skill that can only be sharpened by repetitious work with varied types of people. Becoming a head of any organization is going to take time, effort, failure, success, and reflection. The above ideas are a solid foundation in which to construct an individual leadership profile. If you hope to create positive working environments with outcomes that exceed expectations; start with relationships. When you know, respect, and invest in your co-workers, you will establish deep bonds that create success, in and outside of the workplace.

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The Relationships of Teaching: Reflections of a First Year Teacher

Carley Clinkscale

Being a first-year teacher is a wild ride, and when asked to explore leadership through the lens of a graduate student, anxiety arises; a bi-product of being a brand-new educator. A leader builds a relationship with followers while constructing an inspirational vision, setting a direction, and influencing change to achieve a common goal. Reflecting on the last year, first-year teachers have responsibility of building rapport with parents, leading other teachers, educational assistants and little people, as well as modeling appropriate behaviors and teaching young minds respect, care, kindness, academics, how to handle disappointment, patience, honesty, integrity, cooperation and so much more.

Relationship building starts with creating a learning community that is thought provoking, fun, and captivating where all children feel welcome, cared for, respected (social-emotional) and can thrive. In this learning community, academics are essential, but kindness and empathy are at the top of the lesson plan. The Harvard University Center on the Developing Child's 2017 statement on Learning Communities encourages the development of learning communities that share values, celebrate communications, and respect individual participants.

The opportunities provided on the path to teaching instilled the importance of creating a classroom community. I always dreamed of being a teacher, especially a kindergarten teacher. For me, school was always enjoyable, and many phenomenal educators throughout the years are my inspiration. My cooperating teacher during student teaching, Kelly Allington, made me the educator I am today and deserves all the recognition in the world for showing how amusing and electrifying kindergarten can be. Responsive Classroom, learned from Kelly Allington, is an approach used and is well known for its

“evidence-based approach to education that focuses on strong relationships between academic success and social-emotional learning” (Responsive Classroom, 2018). A classroom community can be created through morning meeting experiences, lessons, and practice. Morning meeting, adopted from Responsive Classroom, consists of a daily gathering for about 20 minutes which includes a greeting, sharing, group activity, and a morning message.

Another approach to leadership development in young children is “bucket filler, bucket dipper.” Every person has an invisible bucket that gets filled with respect, care, and positive interactions, but can quickly be dipped through negative interactions. Dr. Donald O. Clifton created the first “Dipper and Bucket” story, which includes positive encounters and a reduction of the negative (General Questions About Bucket Filling, 2018).

Good relationships value each voice and respects individual expression. Anchor charts displaying expected and unexpected behaviors and practicing scenarios are great reminders to make good choices in order to be our best selves. Letting students have a voice in creating the expected and unexpected behaviors allow for ownership. Students also learn there will be times when mistakes are made, and sometimes all you can do is say you are sorry and change your thoughts and actions for the future. One of the kindergarten students said, “Miss, Clinkscales, the stuff you teach us is important, but you teach us to be kind because that’s importanter.” Grammatically correct or not, this intelligent young mind hit the nail right on the head with that statement. My basic teaching beliefs consist of establishing individuals who make the world a better place. Being kind and respectful costs absolutely nothing, and I want my students to be “those kinds of people.” Kind. Robert Fulghum (2003), author of “All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten,” said it best in his book in which he provides a list of the essentials of life that he learned at age five and six. Fulghum states, “Share everything; play fair; don’t hit people; put things back where you found them; clean up your own mess; say you’re sorry; wash your hands; flush; warm cookies and cold milk are good for you; learn; think; draw; paint; sing; dance; play; work; take naps; be aware of wonder; look around; and when you go out into the world, watch for traffic, hold hands, and stick together.” That’s what kindergarten is all about and my teaching philosophy aligns well with Fulghum’s statements simply because teaching the students academics is critical, but so is creating good people who make the world a better place.

Building viable and sustainable with parents is crucial but takes time and initiative. Rapport is built through positive interactions, effective communication, and clear expectations. As a first-year teacher, parents

especially want to know and understand who their child's new teacher is. Imagine having to drop your five or six-year-old child off in a classroom with an individual nobody really knows because the teacher is brand new. One kindergarten parent said, "It's scary having to leave your child with someone you don't know. As a parent, you have to trust that the educator is going to care for your child and do what is best at all times." Through communication, educators and parents are able to establish relationships and build rapport. In order to begin forming relationships with parents, it is a wise idea to send a letter introducing yourself and providing some basic information, with a self-portrait included before school begins. This allows parents to get a better idea of who their child's teacher is and also put a name with a face. In particular, parents have a better idea as to who to look for and meet with on the night of open house. Even prior to the first encounter with parents, research may be conducted. Parents may investigate various social media sites to try and find out any information possible, so don't give them a reason to wish their child was with the other teacher down the hall. Personal branding is the way others perceive you; leave a positive and lasting impression. The world doesn't need to know your every move. As an educator especially, consider keeping all security settings on and not posting anything too personal or revealing.

After forming relationships, it's important to build and strengthen them through emails, weekly newsletters, phone calls, and even conferences from time to time. Natalie Skoglund, a first-year teacher, shared, "My first-year teaching has been successful because of the open communication with my student's parents. This allows me to better understand my students and their home life. I have found this necessary because I can differentiate my lessons based on every student's personalities and needs. Teaching is a continuous learning experience" (N. Skoglund, personal communication, 2018).

To keep a working relationship with parents, a teacher should provide positives as well as areas for growth. Parents are one of the most influential parts of their child's learning and it's important for everyone to be on the same page. This helps build trust with families and provides an understanding that a teacher and parents are a team. Working with kindergarten parents, it's important to invest in building relationships and effectively communicating because this is their first encounter with school, especially if they don't have older children. Through communication, educators and parents can work together to provide the best education for each individual child. Breanna Cramer, a first-year teacher, shared "It's important for kindergarten teachers to provide students great experiences and lessons so that all students love school; they have many years of schooling ahead of them" (B. Cramer, personal communication, 2018).

Another approach used is the “open-door policy,” which refers to parents being welcome at any point in time in the classroom. This provides assurance that there is nothing to hide and that the teacher feels comfortable and confident in his/her work. Spaulding Middle School prides themselves on the open-door policy stating “you (parents) are welcome to come and sit in a teacher’s classroom with your son/daughter to experience first-hand what class feels and looks like from the perspective of the students” (Spaulding Middle School, 2018). Encourage parents to join the class for lessons and activities; they’ll appreciate it. The students will, too!

Building relationships and fulfilling responsibilities are essential tasks for first-year teachers, especially as the newest member of a learning community. It’s far beyond just the duties of a teacher, as one then becomes the member of a grade-level team, school, various committees, and an entire school system. It’s not easy to be “the new kid on the block,” but a new teacher should try to have an open mind and step out of his/her comfort zone and introduce himself/herself; it’s a must. There will be some staff who go out of their way to introduce themselves, but there are others who wait to see how the newest staff member presents himself/herself, even as a first-year teacher.

Communication is key, especially in forming relationships. First, start small and get to know the individuals you teach alongside, this will help to build some confidence. It helps to learn one another’s strengths and limitations in order to best work together as a team. It’s crucial to understand the duties of each team member to get the job done. That said, one needs to make sure to know exactly what the expectations are of each member of the group and what fulfillment will look like. The duties of the team consist of communicating, collaborating, organizing of field trips and activities, as well as support and encouragement (especially to the newest member of the team), and even framing deadlines. There are many obligations the grade-level team has, therefore; it is critical to connect with the other individuals on the team from the get-go. Next, one should meet others within the learning community, even those that work in another building. It is uncomfortable to “break the ice” at first but well worth it in the end. Educators cross paths frequently, so having another person or persons to collaborate with and learn from is a phenomenal idea, especially for a first-year teacher. Lastly, committee meetings take place frequently, which allows for members to work together to reach goals that are set. Staff members can be assigned to committees, which means as a new teacher, you will have to build relationships and learn to effectively communicate with the other affiliates. One should be sure to know the roles of all members in order to be successful.

There is nothing worse than expecting someone to complete a task, and then find out at the next meeting that it was never taken care of.

Administration has expectations for all educators, but especially for first-year teachers. The school principal and I have very similar beliefs and expectations. One of the expectations is greeting students at the door, following the “Four at the Door” approach. This method allows educators to connect with students as soon as they enter the classroom doorway through good eye contact, use of the student’s name, an appropriate human contact such as a fist bump, or hi-five, followed by a heart to heart interaction such as a question about his/her weekend or a compliment (Norlin, 2017). High achievement and engaging lessons are a must. All students deserve a world-class education, therefore; it is essential to make sure they receive what they need in order to be successful.

Pat Bowlin, Winona Area Catholic Schools principal, also firmly believes in creating and retaining a strong “Culture of Kindness” (P. Bowlin, personal communication, 2018). Everyone should show and receive kindness. It is said that kindness is contagious, so if we start with our school it could turn into a society that is harmonious. Wouldn’t that be amazing? Lastly, The Winona Area Catholic Schools (WACS) Way is an expectation administration holds all staff accountable for. It includes a pledge of four components: help others succeed, let others know they matter, see the problem—own the problem, and honor the absent (Winona Area Catholic Schools, 2018). Through this, the mission is for everyone to be their best selves, providing small acts of kindness to let others feel love and care, figuring out a solution and putting it into action to fix a problem, and making sure trust is present through honesty and kindness with avoidance of gossip and false information.

At the beginning of the school year, all WACS educators were encouraged to read the book *The Carpenter*. As a first-year teacher, this book inspired strength in times of adversity or fear. Author, Jon Gordon (2014), stated “Don’t focus on building your business. Focus on using your business to love, serve, care, and build others up. If you do this, your business will build and multiply exponentially” (p. 115). My biggest takeaway was it is my duty to love, serve, and care for others, and once that takes place, the business will positively change and grow.

As a learning leader, there are numerous responsibilities one is held to, far beyond just teaching students. The responsibilities of a teacher are spelled out under contract, through personal ethics and values, and positive child development. A teaching contract is an agreement between the educator and the employer. This consists of, but is not limited to, contract hours and days, pay, duties, etc. As an educator, there are also ethics and values that come

into play. It's important to keep the mission in mind and always do what is best for the students. Understanding and developing curriculum, instruction, and assessment can be overwhelming, but it's an area all educators are held accountable for. An accountable employee and educator prioritizes student growth and positive child development.

Leadership tasks take place in the school classroom on a daily basis. The students are the focus, which requires individuals to communicate, build and maintain trust, influence others, manage conflict, and so much more in order to build the classroom community that is present. In order for these five and six-year-olds to achieve a common goal of learning, the teacher must make sure effective communication is used at all times. The educator needs to obtain knowledge to present the lesson, use correct vocabulary, assess students learning, and more. Students and parents trust the information conveyed by the teacher is accurate and honest. Students learn best when lessons are engaging and meaningful. Kindergarten students often comment about their love for school due to the interactive, insightful, and amusing lessons.

Conflict is another piece of leadership, which is present in a classroom setting on a daily basis. Occasional conflict is inevitable, however; through rules and procedures; educators can better manage when they do arise. Once a classroom community is formed and strategies are taught by the leader, students can better manage conflict themselves.

In order to sustain teaching excellence, supportive relationships are a must! It feels good to be in a building and school system that supports, understands and thrives. New teachers should consider finding a mentor to help in times of need, answer questions, and work through concerns that arise. Jennifer Hermsen, my kindergarten co-worker, mentor, and friend, has been my go-to for anything and everything. Knowing her all my life has helped ease the challenging times simply because we know one another very well and have already had a relationship that stems from when I was young. It doesn't matter if it's a question, a comment, or a concern, she's always there to lend a helping hand or even just listen. Another plus is she always builds me up. In times of doubt or uncertainty, she comes through by providing reminders of times in excellence and ways to get through. Relationships with administrators are also important; first-year teachers especially need all the support and coaching they can get. Administrators can be great resources, especially for a brand-new educator.

The Leadership Education program at Winona State University has prepared me to lead others, beyond young children. The professors want their students to be the best leaders they can possibly be, even in tough times. Anyone can lead

when the situation at hand is good, however; it takes a true leader to step up when the going gets tough. Some of the best leaders emerge in difficult times. Students in the Winona State University Leadership Education are provided numerous opportunities to strengthen their leadership skills through simulations, scenarios, and personal experiences. One of the biggest takeaways is the importance of building and strengthening relationships through effective communication.

Everyday lessons are learned, especially as a first-year teacher. One should consider a journal to write about exciting moments of days in order to reflect, transform, and laugh. My first teaching experience was full of great experience and challenges, with many powerful lessons learned. The first lessons I learned early on in the school year is how essential it is to be organized and prepared at all times. Lesson plans, managing the classroom, finding and building up appropriate and amusing lessons, materials, and ideas, grading papers, assessing students, meeting with parents, and working closely with school staff takes a lot of time and heart, but dedication and hard work is the key to a successful experience, especially as a first-year teacher.

It can teach years to become a great teacher. It is inspiring yet stressful at times to see colleagues providing students great learning lessons and experiences, while you feel like you're barely keeping your head above water. It takes time to build up the collection of amazing ideas, lessons, and projects. One needs to remember it does not happen overnight and to breathe. Do what you can and grow for the following year.

The biggest lesson I've learned as a leader is you must make wise decisions on when to be bold and stand tall, even if you're standing alone and when to let it slide. It's not always easy to stand up for what you believe in but choose wisely. Songwriter, Don Schlitz, and singer, Kenny Rogers, said it best in the song, *The Gambler*, "You've got to know when to hold em, know when to fold em, know when to walk away, know when to run" (1978). There are times when you must stand bold, and other times when you just have to "fold em" and roll with it.

The experiences and opportunities of being a first-year teacher have provided anxiety, but also knowledge and growth. I'm a firm believer in the famous quote by Mahatma Gandhi, "Be the change you wish to see in the world." As a leader, I can influence and guide change in order to do what is best for students!

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Inspiring Female Youth Leadership Through Extended Learning

Brittany Kinney

Female youth represent a significant part of the leadership for the future. The positive development of female youth is a concern at all levels of society and the community. Young girls need support in responding to the social and emotional challenges facing adolescents and need multiple opportunities to develop in positive ways. Pearson (2015) asserts, “In the history of the world, change often starts with the young. Young people look at the world with fresh eyes.” Female youth are a part of this anticipated change and need to participate in the change process.

