

## Discussion Post #7: Leading Across Cultures

This assignment is two parts.

First, think of a role model you look up to. If a young person would ask these role models for leadership advice, what kind of advice would that be? What elements of culture would be included within that advice? What additional advice would you include? In a 100-word minimum post please share your response.

Second, provide a 100-word substantive minimum response to at least one classmate.

Utilize any LIS scholarly or professional literature and course materials. Be sure to cite your sources at the end of your post. Link out to other URLs and add images or embed media when appropriate.

[Mary Koeven \(She/Her\)](#)

Nov 10 10:15am | Last reply Nov 19 11:27am

Manage Discussion by Mary Koeven

### Reply from Mary Koeven

I love that many of you have chosen people you have worked with as role models, but I don't have a job in the LIS field right now, so I am going to go with a celebrity role model instead. One famous role model that has been on my mind a lot lately since starting library school is LeVar Burton. I watched him as a child on Reading Rainbow, Star Trek, and Roots, and have always admired him as a