It is imperative that girls develop social and emotional skills to deal with stressors such as forced media expectations, pressured academic success, and most significantly, peer pressure. Social-emotional skills are also known as soft skills, non-cognitive skills, or character skills. Female youth exhibit these skills when they work to achieve goals, deal with conflict, process their external environment, or work to manage their emotions (Miyamoto, Huerta, & Kubacka, 2015, p. 184). Competence in social-emotional skills directly correlates to emotional stability, the likelihood of attending post-secondary education, desirability to the workforce, healthy relationships, and leadership. If girls fail to develop these skills, their perception of the external environment may become jaded, leading to loss of interest in pursuing goals or working toward a communal resolution.

The State of Female Youth

We cannot identify social-emotional skills that would mitigate undesirable behaviors without understanding the current mental health pressures and external environment of female youth.

In 2015, *Child Trends* compiled national statistics on Adolescents who felt

sad or hopeless in the last year. Nearly 40% of female students in the United States reported feeling sad or hopeless for a period of two or more weeks in a row (“Adolescents Who Felt Sad or Hopeless”, 2016). In severe cases of sadness and hopelessness, students may attempt or commit suicide; These statistics are staggering. Nationwide in grades 9-12, 23% of females have seriously considered suicide, 12% have attempted, with 4% of attempts requiring medical attention (“Suicidal Teens”, 2016). Suicide is not only indicative of mental health issues, but also of trauma, excessive stress, and abuse.

Like sadness, hopelessness, and suicide, eating disorders are common amongst girls. Eating disorders wear many masks. Binging, purging, consuming laxatives, or refusing to eat are all signs of an eating disorder. In 2014, *Child Trends* reported that 6.6% of female students, grades 9-12 engage in disordered eating (“Disordered Eating”, 2014).

In addition to internal mental health struggles, a female youth’s external environment can also have a negative impact on her life: bullying, drug abuse, teen pregnancy, low self-esteem, unhealthy relationships, and school dropout are all risks girls face.

Bullying takes shape in many different forms. Bullying presents itself as physical intimidation, relational aggression, or internet/cell phone harassment. Comparatively, youth males and females face the same amount of bullying, with females being 5% more likely to experience relational aggression. In 2016, 12% of females’ self-reported being physically intimidated, 38% faced relational aggression, and 5% experienced cyberbullying. Students who are on the receiving end of these aggressions are more likely to be lonely, have physical and mental health issues, display poor social skills, and have poor performance at school (“Bullying”, 2016).

Teen pregnancy is another issue girls face in today’s world. Hypersexuality is encouraged through television, music, and magazines to name a few, but that isn’t the only indicator of susceptibility to teen pregnancy risks. Substance abuse, poor self-esteem, family norms, socioeconomic status and cognitive maturity, can play a huge role in the likelihood of teen pregnancy. Nearly 53 out of 1,000 teens aged 15-19 will become pregnant this year (“Teen Pregnancy”, 2016). This is not surprising, considering that 1 in 3 teens are sexually active, with a tendency for females being more likely to engage in intercourse (“Sexually Active Teens”, 2017).

Drug abuse can severely impact a girl’s participation in deviant behaviors. The pressures to consume drugs and alcohol can be difficult to avoid, especially when pressured by peers. Aside from peer pressure, some students are more inclined to participate in the use of drugs and alcohol if their family has a history

of drug abuse. Males are more likely to abuse marijuana, but females are twice as likely to use illicit drugs such as LSD, MDMA, Heroin, Cocaine, and more (“Illicit Drug Use”, 2016).

Overall, these issues lead to high absenteeism and school dropout. Nearly 6% of girls nationwide will drop out of school (“High School Dropout Rates”, 2017). Both factors lead to a higher chance of poverty and poor post-secondary performance. Without completion of high school and a post-secondary pathway, the likelihood of a female youth achieving success decreases significantly.

The Connectedness of Social and Emotional Skills to Leadership

Social-emotional skills are varied and plentiful; I specifically want to highlight six that I find to be most important. The first of these skills is personal boundaries. Personal boundaries are invisible walls each of us put up to protect ourselves. Female youth are vulnerable to allowing friends, family, strangers, and especially significant others cross those boundaries due to familial culture, expectations from their external environment, and existing gender stereotypes. It is imperative for girls to understand boundaries that are healthy, while emphasizing that not a single one of us is perfect. Having personal boundaries allows female youth to have a voice, be in control of their life, and pursue healthy relationships. This assists in preventing chances of domestic violence, teen pregnancy, and school dropout.

Effective communication is also a skill that must be learned by girls. Effective communication allows female youth to read tone, body language, and other nonverbal cues to decipher what are appropriate conversations. If one has ever been around middle or high school aged girls, one knows effective communication can be a problem. Drama happens for a reason, and often it is because of poor communication. It doesn't help that 74% of girls feel as though they need to please everyone (“Statistics on Girls & Women's Self Esteem”, 2013). When female youth gain their voice, they can stand up to peer pressure, find confidence, and reach out for guidance when they are in need.

Learning the ability to carry out healthy relationships is a skill female youth need. Hormones are running rampant in girls. Many female youth are striving to have what they believe to be a significant other, and will go to great lengths to obtain that relationship. Unhealthy relationships put girls at risk for sexual experiences at a young age, teen sexting, and dating violence. One out of 14 young girls will have experienced sexual assault, physical abuse, or stalking by their partner by age 18 (Smith et al., 2017). When girls learn about and witness healthy relationships, they are more likely to replicate these behaviors.

Students can also learn to mitigate conflict by modeling the actions of parents, teachers, and other trusted adults. Dealing with conflict is hard for female youth; not only do they want to please others, they fear losing social status. Teaching girls conflict resolution not only helps in their current life, but also sets young women up for success in the future.

Even if girls do master the art of dealing with conflict, life still won't always go their way. Equipping female youth to persevere through hardships can dramatically alter their pathway in life. Perseverance is a student's capability to move forward or find success despite the adversity and barriers presented to them. Similar terms used are grit and resiliency.

To foster social-emotional skills, female youth must learn and practice positive self-care. When girls create these habits at a young age, they are more likely to carry them out throughout adulthood. Self-Care is most frequently taught and practiced as mindfulness, being aware of your thoughts, feelings, and actions in a particular moment. Though, for many females, self-care goes beyond that. It can be accomplishing simple tasks like showering, managing stress, exercise, and tending to your friendships. Self-care allows female youth to be happy and healthy, which leads to better performance in school, sports, and life choices.

Lastly, I want to touch on self-compassion. Self-compassion is closely related to self-esteem, but displays less unfavorable outcomes such as narcissism, bullying, and aggression (Neff & McGehee, 2010). Self-compassion entails treating yourself with care when you experience imperfection, finding commonality in the human experience, and holding yourself captive to the present moment (Neff & McGehee, 2010). A girl can provide herself with compassion when her external environment, personal choices, or performance isn't meeting expectations. Self-compassion leads to increased happiness, optimism, and lower risk of mental health issues. Self-compassion also prevents insecurity, closed mindset, and social comparison (Neff & McGehee, 2010).

All of these social-emotional skills play a role in preventing negative behaviors. When practiced, these skills allow female youth to navigate through childhood obstacles, create post-secondary pathways, strong leadership, and happy, healthy adult lives.

The Role of Extended Learning

With parents working more than ever and classroom time limited to national test competencies, how and when are students supposed to acquire these skills? After-school programs or extended learning opportunities have proven to be a place to foster these skills. Extended learning can have many different looks:

sports, study clubs, student government, religious groups, mentoring, and gender-specific groups. Females in high school may also experience extended learning through community service, internships, apprenticeships, and job shadows.

Implementing social-emotional learning (SEL) into extended learning allows female youth to gain experiences in the activities they love while expanding cognitive skills that encourage leadership. Creating and implementing lessons that stimulate this learning are easy to find and adapt. Girls engaged in an SEL programs express less aggression, anxiety, and depression, while social competence and school engagement increase (Moore McBride, Chung, & Robertson, 2016).

Above all, the most impactful piece of extended learning programs are the positive youth-staff relationships that develop (Hurd & Deutsch, 2017). As discussed above, healthy relationships are a critical part of self-development for female youth. As educators, we create lessons that are engaging, purposeful, and applicable. However, female youth return for relationships. Whether these relationships are with friends, teachers, mentors, or coaches, having someone who invests in their well-being motivates girls to work harder and display positive behaviors. As a positive adult, your relationships are the power and magic of extended learning.

It is important to touch on what identifies someone as a positive adult. One of the first things a female youth will detect is if their program activity is held in a safe space. Safe space is not only secure in physicality, but in stability and expression. The elimination of chaos allows female youth have room for focus on hard work, problem-solving, and self-reflection. Next, a positive adult offers the opportunity to build new skills. These new skills can be in academics, sports, or other hobbies. To construct these skills, adults need to give girls a degree of autonomy, where the adult leader sets rules and limits that foster innovation and investment in outcomes. Supporting a female youth's social identity, including her race, culture, ability, or sexual orientation, is extremely important. When girls are authentically recognized for their identity and rewarded for positive behaviors, they are more likely to continue exuding those behaviors.

Lastly, a girl looks to be nurtured and supported. An adult that is compassionate asks about a female youth's welfare and inspires the creation of goals and aspirations (Hurd & Deutsch, 2017). A positive adult can also adjust their attitudes and programs to be equitable, making extended learning available marginalized groups of female youth.

Extended learning providers have an advantage over school teachers, as they are typically not seen as disciplinary forces, eliminating negative stigma and

fear from female youth. These unique relationships open a door for extended learning providers to reach students on a personal level. Female youth are more likely to share in depth about their lives when given the opportunity. Through sharing, adult staff can create opportunities to identify negative behaviors and opportunities to fix them.

Aside from staff that runs extended learning programs, mentors, coaches, and other positive role models can be present. All of these adults have the opportunity to provide impactful touch points with female youth.

Mentoring, which provides girls with coaching and guidance is also positively correlated with the development of leadership skills. Having a mentor allows a female youth to analyze leadership styles and model observed styles (Holliday, Dawson, & Hall, 2017). Mentorship can also foster teamwork, motivation, and increase leadership competencies.

With these positive correlations stated, there is a clear need for female youth to be engaged in extended learning opportunities. Whether sports, the arts, study clubs, or other learning experiences, the social and emotional skills learned can propel young women to new heights.

The Need for Female Leaders

To support our next generation of girls, we need to increase the prevalence of female leaders. Only 3% of Fortune 500 CEOs are women (“Statistics on Girls & Women’s Self Esteem”, 2013). The Nation needs female voices in business, politics, and education who will inspire young women and shape policy and programs that support their development. “Equal participation for young women in the economy means a potential boost of 28 trillion USD to global annual GDP by 2025” (“You are the leaders of today”, 2017). If society were to make changes at the institutional level, the involvement of a diverse group of leaders is essential. This needs to include women. Women of color, non-cisgender, various socioeconomic, and religious beliefs all need to be present.

Look at how Angela Merkel, Chancellor of Germany has changed her country throughout time. Not only is Angela Merkel ranked the number one powerful woman in politics by Forbes magazine; she has also significantly grown the German economy. Germany has the world’s 4th largest economy, has reached \$3.5 trillion GDP, and has accomplished a significantly low unemployment rate. In the midst of growing the German economy, Merkel consistently listens to the German people creating policies that meet their wants, needs, and wishes (Howard, 2017).

While female-specific programs exist nationwide, they are not in abundance,

restricting access for many girls. Unlike many communities, Eagle County, Colorado, where I reside, has a multitude of extended learning opportunities available. Girl PowHER, a female-specific program, is one of the most well attended and often has a waitlist. To conclude this look at how extended learning inspires female youth leadership, I wanted to share testimonials that come directly from female youth with my readers.

From Girl PowHER :

“Girl PowHER has helped me to be more confident, outspoken, and helped me overcome obstacles in my life.”

“I love going to Girl PowHER because I get to express myself and have learned to believe in myself.”

From Cycle Effect:

“It supported me in achieving my goals by encouraging me to continue my education, to focus in school, and get good grades. Most importantly, it helped me learn that there are opportunities for everyone no matter who you are. When I was team captain it taught me to be responsible of myself and others. It helped me get into the job I have now which is working for the Vail Rec. District.”

From Girls Academic Soccer:

“This program has impacted me by teaching me leadership. I get to teach kids and encourage them through my love of soccer. I’ve been playing since I was in middle school.”

“Soccer has taught me to never give up and always do my best and just have fun with the team. Always be a teammate and never let people down. Try to make people happy when they are sad or get hurt.”

Concluding Remarks

Female youth nationwide are faced with a plethora of pressures and choices that can impact their futures. From mental health, to teen pregnancy, to drug use, and school dropouts, extended learning has the opportunity to address it all. Extended learning provides female youth with positive adult relationships, a safe place to belong, and opportunities to gain leadership skills. Investing in female youth and extended learning not only makes our world happy and healthy, it also leads to the eradication of poverty, positive productivity, and sustainable economic growth (“You are the Leaders of Today”, 2017).

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Mentorship: The Foundation of Follower Development

Stephen Erlandson

For a young professional, having someone to look up to as a mentor is instrumental to the development of their own unique set of skills. In the transition from being a young professional to an aspiring leader, it is important to draw on those specific sets of traits and skills that those in leadership roles have. The influence leaders have on one's life, both professionally and personally, can help develop young professionals into who they aspire to be. Key traits that strong leaders exhibit are intelligence, integrity, and the dedication to see others succeed (Northouse, 2016). These three traits serve as a solid foundation for leaders who seek to be mentors to those they serve.

Mentorship can happen in a couple of different ways. Martin and Robinson (2011) suggest, "Informal mentorships often occur via networking events: co-workers, students, and other participants develop relationships and can learn and grow from these connections. Formal Relationships have specific expectations and guidelines, which provide consistency and dependability throughout the relationship and ensure that both sides benefit from the partnership." Going forward, we will focus on the formal side of mentorship.

Individuals, as well as organizations, can benefit when a successful mentorship program is in place. Those programs develop valuable relationships between co-workers that might not otherwise get the chance to work together. The idea of mentorship also suits a wide array of needs, pairing individuals together with a common goal and watching them work together to achieve that goal. It enhances the skills of both individuals, while also opening new doors of perspective for mentors to see through as mentees bring a fresh perspective to the table. Overall, it is a joint experience that will help benefit everyone involved (Martin & Robinson, 2011).

Quality mentors are those who seek to engage with and be an impact

in others' lives. Leaders who take the initiative to become mentors receive fulfillment from this engagement as they share their knowledge and experience with like-minded individuals. The primary goal of a mentor is to facilitate growth in a mentee. As the two build a relationship, the wealth of knowledge that a mentor shares with their mentee is taken and utilized in creative ways as a mentee continues to develop a new set of skills and grow in their career. Nurturing professional development is a big part of what mentoring is all about, yet there is also a profound personal connection built that creates social capital and drives a mentee to be a better than they otherwise would be.

Individuals who strive to reach a better understanding in some area of their life, often seek guidance from a trusted leader. In a professional setting, young professionals seek out a trusted leader in the organization to develop a unique set of skills that are similar to those of the leader. As a mentee, the access to the vast amounts of prior knowledge and experiences that a mentor can share is an instrumental part of the development process. Also, the relationship that it builds through the interaction of the individuals creates a lasting effect on them both.

The following will examine how the relationship that mentorship builds between the mentor and the mentee is instrumental in the development of the follower. First, explaining where effective mentorship happens within an organization and why millennials crave this type of relationship in the workplace. Next, the relationship between the two is assessed from a professional development perspective, highlighting the stages the partnership goes through in developing a shared sense of understanding. As the two begin to build upon their relationship, the shared knowledge largely impacts a mentee's development as they strive to learn more. It is also meaningful to identify how mentors motivate their mentees in the workplace and inspire them to reach their highest potential. Entering into this type of relationship not only has a professional upside, but the interpersonal skills that develop as the two grow together are something to be examined as well.

Formal mentorship programs have been proven to facilitate immense growth and satisfaction for individuals within organizations. The effectiveness of these programs allows for organizations to retain staff longer, and continue to offer employees room for growth, through mentorship and training programs that will keep them satisfied with their jobs. Crapanzano and Cook (2017) examined the benefits of a formal mentorship program and how implementing an effective program can benefit emerging leaders long term.

Like many others, the two agree that mentorship positively affects professional development. The prominent thing Crapanzano and Cook (2017)

stress is that even though being a part of a mentorship program is a fixed medium, the relationship should still be voluntary. Being forced into a relationship with someone just for the sake of higher knowledge is not healthy. There is a mutual goal of growth that is established as a part of the relationship and a commitment to higher learning for both parties (Crapanzano & Cook, 2017).

Effective programs produce mentor relationships that last long term. During this relationship, Crapanzano and Cook (2017) say that there are four stages of development. The four stages are initiate, cultivate, separate, and redefine. Initiation and inclusion are significant benefits of mentorship programs because they give each individual a sense of value. The next stage of development allows mentors/mentees to build upon their relationship and work on deepening the connection. The separation phase challenges the pair to use what they have learned thus far during the program and apply it in their own settings as the two may not work directly with each other. The final stage of development shows the longevity of the relationship built as the pair moves on to other ventures but remains in contact while continuing to lean on one another for guidance. Programs that can correctly facilitate these four developmental phases will see overall satisfaction and retention rise over time.

The development of a competent mentor/mentee relationship is seen in the phases of leadership making. This approach depicts a leader making this type of connection with all of his or her followers. Phase one depicts the leader-member relationship as strangers going about their daily business, typically sticking to their prescribed job duties. The next phase is where the mentor/mentee relations starts to develop. The leader reaches out and offers the follower an opportunity for growth as a period of testing to gauge if there is a mutual opportunity for advancement. The final phase sees both leader and follower interacting and sharing the same vision. The relationship is no longer individualized, but mutual where the focus is on the betterment of the pair (Northouse, 2016).

One of the most profound responsibilities of a mentor is to encourage a mentee to be his or her best self. Effective mentors inspire mentees to create their own mission and vision for their professional, and often personal, lives. Knowing how to effectively motivate a mentee to reach the end goal is critical.

The path-goal theory creates a roadmap for how leaders should effectively motivate followers through behaviors such as being directive, supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented (Northouse, 2016). Leaders in a mentorship role can efficiently guide a mentee through any given situation, providing them with the resources needed to complete a task. As mentees finish

assigned tasks, it is critical for mentors to stay involved with the process and act as a resource if a mentee is in need of assistance. Great mentors can interact with their mentees to help facilitate positive growth, stepping in when they see something drastically wrong or encouraging them when they see positive results. Enabling a mentee to try new tasks such as leading small projects or allowing them to create a unique program that they can call their own are both great ways for leaders to build positive growth. Allowing mentees to step out of their comfort zone positively fosters growth and the motivation to learn and do more increases.

As a sports information intern in college, I was able to sit alongside my boss, Jared and learn everything there was to know about the world of athletic communications. From the beginning, he showed interest in my professional development and eagerly chose to invest his time and talents in me to make sure I got the most out of the job. He facilitated the internship as if it was specifically tailored to professional development by letting me create a project that was uniquely my own, so I could have something tangible to take away from the experience. I also led many projects that forced me to step out of my comfort zone and learn valuable skills. After each project was completed, constructive feedback was given to make sure I was aware of what made the end result successful, or what may have hindered it from being superb. His feedback motivated me to continuously improve my skills and aim for a high standard. As time went on, the wealth of knowledge I gained impacted the outlook I had on my career and my level of understanding of the field of sports information. Jared was open to sharing every ounce of knowledge he had with me which made me feel valued as an individual and because of that, his mentorship has a lasting impact on me.

A mentee should treat every situation that he or she is put in as a learning opportunity. It is essential for a mentor to recognize the strengths and weaknesses their mentee has to accurately know how to use them to their advantage, developing a unique set of skills. The support from a mentor to a mentee means a great deal as a young professional learns to grow into their first role in an organization. Allowing a mentee to take charge of a project and excel at a task while seeing positive results inspires confidence and fuels the desire to learn more. On the contrary, when a mentee is exposed to a scenario in which he or she does not excel, growth occurs as well. In this situation, it is okay for a mentee to elicit help from a mentor as the collaboration between the two encourages the mentee to learn something new from the experience. Being dependable in a mentor/mentee relationship shows the commitment to the overall goal as a mentee seeks professional development.

Mentors who are approachable and inclusive can build lasting relationships with their mentees. It is vital for mentors to observe how their mentees act and for them to be able to adapt to those people by enabling them to reach their full potential. One might seek achievement in what they are doing by seeing tangible results, but others may need other forms of satisfaction and affirmation. Keying in on these actions can help one adequately motivate and build relationships with their mentees.

While engaging in a mentor/mentee relationship, professional development is often the primary goal. What many don't realize is that under the surface of the partnership, better interpersonal and life skills develop. The unique interaction between mentor and mentee creates a bond where these skills flourish.

Leader-member exchange conceptualizes this well. It focuses on the interaction between the leader and follower in a truly unique relationship that emphasizes the quality of the relationship and equates that to the feeling valued and accepted within an organization (Northouse, 2016).

Millennials are the perfect candidates for mentoring relationships. Crapanzan and Cook (2017) believe that millennials are eager to engage in mentoring relationships and seek to be satisfied in their personal and professional lives. Millennials strive to build a large network of relationships that positively influences their path in life, which causes them to be more connected to their work and the opportunity for professional growth.

As a 2010 survey concluded, professionals valued feedback from others, while also valuing their work because they are able "to make new friends, learn new skills, and connect to the larger purpose (Crapanzano & Cook, 2017)." In the eyes of a millennial, the satisfaction that he or she receives from being involved in a mentoring relationship far outweighs the amount they make in their current work environment (Crapanzano & Cook, 2017).

The Young Government Leaders, an organization of new professionals in the field, conducted a survey about mentorship. The survey concluded that 79% percent of the respondents saw value in a formal mentorship program. One respondent even said, "having a network of people who have been down the road before and [having] access to long-time agency leaders who can serve as mentors is essential for guiding fellows or interns through this type of program and retaining their employment long-term (Martin & Robinson, 2011)." This statement further cements the value of mentorship in young professionals.

The shared bond that forms through mentorship exchange creates an environment where interpersonal and life skills develop. Many of the situations that a mentee faces can help mature these skills to where they come as second

nature to them. Communication is a critical life skill that can flourish in a mentor/mentee relationship. It is used every day, and it is important for one to know how to do it effectively to mature as an individual. Effective communication demonstrates that one is well trained and can showcase what is learned through professional development. It is important for a young professional to build his or her own unique set of skills, as they can carry them through life and use them in a multitude of scenarios other than a professional setting.

In conclusion, young professionals crave mentorship as part of their professional development and are eager to learn and grow through the relationship built with a mentor. The skills that a mentee acquires through the partnership and the influx of knowledge at their disposal through a mentor is invaluable as one progresses in their career. Organizations with well-established mentorship programs show promise to young professionals as they see the value in growing with a company to reach new heights.

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Technology's Impact on Leader Relationships

Vanessa Richter

With the advancement of technology, leaders are not only able but expected, to better connect with others. Whether used for personal, inter-company, or vendor and consumer-facing communication, technology is key to facilitating these connections and, ultimately, to building relationships.

Utilizing technology is a great way for leaders to build relationships, but it must be facilitated through mediums that apply to the corresponding audience. In order for leaders to understand what the best technology is to communicate with others, they must keep abreast of technological advancements to stay attuned to their followers.

Griffith (2012), author of *The Plugged-In Manager*, stressed the need to stay engaged with technology because it has found a place to orchestrate the way people work with one another both internally and across the world, find solutions, hire new employees and connect with vendors (Griffith, 2012). With technology continuously integrating into our communication methods, leaders can leverage it to store information, communicate more quickly and work with people everywhere to build relationships. Leaders must engage with technology in these ways because followers are demanding it.

Followers want to know who their leaders are and get to know them. People want to understand and trust who their leaders are, both within their company and at the companies where they shop. Trust and transparency are vital to a lasting relationship, especially in a digital age where personal information can be breached or hacked. Katz (2018) provides the examples of how the data breaches at Target and The Home Depot compromised consumers' personal information and have resulted in an increased desire for transparency because people want to feel that their information is safe (Katz, 2018). One way for consumers to feel safe sharing information is for company leaders to openly communicate how that information will be used.

Katz (2018) describes ways leaders should communicate how information will be used, protected and supply honest responses to consumers' inquiries. Some examples of this are, replying to a consumer's email or supplying them with an informative handout when they provide their contact information. When leaders assure consumers' their safety is of great importance, stronger relationships are built Katz (2018). A good way for leaders to build trust and illustrate their transparency is through the speed that with which they respond.

With technology allowing for instantaneous communication, leaders must leverage these technologies to promptly respond. Katz (2018) writes how, through appropriate mediums, employees and consumers are demanding leaders react quickly to any questions or large events because they have access to resources that make a fast response convenient (Katz, 2018). Luckily, leaders have an array of technology options to rapidly communicate and make themselves accessible to others. One of these options is through social media.

Leaders are now able to build relationships through a strong social presence. Social media allows them to be more transparent since it offers an environment for leaders to show their personality and voice the standpoints of their company. Livingston (2017) reviews the importance of social media by writing, "As a leader, it's important to be social with your customers to build trust and letting them know you value their opinions and business reviews" (Livingston, 2017. Para 5). Social channels are great for building relationships because they allow people to respond and engage with the post. Additionally, social media is an appropriate medium to use for a prompt response. Leaders can create a Facebook post or send out a tweet on Twitter to deploy a message not only quickly but to mass audiences.

Social media channels have made waves in the way leaders look to build their teams or find vendors to support their needs. Simpson (2016) explains how not only information but people themselves are obtained through social networking. Whether it's an employment-specific networking site, like LinkedIn, or other channels like Facebook, leaders are now able to engage with potential vendors or candidates by tapping into their connections Simpson (2016). While social media is a great tool for developing relationships, the messages should be reviewed multiple times for accuracy before posting because when a post or tweet has entered the digital world, it's going to remain in the digital world.

In the event a manager creates a post or tweet with inaccurate information or makes a statement that is false or controversial, leaders need to own up to the incident rather than try to hide their error. Owning the mistake will build trust and transparent relationships with their followers. DeMers (2017) explains that

it's better for a company to admit the fault and try to move forward and repair the incident than to try and hide it. Even in the short amount of time that it might have taken for a leader to edit and remove a post, someone could have taken a screenshot or shared the information—in which case, the repercussions of trying to hide the incident would be far worse than owning up to it DeMers (2017). If an incorrect message is circulating, it's best for a leader to explain the situation and take appropriate steps to fix the statement rather than trying to hide or deny it. Outside of social media, other tools like websites are good ways to develop relationships with people, too.

Websites are a central location for companies and consumers to come together. Leaders are able to present company information and interact with followers through websites. For followers looking for transparency from their leaders, many company websites feature “About Us” or “Meet the Founders” pages that allow people to get to know how a company came about and learn about the company leaders. Websites are also important resources for developing relationships because followers can interact at their comfort level, for the amount of time that they choose.

Leaders can leverage their company's websites to allow consumers to shop products in a non-invasive way. Mullin, Hardy, and Sutton (2014) discussed how companies have been leveraging their websites to help the consumer visualize their purchase by showing the product, hosting videos of the event or showing the consumer the view from the seats they might purchase. Instant messaging has also been implemented on some websites to offer direct communication between a salesperson and the shopper. With instant messaging, people can ask questions or gain additional information in real time, Mullin et al. (2014). Websites offer more than just a real-time connection with followers; they can develop custom messaging to help build a relationship in the long term.

Tools like Google Tag Manager (GTM) can enhance a leader's ability to connect with supporters. GTM offers a way to track a user's experience on the website. One would be able to tell what the most frequently looked at pages are, what is most commonly being purchased, read, clicked, printed, viewed, etc. With this collected data, company leaders can develop customized messaging to better connect with followers and deliver content that they most want to receive. They will feel more connected to the company, the specific brand, and the company leaders when they are presented with messaging that is relevant to them. Zappos, an online shoe sales company, is a good example of a business's ability to utilize technology to build relationships.

Griffith's (2012), *The Plugged-In Manager*, explains how Zappos' openness has

been key to building their relationships and, “Through the Zappos Insights website, experiences, and community, the Zappos Family freely shares the ‘how’ as well as the ‘what’ of their company” (Griffith, 2012, p. 39). Zappos leverages the website, ZappoInsights.com, to stay connected to followers. Through this website people can schedule tours to visit the warehouse and learn about the way Zappos runs their business. It also allows followers to “ask anything.” People are able to submit any question they have for the company and stay connected with the company leaders. Not only does Zappos show an exemplary example of using technology to build relationships with consumers, but they also offer a second website to network with other companies (Griffith, 2012).

Through DeliveringHappinessBook.com, Zappos CEO, Tony Hsieh’s book, *Delivering Happiness*, is brought to life online and acts as a support community for startup companies. Through this website, companies are able to get advice leveraging the information that Zappos is sharing, including best practices and what they’ve found works or doesn’t work for their company. Developing connections with other companies not only positions Zappos as a transparent leader but helps them develop relationships and powerful networks that can grow into business partners or potential fulfillment vendors. The two sites that Zappos uses to facilitate conversations and build relationships with consumers, employees and other companies are only part of the way they leverage technology.

Beyond connecting with people directly, Zappos uses technology to efficiently track where products are stored in a warehouse and where a product is in the fulfillment process, allowing consumers to know the exact location of their purchase. Even these subtle ways of integrating technology contribute to followers being able to build relationship with Zappos leaders and the company as a whole (Griffith, 2012). Consumers can stay in constant communication with Zappos by receiving alerts on their order status and using tracking programs to be in the loop at all times. Other technologies, like video and conference calling, through applications like Skype, have aided in connecting people as well.

Video and conference calling are technologies that have become increasingly relevant for leaders and followers because they allow real-time communication. Simpson (2016) explains how technologies like video conferencing enhance employee collaboration because both video and audio are used to connect teams in actual time. No matter the geographic location, people are able to come together without literally having to travel to build relationships and still get the authenticity of an in-person experience (Simpson, 2016). Many of these

applications support screen sharing, which allows for content to be accessible for all participants. If an application does not support screen sharing, other technology tools, like the Cloud and Google Documents, can be used to make sure information is shared with all group members. When information is easily shared and accessible to everyone, leaders and followers are more easily able to communicate and collaborate with one another, making working together more seamless. Additionally, technology allows for non-invasive, organic relationships to develop with leaders because of how it offers flexibility in communication styles.

Whether people would rather respond to emails first thing in the morning or late at night, technology allows relationships to develop at times that are most convenient for the individual. Ariens (2017) describes how software programs can be added to cellphones, laptops and, tablets, allowing managers who travel for work to stay connected, whether they're in an airport, a hotel room or just want to stay up to date while on vacation. Managers can now answer important questions or review business plans while having the flexibility to respond when the time is right for them and through the medium that is available or preferred Ariens (2017). Technology also can help train and monitor staff performance.

Here too, applications like video conferencing can be leveraged for real-time meetings to occur and talk teams through company updates and provide an environment for questions to be asked immediately. Other options that company leaders have been using are internal network systems that support video content and quizzes for employees to catch up on training or engage in additional courses provided by the company leaders at a time that best fits their schedule (Livingston, 2017). Additionally, through shared documents like Google Docs, the Cloud, or internal shared servers, leaders can also track and monitor their team's progress. At any point, a manager can view documents, make edits or comments and evaluate how the team is progressing.

Technology has made communicating seamless. Leaders and followers are able to develop relationships at the pace and depth they want by selecting the most appropriate technology to facilitate their communication. With people using a variety of tools to connect with one another, leaders must constantly engage with technological advancements to be successful in their role and best interconnect with followers.

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Facilitating Relationships with Parents of Student Athletes

Marcus Teachout

Getting to know parents of students is a good place to start in building a supporting relationship. Because parents are first teachers, it is important to provide opportunities to share this knowledge about the child and the supportive environment parents provide. The National Association of Educators (NEA) (2014) asserts that:

“While the nation and our public education system have changed a lot since 1921, one factor—family engagement—remains critical to student achievement. Ongoing research shows that family engagement in schools improves student achievement, reduces absenteeism, and restores parents’ confidence in their children’s education. Students with involved parents or other caregivers earn higher grades and test scores, have better social skills, and show improved behavior.” (Thornton & Garcia, 2014)

School administration, including coaches, should encourage the involvement and interest of parents in children’s activities in and out of school. Parents should have opportunities to share their expectations and aspirations for children with school staff. Working together, parents and school personnel can develop supportive learning communities that value the child, the parent and the school community.

In the past, parent involvement was characterized by volunteers, mostly mothers, assisting in the classroom, chaperoning students, and fundraising. Today, parent involvement is characterized by a much more inclusive approach where school, family and community partnerships now include mothers and fathers, stepparents, grandparents, foster parents, other relatives and caregivers, business leaders and community groups that all participate in goal-oriented activities. This is significantly linked to an increase in student achievement and school success at all grade levels.

In an era where parents are becoming deeply invested in every aspect of children's lives, parents tend to micromanage children's development which often leads to problems building relationships. This is where the benefits of sports participation come in to play.

When it comes to sports participation, parental involvement may increase and expand to include relationships with coaches. This is where the benefits of sports participation come in to play. Sports help children build initiative, develop teamwork skills, and the ability to regulate emotions. Furthermore, sports help develop self-confidence, a competitive nature, and a task focus mentality that will build leadership roles for children in the future endeavors. "Parents play a large role in the sports experience of their children. In fact, parents have been shown to have the largest impact compared to peers, teachers, and coaches. Their influences can be communicated through support and their motivations for their child's participation." (Taylor, Schweichler, Jorgensen, McKown, & Teresak, 2014).

Parents want to provide what is best for their child and studies show that parents make a significant impact and play an important role in sports participation. Therefore, by building collaborative relationships, parents and coaches can create a community of support that accomplishes these goals.

Parenting styles also play an important role in the development of leadership potential in kids. They are characterized by four types: Authoritarian parenting, Neglectful parenting, Indulgent parenting, and Authoritative parenting. (Riggio, 2011)

Authoritarian parenting is a dominating style that is strict about controlling their children and is highly focused on rules. Children with this type of parenting style, tend to lack crucial social and communication abilities that are important for leadership skills.

Neglectful parenting is the type of parent that does not spend a lot of quality time with their children. The parents let things like television and video games get in the way of interacting with others or each other. Children with this type of parenting style again lead to poor communication skills and lack of self-control.

Indulgent parenting is the loving, affectionate style that has few restraints, basically, anything goes. This typically leads to children having again, poor social and communicative skills and little to no self-control. However, this style tends can increase the child's creativity and imagination.

Authoritative parenting inspires their children to be independent. This allows them to be free and creative, but it also allows the parents to set the limits and boundaries of the creativity. When the child(s) are misbehaving,

the parent(s) will set discipline upon them in a supportive way, not punitive. With the increased independence, children will develop better social skills, are reliant amongst themselves, and are controlled allowing them to become more mature. These all lead to great qualities, which in turn leads to higher leadership potential.

Coaches today have many responsibilities to uphold. In addition to meeting the needs of athletes, coaches have to meet the expectations of the parents, especially the ones highly involved. It can sometimes be difficult to bridge the gap between parental needs and coaching needs. One philosophical approach is to accept that the parents have the best interest of their child regardless of involvement or interest in the sport. This philosophical approach phases away from the coaching model of “my way or the highway”, where the coach is considered the expert and parents are expected to accept coaching decisions without question or explanation. Instead, the relationship between coach and parent is seen as a process of social negotiation that will enhance the overall experience for the child. This approach helps build effective coach-parenting relationships by embracing collaboration, developing a shared understanding, and being transparent about one’s coaching responsibility.

When embracing parent collaboration, the first step is to accept that parents have the right to be informed about all aspects of children’s experiences. Parents are often learning about children’s experiences by listening to their comments or by observing children, the coach, and interactions during games and practices. These are two important ways of learning about the experiences of children. However, it does not allow the parent to understand how and why the coach and child are interacting the way they do or why the decision was made by the coach.

For parents to fully understand the complexity of the learning environment that is unique to each team, parents have to be considered part of a communication process that includes coach, child, and parents. The benefit of this approach will allow the coach and parent to work collaboratively to help children improve skills and become a more successful athlete and student. During this process, parents and coaches also learn more about themselves, each other, and the children participating in the sport.

Parents and coaches come with own philosophies that are grounded in beliefs about how to affect the children’s experience as an athlete. Some philosophies may include the child’s work ethic, the discipline that the child may contain, how playing time constitutes a commitment and the skills improvement, and the overall experience for the child.

When developing a shared understanding, team and coaching staff need to

work together in developing a shared understanding with parents that have competing influences on how children are learning and improving skills. This does not mean that they are trying to change the beliefs of parents. Beliefs are very challenging to resist or change, no matter how new the experience is. A team or coaches should not be focused on altering opinions of the parents, but being straightforward on how parents should expect the coach to handle the growth and experience of the children.

For example, (Fraser-Thomas, Cote, & Deakin, 2008) explain parental coaching from the sidelines is not only disruptive and inappropriate, but it has also been shown to influence the dropout rates of adolescents sports participation and commitment. When developing the shared understanding as a coach, not everything is negotiable. The coaching-parental consensus is not always required. An example would be how playing time is divided. Parents should not be able to negotiate the amount of playing time a child should get.

The shared understanding process, should, in turn, allow the coaches to explain how the child is held accountable when working on improving skills, how playing time is earned throughout the process of refining skills, and how it is equal to all other athletes that are on the team.

Developing a shared understanding does not just happen. It is a process that begins with a self-assessment, that ends with a commitment to building a relationship with coaches and parents together.

There are roughly four ways that a coach can work to build a shared understanding with parents to ensure they are providing a positive interaction and enjoyable experience for the child's athletic involvement.

Being transparent about the coaches philosophy is significant for parents to understand the behavior both in writing and verbal. The viewpoint should articulate how the coaches value playing time for the athlete and what the coach expects the athlete to improve on throughout the year. It holds the athlete accountable for playing time, if there is no improvement, that means the child is not working hard enough to want to play. The coaches philosophy should provide a complete understanding what to expect so there is no conflict or surprises with parents about the issue later on in the season.

Being able to communicate consistently with parents is the next step. A coach may use his or her philosophy by giving a reflection of what they see as a value for the team or athlete. This will, in turn, help parents fully understand what the coaches expect from the athlete. This will help the parents see the similarities of how the children earn equal playing time and the consequences of not working hard and receiving that time. When communicating with the

parents, it gives both sides a complete understanding of how the coach wants things done, and so the parents are not questioning the philosophy.

The third step is coaches aligning behaviors with their values and philosophies. If a coach values hard work, then the coach should reward the athletes that work hard during practice or games. The coaches need to ask themselves how they encourage it, and how it affects the playing time in games. With the understanding of the coaches behaviors, this would allow the parents and children also to hold themselves accountable and behave the same way.

The last step would be providing social opportunities outside of the coaching and parental context. This is how the coach and the parent look like a role model outside of the coaching context. The coach will reflect on ways to be a positive influence. Setting examples of what hard work looks like and values of what a good role model requires.

During my research, a study on how parents affected relationships with coaches, children, and themselves. This research study investigated the influence of sports on individuals as well as the inspiration of parents on children.

“Youth sports provide an opportunity for parents and children to form an emotional bond. Research by Dorsch, Smith, and McDonough found that parents experienced many changes in behavior, cognition, affect, and general parent-child relationship as a result of children’s participation in youth sports. Similarly, a child’s perceived quality of the parent-child relationship has been shown to be a predictor of a child’s enjoyment and experience while playing the sport” (Dorsch, Smith, & McDonough, 2009).

The study examined the parental supportive behaviors and activities when children are in a community recreational soccer program. The sample size was 145 parents with children ranging from 3-18 years of age. Data was gathered with an Eastern North Carolina counties recreation and parks department. Twenty supportive behavior statements with Likert-type scales were drawn from four general support categories: Instrumental Support, Communicative Support with Coaches, Communicative Support during Games, and Communicative Support with Child Before and After Games.

The results show that parents were most likely to perform Instrumental Support types of behaviors such as attending games, purchasing equipment, providing snacks, listening to child and teaching skills at home. Second highest was Communicative support with a child before and after games such as giving advice/feedback and playing instructions before and after games, and showing affection after a disappointing game. Next was Communicative support with coaches, such as e-mail or phone communication with coach throughout the

season or discussion with coaches before or after games. Lowest scores came from Communicative support during games, things like freely voicing frustration or opinions during the game when disagreeing with a coach's decision, interfering with a referee on calls, or voicing encouragement/approval when child/ team is playing well.

These findings help prove the impact parental behaviors have on overall performance and motivation of their children. Children in any sport will improve their success when there are positive motivation and support at home. Successful and deliberate parent-coach communication will allow parents to feel they are better supporting their child's participation.

During my time as a coach, I have seen the four types of parents interaction. Through the many years that I have coached, I found that some of the best ways of building relationships with parents and athletes were setting clear expectations, having effective communication, being a role model and leading by example during the sporting event or outside of the community. When setting clear expectations, parents and athletes know that there needs to be a clear understanding of what is expected and what the consequences are for the athlete if the athlete does not obey them. This helps build effective relationships and minimize controversy between coach, parents, and athletes.

When parents, coaches, and communities work together to support building relationships, students tend to earn higher grades, attend school more regularly, stay in school and sports longer, and enroll in higher level programs. As coaches, we strive to build long-lasting relationships with parents while investing a lot of time with the child's developmental and involvement in the community and sporting activities. Educating parents through collaboration and by developing a shared understanding of the coaches expectations has proven to help build a successful relationship between parents, coaches, and athletes. More importantly, when the going gets tough and young players experience stressful situations or perceived failure, more often than not, it's the support of their parents that have the utmost impact on them.

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An Exercise in Leadership: Being the Change that You Wish to See

Patrick Holt

“If you want to build something great, you should focus on what the change is that you want to make in the world.”

-Mark Zuckerberg

“We are prone to judge success by the index of our salaries or the size of our automobiles rather than by the quality of our service and relationship to mankind.”

-Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Leadership at its core is role modeling the best of ones' abilities and talents, in service not only to one's employer, but the world at large. I have heard it said that the best sermons are those that are seen and not heard. Walking one's talk is crucial to follower investment. Gandhi was a beacon to the world, not because he told others what to do, but because he led by example. Following his concept of Satyagraha and non-violent protest, he walked his talk as he led the Salt March with thousands of followers in tow, a walk lasting 24 days, a walk which brought the British salt market to its knees and established Gandhi forever as the quintessential authentic transformative leader. Gandhi was not an aberration however. Martin Luther King Jr. would lead not only a civil rights movement, but like Gandhi would walk his talk in a peaceful protest march from Selma to Montgomery Alabama. These men are considered two of the world's most exemplary leaders not because they ruled by mandate, but rather by example, both having skin in their prospective games. Each was willing to be the change that they wished to see. Each was

willing to be seen and not just heard, both eventually paying the ultimate price for their beliefs and efforts. Both Gandhi and King exhibited many styles of leadership including: aspirational, authentic, ethical, strategic, transformative and virtuous. By blending these styles, they were uniquely placed in history to change the world for the better. Perhaps then, for us who aspire to such leadership greatness, this is the leadership challenge: role modeling ones best and finest qualities, blending acquired leadership styles for best effect, all while mirroring the change that one wishes to see in the world.

To gain a better understanding of both Dr. Kings' and Mahatma Gandhi's leadership success, this paper shall attempt to shed some light on the aspects of leadership mentioned in the introductory paragraph, as well as look a little closer at what made both Gandhi and Dr. King stand out as transformative and inspirational leaders. This paper will begin its analysis with the concept of aspirational leadership. Authors Juliette Koning and Jeff Waistell, in their article titled "Identity Talk of Aspirational Leaders" inform us that:

Identity formation in aspirational ethical leadership is an interaction between contexts and transformative agentic processes of realization, inspiring the constitution of a new identity, discontinuous with what went before (although more subtly retaining previous aspects of the 'former' identity). This new self-understanding galvanizes further aspiration towards ethical leadership (Koning & Waistell, 2012).

Both Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. King had strong transformative experiences in their youth and early adult lives that shaped their identity and cast them in their future roles as world leaders. It was their solid sense of self, morality, and a desire for a better world that propelled them onto the world stage as agents of ethical leadership.

Good character, embedded in moralistic thinking, followed by authentic action inspires follower investment. Michael P. Levine and Jacqueline Boaks explain in their work "What Does Ethics Have to do with Leadership?" that:

By their good character, both Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. King were able to lead from an ethical as well as an authentic base. This moral base, coupled with their tenacity of leading from the front made them phenomenally powerful as both political and moral leaders. Walking their talk upon the bedrock of morality made their message authentic, compelling and ultimately long lived.

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So, what exactly does it mean to be an authentic leader? In “Authentic Leadership and Behavioral Integrity as Drivers of Follower Commitment and Performance” authors Hannes Leroy, Michael L. Palanski, and Tony Simon define leadership authenticity. They write:

...being authentic refers to an open and non-defensive way of interacting with one’s environment. As a result, leaders who function authentically express their personal-self yet, at the same time remain open to relational input. As a result, individuals who function authentically will be perceived as having more integrity, not only because their words and deeds are aligned, but because they effectively manage others perceptions of how their words and deeds are in alignment (Leroy, Palanski, & Simon, 2012, p. 262).

Mahatma Gandhi’s platform of Satyagraha exemplified a non-defensive way of resisting oppression. So too, the vision of Dr. King to engage in non-violent protest, to achieve the goals of the Civil Rights movement, displayed the virtue of authenticity in this non-defensive dynamic. The ability to remain calm, focused and without angst in the face of great turmoil and animosity could be said of both leaders, this ability to remain authentic only increased their follower’s investment and commitment to them and ultimately to their vision for a better world.

Strategic leadership is the art of garnering follower investment. Strategically crafting the “change” message and communicating it judiciously will increase and charge stakeholder and follower involvement. In “Walking the Vision and Walking the Talk: Transforming Public Organizations with Strategic Leadership” we are enlightened by Paul C. Nutt and Robert W. Backoff in that:

The vision and a leader’s belief in it is the force that invents the future. The leader must imagine what it will be like to arrive at the point called for by the vision. This image of the future is used to pull people forward. The leader’s role is to organize a movement toward this future. This is done by inspiring a shared vision of the future that has been adopted by the leader (Nutt & Backoff, 1996, p. 465).

Possibly no speech in history is more famous or has had more impact than that of Dr. King’s “I have a Dream” speech. In this speech Dr. King shared his vision of the future. This one speech united a movement and pulled a

people forward to accomplish Dr. King's vision of a world without prejudice and poverty. So too, Mahatma Gandhi influenced an entire continent with his "Quit India" speech in which he reached out to end British rule in India. Both Gandhi and Dr. King, through the use of strategic leadership, were able to influence vast segments of the population to invest in their dreams and thereby change the course of history.

Transformative leadership are/were the earmarks of both Dr. King and Mahatma Gandhi. Not only did their leadership transform society, it did so in such a manner as to preclude any possibility of recidivism back to old patterns of societal thinking and behavior that did not serve the common good. What does Transformative Leadership look like then? Authors Cam Caldwell, Rolf D. Dixon, Larry A. Floyd, Joe Chaudoin, Jonathan Post, and Gaynor Cheokas define the concept in "Transformative Leadership: Achieving Unparalleled Excellence," they state:

Transformative leadership is an ethically based leadership model that integrates a commitment to values and outcomes by optimizing the long-term interests of stakeholders and society and honoring the moral duties owed by organizations to their stakeholders. It is in living the highest standards of moral leadership that leaders merit the trust and followership of others (Caldwell, Dixon, Floyd, Chaudoin, Post, & Cheokas, 2012, p. 176).

Few other men in history come close to the legacies of Gandhi and Dr. King. Both leaders radically changed the lots of their stakeholders and ultimately that of the world by remaining true to their principles of morality and ethics. Their messages would have been less well received had they been men of less moral character. Their visions ultimately "optimized the long-term interests of both their stakeholders and that of society" (Caldwell et al., 2012, p. 178).

Finally, both Dr. King and Mahatma Gandhi demonstrated Virtuous Leadership. Kim Cameron in "Responsible Leadership as Virtuous Leadership" explains that:

Taking responsibility as a leader, in other words, certainly involves accountability, dependability, authority, and empowerment. If responsibility also includes the notion of virtuousness, however, the implications then become much more far-reaching and inclusive. Responsibility implies the pursuit of the ultimate best – eudaemonism – and, secondarily, to produce advantages for constituencies who may never be affected otherwise (Cameron, 2011, p. 32).

As virtuous leaders both Gandhi and Dr. King strived for the best for their

followers and from their followers. They often put themselves into positions of danger, despair and peril for their collective causes. Both Gandhi and Dr. King would be imprisoned for their beliefs; both would find greater strength and resolve from these experiences. Both would reflect upon and write about these experiences in powerful essays that would galvanize and move their followers to a greater degree of investment and involvement in their respective movements.

So, just what made Mahatma Gandhi stand out as leader? Dennis Dalton in “Gandhi: Ideology and Authority” explains that:

...it was precisely Gandhi’s ideological distinction between the purity of moral authority and the corruptibility of political power that rationalized for him his participation in politics. Political power, he insisted throughout his life, will always corrupt unless it flows from a disinterested moral authority (Dalton, 1969, p. 379).

Everything is life is political, essentially then leadership and the exercise of power should stem from a disinterested authority that is based in morality. Perhaps this then is the key to authentic leadership, to lead from a selfless perspective with the highest good of all others in the foreground.

Dalton further explicates that Gandhi (and King) “strive for a social order without factionalism, conflict, and strife. The emphasis is constantly upon the creation in society of the strongest possible moral consensus” (Dalton, 1969, p. 389). Gandhi and Dr. King both strived to remove factionalism, conflict, and strife from their collective movements. Their emphasis was on the best and highest good for all peoples coupled with the most moral and noble of causes; all brought about through non-violent means. Both leaders embodied the best qualities of self-mastery and selflessness. They were, and remain beacons of moral mastery, to be emulated and modeled after by today’s authentic leaders. Dalton illuminates this concept further in this regard when he states: “the ideal political leader was he who had achieved the highest freedom through obedience to self-imposed laws, and was thus in a position to exercise legitimate authority” (Dalton, 1969, p. 392). Simply put, we are informed that Gandhi (and King) derived their authority because they practiced self-mastery before attempting to lead. Essentially, they walked, before they talked.

In the “The Gandhian Repertoire as Transformative Invention” Sean Chabot describes Gandhi’s leadership methodology to be vastly different than all others. He states:

Gandhi's protest methods are distinct from passive resistance and other forms of non-violent action. Gandhian forms of collective action, organization, and discourse rely on the strength of participants, not on "weapons of the weak." They depend on love of self and others, not hatred of opponents. They call for non-violence regardless of whether the circumstances favor violence or not. They focus on addressing causes of oppression and improving the welfare of the oppressed and therefore may target fellow activists as well as enemies. And they preclude harming other parties—whether in word or deed, symbolically or physically. Thus, unlike more familiar kinds of non-violent action, the Gandhian repertoire calls for challenging social injustice through active and deliberate self-suffering, both individually and collectively (Chabot, 2014, p. 331).

Dr. King would also exemplify this narrative. His suffering, comparable to Mahatma Gandhi's, placed him at the forefront of his cause. So too like Gandhi, Dr. King would pay the ultimate price for his beliefs. Gandhi's Satyagraha and Dr. King's non-violent protest movement dramatically altered the course of society and world events. Both men freed their collective constituents from the grip of tyranny; one from the servitude and exploitation of a foreign government, the other from the oppression of a long standing social system that favored one group's interests over that of another. Love and tolerance were not only their message but also their weapons.

Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. embody the best qualities of authentic leadership. Their leadership style of leading from the front and incorporating "walking the talk" are examples of sermons seen and not heard. Blending different leadership styles, they modeled the best qualities possible in leadership, qualities that today's leaders would do well to emulate. To truly aspire to be authentic as a transformative leader, it is important to ethically and strategically lead from a position of virtue. Following the lead of Gandhi and Dr. King, these leadership qualities and lessons in morality, virtue and authenticity (walking the talk) are perhaps the best take away for today's leaders who aspire to leave the world better than they have found it. Following then, in Gandhi's and Dr. King's footsteps and following their lead toward authenticity, we too begin to "walk our talk" and become "the change that we wish to see."

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Community and College Athletics: Building Powerful Relationships

Brittany E. York

Communities matter in the development and advancement of an intercollegiate athletic department. Influential relationships between an athletic department and the surrounding community can provide a positive impact for both parties involved (Svensson, Huml, & Hancock, 2014). Furthermore, fostering such powerful relationships within the community offers a positive long-term impact on student-athletes, the University, and the community alike. Worrall (2007) stated the alleged success of a partnership relies on the success of the relationship between the engaging organizations. Success will transpire when both parties are willing to participate on an equal scale.

The development and maintenance of a community-athletic relationship weigh heavy on the application of leadership. The progression of one's personal, social, and most importantly, professional lives can stem from the practice of leadership. This information is well known, but becoming a leader and practicing great leadership is the ultimate task. So, how do you define leadership? "There are almost as many different definitions of leadership as there are people who have tried to define it (Northouse, 2016, p. 2)." Leadership scholars have a hard time agreeing on a shared definition due to growing global influences and generational differences. Therefore, leadership will encompass different meanings for everyone. In the circumstance of building a powerful relationship between a community and a college athletic department, there will be a clear definition of leadership. Necessary attributes needed to formulate and sustain these relationships include having human skill and conceptual skill. Northouse (2016) defines human skill as "knowledge about and ability to work with people (p. 44)." He also defines conceptual skill as "the ability to work with ideas and concepts (p. 45)." These two skills combined allow for a leadership

relationship, which means the leader must know when to lead, when to follow, and when to get out of the way.

The possibility of creating positive change through forming powerful relationships should be a goal for all leaders. Leading, specifically in an athletic department, requires human and conceptual skill. Using these learned skills positively increases the likelihood of benefitting from current and new relationships. Possessing human skill provides an opportunity to cultivate motivational and productive relationships. When two parties are motivated to help one another, loyalty surfaces which then creates productivity. Loyalty is vital in this ever-changing world. The ability to stick together and remain determined in reaching similar goals combines to create a powerful relationship.

Modern athletics was not the first pivotal point in the creation of community-athletics partnerships. The cohesion of communities and sport stem from even long before ancient Grecian athletics (Clopton, 2005). Athletes were often the ones who represented their towns and brought residents together through competition. The dynamic of athletics broke down many cultural barriers, which mended a bond between people that would not have been created otherwise. Folks from all class types, ethnic groups, and ages worked together and competed against one another, or joined as a spectator to represent their community positively. Athletics would not have started and continued to thrive without support from community admirers. Sports also deserves recognition in bringing together a multicultural civic. The development of athletics has prospered into most Universities around the world. Structuring athletics brings athletic departments to life. Modern-day athletics thrive due to the powerful relationship between community members.

It is important for community members to understand the value that sport brings to local government and to the public. Value extends beyond the sport's sake. It can play a pivotal role in bringing communities together by having a social and cultural impact, developing social capital, and reducing crime or anti-social behavior. Sports allow an opportunity to engage as players or spectators, in the ecstasy and drama of the spectacle unfolding. Either we play for the fun of it, or we watch for the thrill of it, in hopes that we slip away from whatever problems this short life can bring us.

As a previous college-level athlete, a member within a college town, and now, as an employee within an athletic department, I have experience on all three vital sides of this communal relationship. This gives me great insight on the multilevel benefits for all involved. This newfound intuition has sparked awareness that this defining relationship is more than just transactional. Transactional relationships tend to focus on a single objective; making an

exchange. This is merely a singular event. Lack of time spent on actually building a relationship makes for a negative affiliation with whom is involved. The successful relationships athletic departments build with communities promote a mutual long-term goal. Satisfaction, retention, and acquisition tend to generate from developing and maintaining strong, non-transactional relationships. Both parties will typically rely on each other for one another to preserve and grow. This is where transformational leadership flourishes. Transformational leadership is a process through which engagement creates connection that raises motivation and morality in both the leader and followers. Leaders and followers can benefit through gaining a stronger and higher set of moral values (Northouse, 2016, pp. 162).

Partaking in the opportunity to engage with supporters made playing for the University and community much more important as a former student-athlete. Participating in regular community service while representing the athletic department provided dignity throughout all programs. Community service projects included trick or treat for canned goods, prepping food at the native pizza eatery, visiting the local boys and girls club, starting a community garden downtown, reading and tutoring in the surrounding district school, and many more. This “pay it forward” mentality of athletic departments allow the communities to develop stronger, together. Considering this relationship is a two way street, it is important to show respect to the community members who promote the livelihood of college athletics. Showing gratitude also included athletes reaching out to corporate sponsors, who fund a large portion of athletics, and express appreciation via promotions. Stepping foot into these businesses that support athletics can also provide great networking opportunities. This network can benefit an athlete in future employment purposes. We have all heard the classic statement “it’s not about what you know, it’s about who you know,” and it plays a large role for the future of these athletes by maintaining these relationships. Building relationships as a former student-athlete became second nature. It was imperative to go out to the public and represent the program respectfully to anyone and everyone encountered during community service opportunities. Experiences I have had and people I have met through community outreach still play a vital role in where I am today.

From a community member standpoint, it is important to know that the stronger a community is, the stronger the University will be. This works both ways however; making the University stronger will then lead to a stronger community. Universities provide such positive environments and spaces that families can utilize and enjoy; which makes this relationship unique. For example, Winona State’s athletic department provides a beautiful and up to

date wellness center that is also available for community use. This space brings together student-athletes, college students, and community members. Access to this space provides the community with an opportunity to better their health and well-being, while developing small relationships with one another. Furthermore, opportunities to attend such family-oriented gatherings athletic departments host is an opportunity that other communities cannot take advantage. Events hosted by a University's athletic department aim towards the attendance of family members, specifically within a community, so relationships can build. Gatherings included athletic events, spaghetti dinners, homecoming parades, 5k marathons, golf outings, skill camps, and many more. Without the engagements of loyal fans, college athletics would have no support. When fans show commitment, a relationship can form, and this powerful relationship is the bread and butter of all existing and thriving college athletic departments.

From the perspective of a current employee within an athletic department, it is important to prompt the first move in gaining community support. A community action plan is often necessary for staying on track and hitting the right notes in the endeavor of sparking relations with the surrounding members. This plan needs to take action in face-to-face fashion, at least in the beginning stages. Incorporating current social media tools such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram provide a free way to get positive stories and athletic happenings into the eyes and ears of the public. Promoting athletic events and gaining fan engagement in a family-friendly environment is a perfect introduction. However, getting residents to attend events is not enough, especially with other competitive happenings going on around town. The athletic department needs to offer the fans a reason to continue coming back to support athletics. Having a competitive, winning team is only a small portion for gaining lifetime fans; clean facilities, appealing food and beverage options, and game day experience can play a huge role in sustaining fans. Community members will stick with an athletic program if they feel the relationship has affected them in a positive manner. Once this has happened, maintaining and managing the relationship becomes the next level of importance.

Relationship management will help achieve goals between two different parties working in conjunction with one another. Investopedia (2010) describes relationship management as a strategy involving continuous engagement between an organization and its audience. As previously stated, it is important for organizations to create a partnership with its stakeholder groups rather than seeing them as a source of income. Transformational partnerships provide value over transactional partnerships. This conglomeration allows community members to connect with the athletic department, which creates a continuous

engagement that is typically the end goal. The system of powerful relationship timelines have a direct influence on if the engagement has been positive or not. Relationships with a lengthy timeline often reflect a positive relationship. Similarly, relationships with shorter timelines often reflect negative relationships.

Utilizing relationship management by collecting, analyzing, and reporting information on relationship retention and satisfaction can increase persistent engagement. Programs that operate relationship management have common goals including recurring relationships and increasing fan loyalty (Butler, 2012). Managing relationships properly and efficiently will help maximize community support for athletic departments. With the mindset that this relationship is a two way street, giving back to the loyal fans of the community is essential. Tightly knit communities are a great stage for active participation between athletic programs and community members.

Jackson (2014) states “One of the most important components of Division II’s philosophy is community engagement. You are operating in a more intimate environment than most of your Division I peers, so it is important for your supporters to know, and respect, your student-athletes and coaches.” Having a community within a college town makes athletic marketing and promotion seemingly simple, which may lead to a lifetime relationship. However, for lesser Division II institutions, the small communities and small budgets are a setback in marketing athletic programs, which can hinder possible partnerships. Fortunately, technology and social media are becoming increasingly popular due to the surge of smartphone use and mobile applications. Reaching alumni, who were once important community members, becomes simple with the use of technology. Maintaining this relationship, even though it may be long distance, becomes possible through the heave in smartphone use. Athletic department updates and sports information becomes easy to communicate when the long distance crowd fosters the innovative athletic department applications. Overall, the use of social media and technology provides that community connection without a cosmic price tag.

I attended Minnesota State University Moorhead for five years, four as a student-athlete and one as an undergraduate student. These different perspectives of intercollegiate athletics ignited a realization that the heart of a community surrounding a college town lies within an athletic department. The Fargo-Moorhead area is home to three different Universities and provides three different divisionally ranked athletic departments. North Dakota State University is a National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I athletic program, Minnesota State University Moorhead is an NCAA Division

II program, and Concordia Moorhead is an NCAA Division III program. The diversity of the three unrelated programs delivered the community a chance to find their perfect niche in the athletic civic. Especially considering North Dakota's lack of presence in the National Football League (NFL), the National Basketball Association, Major League Baseball (MLB), and in the National Hockey League (NHL), the community often held on tight to these collegiate athletic programs to build a sense of intimacy.

Powerful relationships matter in the development and advancement of an intercollegiate athletic department. By-products of sport and community relationships benefit all National Collegiate Athletic Association academies. The bliss displayed by community members who are involved in such a fascinating partnership is why this relationship is worth the effort. Sport and community exist for one another; one would not bloom without the other. Embracing this relationship will create a unifying force for all.

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A Coach's Role in Building Powerful Relationships with Student-Athletes

Dustin S. Anderson

When Michael Jordan reflects on the passing of coach Dean Smith, he states, Dean was “more than a coach — he was a mentor, my teacher, my second father”. Coaches all around the world are responsible for building relationships with athletes that generate success. As someone who has been involved in sports as both an athlete and a coach, I have been presented with opportunities to see the growth of myself and others via positive coaching relationships. It is my responsibility as a graduate student in Education Leadership to present my experience to others to add depth to the knowledge of coaching.

The Relationships that Coaches Build

One requirement of being a coach is developing strong relationships with the athletes. The term relationship is initially accompanied by a sense of intimacy, but that is not the case when it comes to coaching. Through a coaching mindset, a relationship is more about trust and athlete-development than intimacy or emotion. This is seen in Fred Kiel’s ‘Coaching at the top’, where a coaching relationship is defined as, “the consultant earns a level of trust sufficient to allow the executive to be open to change and willing to be influenced” (1996). A coach has to build a level of trust with athletes which allows the athlete to open themselves for the betterment of athletic performance. Once a relationship of trust has been established there is a stronger connection between the coach and team, allowing for access to the social connections. The social connection that is shared between these two groups is important in the prevention of non-beneficial actions. As a coach identifies an athletes’ social behaviors the coach can get an understanding of how an athlete might react in different situations. If there are situations where a coach thinks an athlete would react poorly, the coach can then step up and voice his concern to the athlete.

What is Leadership?

Leadership is a skill used by those who have influence over others. Without proper leadership, society fails to advance, businesses don't meet quotas, and athletic teams have losing seasons. Peter Northouse writes, "leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal" (2016). Those who possess leadership stand out when entering a room; they sit up straight during meetings, and they demand a presence. A 2012 study to determine posture and perceived status between a team captain and a water boy concluded: "When the captain slumped and looked ashamed, and the water boy stood tall, people more quickly paired the water boy with high-status words" (Shariff, 2012). Furthermore, in the same study the roles were reversed (i.e., the water boy slumped, and the captain stood tall) and the participants took more time to identify higher status. The takeaway for this study is that regarding status leadership, posture is a stronger determinant of higher influence than information related to roles on the team. All in all, leadership is a 'you know it when you see it' skill seen in higher status individuals that help captivate and motivate individuals to achieve common goals.

The Leaders that Surround our Athletes

In the realm of athletics, there are various leaders that influence the life of student-athletes. One of the many leaders that student-athletes look up to are their parents. In obvious ways, parents play a large role in the lives of children. In an attempt to link student success in both sport and education to parental support, Cosh and Tully found that in all but one of the studied athletes, parents are "crucial in enabling athletes to overcome stressors and facilitate successful integration of sport and education" (2015). Similar to parents, professional athletes have a major responsibility in the development of student-athletes. Though student-athletes usually never meet a professional role model, these higher level players are constantly looked at as role models. P.K. Subban of the Nashville Predators has a Helping Hand program in the Montreal Children's Hospital in which he assists families who are financially devastated by a child's illness. This foundation is his way of being a positive role model for those who look up to him. In his first game back in Montreal after his trade, the crowd of 20,000 attempted to show P.K. how much they look up to him by giving him a standing ovation while chanting 'P.K., P.K., P.K.,' after the national anthem. In addition to professional athletes' influence on student-athlete development and behavior, surrounding teammates are also accountable for the personal growth of character. As a part of a team, athletes are a family, meaning if one

member has a non-beneficial behavior it will spread to the rest of the team in haste. During my undergraduate program one of our student-run club level athletic teams took in a couple of players whose sole intentions were to be the teams' tough guys. These particular players were ejected from multiple games for physical altercations with the other teams' players and fans, but were unpunished time and time again. The rest of the team thinking these actions were allowed, began to take part in physical altercations as well. This led to the ejection of the team from their conference as well as the dismemberment of the team by the University. With a proper coaching staff and discipline, the previously mentioned situation could have been avoided. Coaches hold a fluid role that has a combination of power and acquaintanceship with athletes.

Coaches as Leaders

Often looked to for advice in sports, coaches take primary responsibility for steering their team away from any non-beneficial behavior. When asked to define the role of a coach, Interviewee 1 stated, "a coach is someone who is always pushing us to do our best in any situation", this relates to sports, class and extracurricular activities. Later, interviewee 1 continued, "they're (coaches) supposed to be a dad for a family and when we make mistakes we report to them". Bringing the statement 'a dad for a family' into the light reflects the true role that coach has: a parent. Athletes moving away from home and going to college removes the social bond between parents and their children because they do not physically see each other every day. Smith's study reinforces this when they state, "Reduced connections with parents can have negative impacts on academic performance and social well-being" (2012). It is in moments like this that the coach can step into the void created by missing the parent and assume the role of a guiding hand. When the interviewees were asked about looking up to a coach for advice, interviewee 3 responded by saying, "Coaches are for when you have instability in life, they are someone who can be an outsider looking in as they always want the best for you".

A Bad Coach vs. a Good Coach

As stated earlier one of the responsibilities a coach has is to develop healthy relationships that generate success, but success can be seen in more than one form. Believing that winning is the only way to measure success leads to bad coaching. There are professional athletic teams that have all the right players for a successful playoff appearance, but due to poor team cohesion and leadership, that same team struggles to maintain a .500 record. On the same note, good coaches who have matched team chemistry and leadership can lead less skilled players to championships. Success in sports is most easily measured by winning

but should also be measured by positive change on the road to winning. Bill Parcells, a former NFL head coach, is a strong example of successful coaching in unsuccessful times. Parcells first head coaching position was with the New England Patriots, who at the time had one winning season in ten years. After one unsuccessful season, Parcells coached the Patriots to a back-to-back playoff appearances and multiple Super Bowls. This was the first of three professional football teams that Parcells coached from negative to positive records over 19 seasons. In his years, Parcells worked with many assistant coaches giving them guidance and success for their future careers. As of 2016, Parcells has eight coaching prodigies that have coached at the NFL level (McCullick, 2016). Parcells coaching is an excellent example of a good coach developing those surrounding the coach.

Personal Experience as an Athlete

Growing up involved in sports has exposed me to a number of coaches. In addition to being able to experience both the difference between a good and a bad coach, I have also met coaches who built strong working relationships with athletes. One coach of mine was involved in our athletic program for money. This coach regularly bashed on kids who underperformed, spoke down to the athletes when they asked for advice and only showed up to games when he needed to. This coach acted as though the athletes should have felt grateful when he was present. This is where I would discuss the coach-athlete relationships that this coach built but by the time I left the team, the coach did not build any relationships. During practice athletes did not listen, in games the athletes played without cohesion, and any off-field experience was ruined when this coach had any presence. Turning the page, I also had an athletic trainer/coach/teacher who won a Humanitarian award. This coach was a middle school teacher who spent two hours every morning and afternoon at the high school making sure the athletes were able to perform to the best of their abilities. Also, he made a great effort to be at all the home sporting events possible. There was a deep level of care for all the athletes that he dealt with, it showed, and we felt it. Not only did the coach win an award, but he also won the hearts of many student-athletes, building powerful relationships with athletes by putting the athlete development before himself. Toward the end of my career, I was able to play under one of the best coaches of my career. This coach gave everything he could to help the team succeed and the development of all the student-athletes, regardless of how non-sport related the matter was. The coach set the environment for cohesion and made sure that when a new athlete joined our team he was immediately accepted into our family. Athletes from all

different backgrounds were coming together to form a powerful unit. Though we posted above .500 records we never made it past the first round of playoffs. This team wasn't as successful in the sport as it was in athlete development. The relationships between coach and athlete were constantly growing until the athlete graduated, and even then, most of the athletes still kept in touch with the coach. If I were to ask my previous teammates about the success they have had in life since playing under this coach, most if not all of them would credit this coach as the beginning of their success.

Personal Experience as a Coach

Since the third year of my undergraduate studies, I have been involved in coaching student athletes. An experience of my own in powerful relationships comes from my internship. My internship was easily relatable because I worked with a couple of different coaches who all had taken the time to build strong bonds with their athletes. The first was with one of the assistant strength coaches. This coach was able to push his athletes to the brink of despair over and over again, but yet they returned time and time again to continue training. At times athletes would question the intensity of the workout, but would quickly realize that the coach has never directed them down the wrong path. High levels of trust granted him the ability to push athletes harder than they were accustomed to, for the betterment of athletic development. Unfortunately, halfway through my internship, the assistant coach took another job at another University leaving the athletes in a leaderless position. Post-departure, the training sessions were run by an interim coach who brought a new style of coaching to the team. From there on there was no life in the training, no relationship building, the team had a feeling of emptiness. Another coach I worked under had a similar style of relationship building with the athletes. The head coach showed his athletes his compassion for development and success, to which the athlete responded by following every command that was given. This coach had certain uniqueness when carrying out sessions. Once a week the team would gather for a yoga-like, movement based, slow tempo practice. The coach would run them through a series of positions that I did not know the human body could contort into. Every single athlete was there every single time and none of them would complain. In addition to the movement based session, the athletes were also required to drink shakes made for increasing muscle mass. By the end of my internship, I was the shake making chef and can relay firsthand that these shakes tasted awful. The specific combination of ingredients did not seem edible, yet the athletes drank it like water.

It is the primary job of a coach to build powerful relationships with athletes

for the betterment of the athlete. Coaching is a powerful position that can greatly enhance a team's capabilities to not only perform but to bond as a tightly knit family. Without a strong presence from a coach, an athletic team is on track to an unsuccessful season. As college football coaching hall of fame Bill McCartney said, "All coaching is, is taking a player where he can't take himself," and this is done through powerful relationships with athletes.

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Relationships and Rapport: The Keys to Classroom Success

Justin Rude Hanson

Relationships are powerful, useful tools in a wide variety of contexts from parenthood to leadership. The human dynamic plays an integral role in building a close rapport with others. Higher levels of student learning, favorable behaviors, and a students' positive perception of school can be improved through positive teacher-student relationships. As a classroom teacher, I can guide students to achieve things deemed otherwise impossible by building positive, trusting relationships. An abundance of approaches lead to powerful student and teacher relationships. These approaches start with an effective teacher.

What makes an effective teacher? A successful teacher has a variety of skills and traits that a quality employee of any organization has, yet there are additional qualities that are specific to educators. These qualities can be traits or things that come naturally. These also can be skills or things that are learned and developed over time. These skills and traits include, but are not limited to, strong classroom management, effective planning, clarity of instructional delivery, collegiality, student engagement, and knowledge of subject matter, curriculum, and standards. One of the essential qualities of an effective teacher is someone who cares deeply about their students and shows that through building strong, positive, and professional relationships. Studies and researchers (Lee, 2007; Soar & Soar, 1979) have supported what many successful teachers have always known: strong and positive student-teacher relationships influence student success (Crow & Knoell, 2013).

There are various ways to build relationships with students in the classroom, and it all begins at the start of the school year. The first few days of school for most grade levels, in most schools, are entrenched with rules and procedures. As the leader of the classroom, these first days are not only imperative in

establishing the ground rules and setting expectations, but are also important in creating a welcoming classroom environment for all students, leading team building exercises, setting goals, and getting to know the students.

One missing piece that many teachers exclude throughout the school year, which is equally essential to this process, is to share personal information with students. Relationships are a reciprocal process. There is an innate ebb and flow, give and take. Building meaningful relationships with students will promote higher academic achievement, improve behaviors, and help them become better human beings overall. According to McCombs and Whisler (1997), "Learning occurs best in an environment that contains positive interpersonal relationships and interactions and in which the learner feels appreciated, acknowledged, respected, and admired" (p. 10). A way to accomplish this is for the teacher to get to know the students and for the students to get to know the teacher. There are a variety of ways this can be achieved.

One of the activities a teacher can facilitate at the start of the school year is to have the students create classroom rules. This is a simple activity for a practiced teacher leading any grade level, as even very young students know basic rules. As a class, have students thoughtfully share ideas for classroom rules. Then brainstorm ideas as a group. Write down all of the ideas on the whiteboard or Smart Board. This activity gets the students comfortable raising their hand and engaging in class within the first two days of school; it is an icebreaker activity. Keep the rules positive. For example, "don't push" can become, "respect others." Many students will come up with "don'ts." Change those to "dos." All of the rules students come up with can fall into five categories. Once the brainstorming is complete, write these five categories on the board: Be Kind, Be Positive, Try Your Best, Be Respectful, and Be Organized. Then take all of the guidelines students created and have them organize their ideas into one of the five categories. In essence, as the classroom teacher, classroom regulations are already in mind. However, it also involves students in creating their own rules. It is not a trick, as most tend to be common sense. Allowing students to create their own classroom rules promotes ownership and buy-in (Hinton, Warnke, & Wibbolding, 2011). Creating classroom rules is just one of many activities that can help get the school year off to a good start and begin the process of building strong teacher-student relationships. The first few days of school are the foundational building blocks of connectivity between students, as well as between teachers and students.

Not only is the beginning of the school year an ideal time to begin building an empowering classroom environment and to start forming strong teacher-student relationships, but the start of each week and each day is equally

important. Start each morning greeting students with a smile as they come into the classroom. After morning attendance, lunch count, and announcements, begin each day with a morning meeting. The meeting starts by going through the agenda for the day.

After completing the “business” of the day, then begin to engage on more of a personal level, especially on Mondays. To start the week, have students either sit or stand in a circle, and then share one or two highlights from their weekend. This allows every student an opportunity to share something that he or she did over the weekend. It also provides his or her classmates and the teacher the opportunity to receive some insight into who the students are personally. At the start of the school year, students tend to be a little reluctant about sharing personal information with the rest of the class. To make things a bit easier, have the students share their favorite color, animal, cartoon/television show, book, or some other small bits of personal information they can share readily with the class. After the first few weeks of school, students then feel comfortable enough sharing about their weekend with everyone in the class.

Through these Monday morning meetings, a great deal of information is learned such as what students like to do, who they are as people, and what their lives are like outside of school. The teacher should also share the highlights of their weekend. This is equally essential in the process of cultivating positive relationships with students. Students need to know that teachers also live a life outside of school and that we are just as much of a human being as they are. Sometimes teachers can seem like aliens to students because they do not share anything about themselves. My students know my favorite color and animal, that I raise two children on my own, that I was not the best high school student, my favorite sports teams, that I enjoy Harry Potter books and movies, and that I love to explore national parks. Sharing that I raise two children on my own gives me a connection with students that have divorced parents. A connection is also formed with struggling students who know I was not a high achieving student. Students do not need to know my life story, but they do need to know who I am and what I enjoy almost as much as I need to know who they are and what they enjoy. By sharing some of these things with my students, they know that I am a person, like them, who has likes and dislikes, who has made and learned from mistakes, and who has a life outside of the school building.

There are numerous other ways to connect on a personal level with students throughout the school year. As all educators know, there are teaching moments that come up naturally and at various times throughout the school year. These opportunities are true blessings when it comes to delivering instruction.

Many of my most effective teaching moments come in the form of stories.

These stories are from experiences from different aspects of my life. These can be moments when a life experience that connects to the content arises naturally. However, some of these teaching moments are manufactured and do not come at random. It can be relatively simple to bring up personal experiences during instruction whether the situation is created or it happens naturally.

Regardless, of whether these teachable moments using personal life stories are naturally occurring or planned, they are effective. Anytime a teacher begins to tell a story, overall student engagement and comprehension of the subject matter increases. One can see it in the collective body language of the students. They sit up straight, their eyes are on the teacher, and they appear eager to hear the whole story.

People love to hear stories. Students are no different. Storytelling is undoubtedly powerful. Students enjoy when the content of what they are learning connects to real life. A compelling storyteller not only positively affects the content retention and engagement of the learner, but this person is also building that ever-so-important teacher-student relationship. That relationship can make such a genuinely positive impact on the lives of the students and should be maintained over time.

The best way to make a long-term impact on students is to continue to be a positive support and influence to them throughout their K-12 education. These situations of support and influence should continue to be in school settings.

There are many opportunities to stay connected with students. According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2014), 57% of all students in the U.S. are involved in extracurricular activities. These activities provide an abundance of opportunities to support former students in ways other than academics. Many of my students grow up in very supportive and loving home environments. Others, unfortunately, do not. Whether a student's home life is supportive or challenging, one can always benefit from additional positive interactions.

For teachers, any additional student interactions are not the easiest thing to actualize, as we are all incredibly busy people throughout the school year. Many raise families, coach sports, take classes, attend meetings, or fulfill a variety of other obligations outside of school. As a parent raising two children on my own, a teacher, and a graduate student, I understand the struggles of maintaining a balanced life. No matter how busy life becomes, it is important to make time to continue being a positive role model to former students, even if it is not as often as one would like. I do my best to attend former students' sporting events, plays, concerts, or art shows. This past year I wrote a letter addressed to an entire class and hung it in their lockers before the school year began wishing them a great first day of school and school year. I have also sent emails to entire

classes of students at the beginning, during, and at the end of school years. I have helped students with projects and homework via email and left the door open to communication and support as much as possible. The students I have taught have made an ample impact in my life, and my hope is that I will do the same for them. The list of possibilities to continue supporting students is virtually endless. My goal is not only to be a positive force in their lives for a school year but also throughout their schooling. Caring for students does not end at the conclusion of the school year just as parenting is not over after twelfth grade.

Another way to continue to be a role model to former students is to be a student alongside them. As part of my teacher contract, I am allowed to spend two days of the school year observing other teachers in the profession. Because I have this opportunity, I spend these days as a classmate of my former students. I have the school create a class schedule as if I am a new student in their grade level. I have conversations with my former students before school, in between classes, during lunch, and after school. During class, not only am I observing the teacher, but I also complete the work as if I am a student in that grade level. By doing this, I engage in what the students are learning, I gain a perspective on what it is like to be a student in that class, and I am also modeling positive student behavior.

There are many benefits to this entire observation experience. I am able to maintain the relationships with former students, learn about what works and what does not work for other teachers, and see how other buildings and the staff in those buildings operate. I also meet other professionals in the district. In two days of each school year, I can build cohesiveness between buildings, staff members, and students. Due to the number of benefits, these observation days are quite simply priceless.

Whether students are current, former, or students to be, there are ways to show genuine care toward them: accept who they are, embrace differences, learn from each other, talk to them about topics other than school, and ask questions. A teacher can notice new haircuts and shoes, joke around in the hallway, compliment students, build confidence, smile often, include them in classroom decisions, involve them in the learning and teaching process, and make them feel welcome in the classroom and the school. We know that human connection is crucial to child development (Knestrict, 2005). We must not forget that. There are numerous ways to nurture, show care, and connect with students.

Maya Angelou said, "People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel" (Booth,

2004, p.14). I know that students will not remember everything that I have taught them, but they will hopefully become better human beings by being students in my classes, and I hope they will remember me as a teacher who cared. Caring teachers can improve the likelihood of students who have a positive perception of school.

Student perception of school is crucial in determining student success. Teachers want students to come to school and look forward to their classes. Students should enjoy the school experience. Children spend a lot of time at school, and it should not be a place to dread. I am not a teacher who focuses on being “liked.” I spend most of my time and energy trying to find the best ways to deliver instruction, as many teachers do. It just so happens that I have carefully crafted a rapport with students that is beneficial to the relationship building process, which in turn benefits academic and behavioral success. The cherry on top is that many students enjoy the classroom culture that has been created. When students enjoy school they put in more effort and behavior is improved. When students feel respected, they give respect in return. “Tough students” tend to do well in my classroom for all of these reasons. When a connection is made with a student, and a strong relationship is formed, the student wants to make the teacher proud. They do not want to let down the teacher. I am not their friend, but I am their mentor, guide, leader, and teacher. Teachers have the opportunity be a positive influence in a world where that is not so common anymore.

If doing what is best for our students is our focus, as it should be, then we need to realize that building positive relationships is beneficial to both the student and the teacher. If delivering instruction is our only focus as teachers, then we have not only failed ourselves, but we have also failed our students. Many school mission statements indicate the institution’s goal is to prepare students for a successful life after graduation. To accomplish that we must not only teach children the academic content, but also show them that people care, teach other life skills, and help them become well-rounded people. That is our purpose as teachers. That is what we must do for the greater good of society. The heart of teaching is the relationships we build, and the positive impacts we make. The cohesiveness created in relationship building results in students that are more likely to succeed academically and socially, who have a positive perception of school and learning. Hopefully, these impacts carry over into their futures and our world.

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Leadership and Team Cohesion: A Leader's Perspective

Jeffrey Thompson

Team cohesion enhances the development of athletes and assists in the pursuit of an organizational goal (Klein, DiazGranados, Salas, Le, Burke, Lyons, & Goodwin, 2009). Goal setting has been perceived by athletes to be the most effective team building method (Stevens, & Bloom, 2003). According to Senecal, Loughhead, and Bloom, results showed a moderate-to-large significant circular relationship between cohesion and performance in sport (Senecal, Loughhead, & Bloom, 2008). It could be suggested that leadership and cohesiveness coincide.

Cohesion is a process that reflects in the tenacity of a group to stick together and remain united in the pursuit of goals, objectives, or satisfaction of its member's current needs (Carron, Brawley, & Widmeyer, 1998, p.213). Cohesion in sports relates to the performance of a team as a whole, or to each individual success, which is also the team's success. A team who remains focused with a clear goal or vision then also benefits from a leader with the same or greater desire to accomplish goals. Cohesion is an important factor because it also increases fluidity of communication, as well as chemistry between teammates. A team, like an organization, requires communication to produce quality results.

Athletic development and performance in sport is important to any coach. Athletes desire performance to increase on the court, looking to the coach to facilitate feedback in which improvements can be made. Performance has a series of affecters, these include but are not limited to: sleep, recovery, practice, strength, power, muscle mass, technique, poise, communication, support, and cohesion. A team with strong cohesion, can communicate with less error, and therefore focus on performance, but also remain resilient during negative times. The athlete also looks to teammates for support both on and off the

playing field. Athletes require cohesion among teammates for strong chemistry. Chemistry is facilitated by strong communication and influence between coaches, athletes, and teammates.

Athletic development and team cohesion both have been an area of inquiry for decades. It is a common perception that a cohesive team will perform better in competition. Teams that portray better communication, team cohesiveness, and comradery seem to perform better than teams that focus less on these qualities. Furthermore, teams who show a high level of leadership tend to have more organization, goal achievement, and cohesion. Leadership can connect qualities of organization, goal setting, and self-efficacy, and have an impact on the relationship between athletes in competition. Self-efficacy points to the importance of a team's ability in believing they will be successful (Kim & Sugiyama, 1992). A team's overall success is a result of each individual team member's personal success and developments within these qualities.

Leadership, as defined by Maxwell, is not about titles, positions, payments, or results, rather it is about one life influencing another (Maxwell, 2011). There is a strong connection between coach and athlete. An athletic team's performance can largely be attributed to the type of leadership influence of the coach. The type of leadership style is not as important as having a vision. Without a vision, the team has no direction, no goal, and no reason to participate in competition. A coach has the important role of not only acting as a leader, but more importantly creating the vision that will guide a team through each season.

There is not one single leadership style that works for any situation or team. Although there are a multitude factors that contribute to an athlete's perception of the coach such as influence, buy-in, goals, and momentum, it is more important for the coach to adapt their leadership style to the team's mentality and situation. Every situation has more than one solution and as a result there is more than one leadership style to suit a situation.

Influence is the combination of character, relationships, knowledge, intuition, experience, past successes, and ability which increase credibility of a leader. Buy-in is created by the leader, and directly reflects the team's sense of confidence in a program thus also giving the leader greater influence. If the coach does not create buy-in then there is no influence. Goals, or goal setting, is an important factor in athletic performance. A team must have goals to accomplish, these set the tone or direction of a team. Goal setting was found to be the most effective form of building cohesion (Stevens & Bloom, 2003). Momentum becomes important once cohesion is formed, and a team begins building upon its foundation. In teams with high task cohesion the perception

of momentum is more pronounced, and beneficial (Cox, 2002; Lavallec. D., Kremer, J., Moran, A., & Williams, M., 2004). Team Cohesion is then an important part of leadership, yet cohesion is an important part of leadership.

Most research that has been done on team cohesion is largely focused on performance as an umbrella variable (Cox, 2002; Lavallec., et al, 2004). A team with athletes that has little to no involvement within one another's ability or personal life show less cohesion. Cohesion requires strong communication habits between athletes, and coaches. It is a coach's responsibility as the leader to create communication and team building between teammates. A coach may employ a variety of team building exercises and strategies throughout any given season all with the same purpose of creating stronger team cohesion.

Fiedler's (1967) contingency model of effective leadership suggests that the effectiveness of a group is related to the relationship style and degree of situation which enable the leader to use influence. Suggestions from *Leadership Theory and Practice (2016)* by Northouse explain the Path-Goal Theory as a function of a leader is to provide a clear path in assisting followers in achievement of goals.

The coach-athlete relationship has been shown to be an important determinant of team success, and player satisfaction. Between compatible coach-athlete relationships there is a sense of mutual respect, influence, and an appreciation of one another's role. Effective and open communication is a part of inclusive environments and there for interaction, communication, and respect between coach and athlete lead to better athlete performance (Cox 2002; Lavallec., et al, 2004). It is important to note that the relationship between coach and athlete is useful, but the relationship between athletes is also a determinant of good performance. A useful way to begin creating cohesion is through team building strategies.

Team building is a large factor in team cohesion. Goal setting is the most widely used form of team building. Though there is extensive research pertaining to team building, the primary influence seems to be increasing team effectiveness and sense of cohesion. Goal setting is designed to strengthen team member motivation to achieve goals and objectives (Sala, Priest, & Derouin, 2005). A team must have a vision, and goals. A team that has a clear vision can then set achievable goals with the help from coaches. Once goals are set a team can pursue goal achievement, and part of goal achievement should require cohesion between team members.

In my experience as a strength and conditioning coach I've seen good teams perform well and good teams perform poorly. Most of the time when a team performs poorly it is not due to strictly bad athletes. It seems that teams who have a higher sense of reliance on one another tend to do well. My first year

with the Tennis team, I interned underneath another a strength coach. During this year I spent most of my time simply assisting and they ended their season with an equal win/loss.

In my second year, I had the opportunity to program and evaluate the tennis team by myself in the weight room. That year the tennis team, for lack of a better word, played awful and ended the season 2-10. The team's composition was similar in past years, but there was no communication. As a strength coach, I did what I could to assist in building a strong team mentality, most days would end with a motivational quote and life lesson. These quotes and life lessons were meant to be a driving force to creating a strong work ethic both in the weight room and on the court, but also in their everyday life. I don't know what lead to them continuing a loss streak, but usually when a team can't seem to pick up momentum it's even harder to create later on.

In my third year with tennis, communication started changing. With 2 new recruits coming in I wasn't sure what to expect, but we had goals this time. From what I had heard, these new recruits were fairly small and no one knew if they were good. Per the usual routine, first day of lifting was mostly geared around learning how things are meant to run and the expectations of each athlete. They seemed timid and quite meek, remaining quiet and introverted. Goals were set for improvement from both losses and wins, looking at the positives and negatives of every situation. Questions were asked such as where improvements could be made, what went well, and what didn't work at all.

The first match was against a difficult team, but it was winnable. As the matches went on it came down to a tiebreaker, both sides coming off with 4-4. One match would decide the winner. It is important to note how a tennis match scoring works. Generally, most matches consist of two rounds of 6 points, winner being declared by a two-point lead; win both points and the match is over; win one point and lose the other then it goes into a tiebreaker. Tiebreakers typically last 10 points, but in order to win it the player needs to win by two points. This particular tiebreaker went for a total 26 points ending 14-12 and with an overall win.

The girls ended the 2016-17 season 14-7 overall, 8-3 in conference and being undefeated at one point, versus the previous year (15-16) 3-12 overall; 2-9 conference. I feel this point was the most important turning point in this team's mentality; workouts were more intense, and the mood was more positive. Maxwell would suggest that this falls into the law of momentum. This wasn't a simple win by any means, but it gave them momentum. With momentum alongside cohesion on the court, and trust in one another, the athletes began creating a winning mentality. Ownership of the team was now in the hands of

the athletes and as a result performing well individually became more important to each athlete. As of February of the most recent year (2018) they are once again undefeated.

Cohesion played an important role in creating momentum. The team had very little cohesion in the beginning, and due to, and resulting in, more losses over wins. Enough momentum could not be produced without wins. Once the factor of winning changed, the team could then see matches as “winnable” and momentum began growing. Furthermore, the relationship between the players grew because wins were more attainable, and the relationship with coaches improved from increased performance.

Another important aspect of my life as a strength coach is within my personal athletic experience. I have competed in Olympic weightlifting and Powerlifting for almost 5 years now. Both are very individualistic strength sports. All of your own efforts become the successes as an athlete. As previously stated, cohesion is an important part of any team composition. Cohesion creates a stronger bond between teammates, assists in better teamwork, communication, and as a result, better performance. Cohesion in strength sports assists in a different way. Though teammates do exist, teammates serve as motivating factors in training. In strength sports, a teammate is both a friend and a foe. If I see my teammate lifting more weight than me, I’m going to be motivated to train harder and become stronger than them. This both influences me, yet builds a relationship with my teammates.

Relationships that have been created during this time are important as well. When creating these relationships, influence should be built from experience in building strong meaningful relationships. Some things I look for are those who have competed, and also knowledgeable and respectful. For example, one of the people I respect the most in my life is a friend and fellow coach, Coach Tom. He’s a man who’s very humble and respectful, yet knows a great deal about coaching and programming. He’s competed in Olympic weightlifting and also does it simply for the fun of it. Although I am technically stronger than Tom, I respect his opinion and would take any advice or coaching with serious consideration because I know he’s knowledgeable. Our relationship grew from his knowledge, practice, and ability. He practices what he preaches and therefore he has a great deal of influence over me.

Team cohesion and leadership impact teams as a whole in different manners. Leadership impacts team cohesion which then effects team performance. Teams with strong cohesion perform better in their sport. A team that is influenced by a strong leader shows importance of goal setting and accomplishment.

Lastly, if a team can accomplish goals, build strong relationships, and produce momentum can likely become successful.

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Building Effective Cross-Departmental Communication in Organizations

Chenxiao Li

“One chopstick can be broke easily, but ten chopsticks together are hard to break.” This is a lesson in cooperation that my mother relayed to me when I was young. At one point I shared this tale with a childhood friend. She replied that evening saying that “it was not hard to break ten chopsticks, it just takes a little extra time.” I became very confused because I knew that breaking ten chopsticks together was impossible. When continuing correspondence it dawned on me that I forgot to mention a key word, “together.” My friend had broken the ten chopsticks one by one. To this day it is this interaction that reminds me how important effective communication is!

Through the study of leadership education, I find that the skill of communication is very essential. However, this basic skill has tremendous power and is worthy of pursuing mastery. This article will discuss how to build better cross-departmental relationships through effective communication. It is this skill that will promote the vigorous development in organizations.

The cornerstone of organizational development and success is teamwork. To be able to collaborate effectively, individuals need to rely on cross-departmental cooperation. When members of differentiating divisions align common goals and practices, it increases the organization’s overall success. Unfortunately, in common applications, inter-departmental contact faces many obstacles.

Let me share with you the firsthand story regarding cross-departmental communication. I once was employed by a research company specializing in the design aspect of clothing. This company located in China. The company expanded rapidly starting with our flagship store to nearly 600 international franchises within a two-year span. With the massive expansion, we quickly discovered that internal management could not keep up the pace at which the

company was growing. Due to demand, extra responsibilities pushed on an already overwhelmed department. The company was beginning to crumble. Though warning signs were apparent, the administrative forces continued to place tighter deadlines and heavier workloads on the individual departments. Each division was working around the clock, and even though they functioned under one roof, they seemed to be working in separate directions.

In 2016, the company was awarded one of its greatest contracts to date. The stress of the project was going to be high, and I was determined to do my best to proactively ease the suffering that my coworkers and I were about to endure. The contract fell under four working departments. I immediately informed one head administrator of the contract details and deadlines. Resting easy that I had done my part of the project, I quickly found out that, due to faulty communication, the final product met at the market with varying results. In fact, many of our vendors were requesting returns. Upon further investigation, I learned that each section of the company was relaying incorrect information to the warehouse and to vendors which resulted in an issue with the packaging. All four divisions, as well as myself, were reprimanded for the problems.

What lessons can be taken away from the example? I believe the number one reason that the company failed is a break down in cross-departmental communication. The divisions in the company seemed to act on their own accord instead of utilizing a synergistic approach. This would include the individual sections, culture, stylistic approach, and who they communicated with. In essence, working as a fractured company meant working against each other as opposed to for and with each other. If the specific divisions would have been proactive in their communication about goals and contract framework, the outcome would have concluded not only more quickly but also much more accurately. It is amazing that something as simple as talking with one another, both initially and through the process, has the power to make the difference between failure and success.

Recognizing and addressing communication problems as they occur help improve the efficiency of any organization. The list below illustrates some underlying lessons and conclusions about cross-departmental communication breakdown.

Establish a Clear Set of Individual and Departmental Responsibilities

The administration should define the responsibilities of each department and its staff's duties. When roles are defined, departments can co-exist more peacefully, avoid duplication of work, and create solutions in a timely fashion (Covey, 2013).

Development of the Company

For companies in the rapid growth stage, they can adjust their organizational structure to suit the development of the company. For example, department and management integration. Department integration can enhance enterprise strength, reduce company cost and reduce internal communication error rate. The integration and simplification at the department level can improve effective communication between departments and realize the high-quality distribution of human resources.

Focus on Team Building

A successful team must not only have competent individuals, but it must also exude positive team spirit, internally and externally. For a company to function seamlessly, it must promote and train staff across all departments. By utilizing cross-departmental training, it will increase the likelihood that divisions will be willing to cooperate when large projects arise.

Establish an Effective Plan for REGULAR Inter-Departmental Contact Time

Communication between departments in most cases is temporary. This means that a division could go years before interacting with others in their company. This creates a huge disconnect. Conducting regular, relevant and effective “forced interactions” will establish a platform for enhancing exchanges and cooperation among different departments. This will help to improve the efficiency of inter-departmental communication and company success.

Integrate the Goals of Various Departments to Form Unified Thinking

The business activities of most institutions need to be handled in multiple departments and sectors due to their size, this does not mean that their end goals are not the same. For example, an engineering section of a flood control project may have a different sub goal than that of the operations and management departments. Though these departments may function separately day to day, they all have the same end goal in mind, to prevent flooding. If the unit does not formulate a unified plan and focus on communication across the department’s trouble will soon arise. Therefore, we must integrate the activities of all individual departments to ensure that their particular duties mesh effectively with those of other sections. Utilizing group performance appraisals in place of individual ratings can help achieve this. The overall goal remains the same, to make effective communication and desired results for the total company.

In general, cross-departmental communication within the organizations

plays the ultimate role in the operation and success of the entire group. According to Wei (2013), the better the communication and coordination between departments, the more efficiently tasks completed.

Now that the framework for cross-departmental communication is set, let's take a look at personal aspects that can encourage proper communication with colleagues. These actions will help establish positive interpersonal relationships.

Keep Close Tabs on Your Emotions

In the process of inter-departmental communication, we must take charge of our mentality. If there is something unpleasant happening in the department, and you do not adjust your mind set you are quickly becoming part of the problem. Effective communication cannot occur when one of the individuals in the conflict is stressed. If an individual communicates while angry, it is very likely that the interaction will result in a negative outcome. In any conflict, be sure to keep your emotions in check.

Respect Others and Actively Communicate with Others

The most effective interpersonal relationships rely on mutual respect. In any partnership, it is significant to be open and honest in all correspondence. Trust built over time by proving that you hold your coworker's best interest in mind. Remember to always be up front and truthful with the people in your company. By establishing a flawless track record of open, honest, and insightful interactions with your peers, you will gain strong interpersonal relationships which will, in turn, provide organizational success.

Improve your Influence

It is necessary to enhance your influence if you want to improve communication. (Xinyu, 2011). Influence is a must have the ability for all people who work in a leadership role. The stronger the influence, the more powerful your organization will become. What is the influence? It is the ability to change the thinking and action of others in a way that they are willing to accept. Influence directly affects the impact that you and your company have on internal and external sources. Whether it is the presentation of opinions, the removal of obstacles, or the resolution of problems, those who project communication through influence will prove effective and able to establish personal authority within a team.

Having Flexibility

The staff that is flexible create a work environment that is not only enjoyable but also more efficient. Flexibility is the ability to adapt to multiple situations

and personnel. People that are flexible can fill various roles even though their position falls under a single job title. Having an organization that is made up of these types of employees creates harmony between colleagues and departments. With that said, we cannot allow flexibility or the relationships that it creates, to get in the way of what's best for the organization. It must be remembered that "all roads lead to Rome" – Rome, in this case, being the desired objective. For example, when you say something modestly, it will likely get a better reaction than if you say the same thing with harsh words. Another effective technique is to present ideas from the aspect of the common interests that departments might share. Doing so often improves the harmony between colleagues and groups.

Of course, we must respect the truth in the process of any workaround, and we cannot sacrifice the interest of the organization to ensure that we have a good interpersonal relationship. For example, if an issue arises between departmental friends or administration, you cannot simply "let the employee slide" if the quality of the project is not up to par. In the administrative role, flexibility has its limits. If a leader wavers on a regular basis, it shows employees that the leader is weak and lacks high emotional intelligence.

Today's market is becoming increasingly competitive. The workloads and expectations put on employees also continue to rise. With such high demand and an often stretched workforce, effective cross-departmental communication is more important now than ever before. Creating harmonious relationships between individuals in varying departments will increase the likelihood of your organization achieving high-level success. In this job market, effective communication across the organization is not a luxury but a necessity. It can improve the efficiency of information delivery, boost team cohesion, and achieve effective teamwork. To build a united company, start with communication.

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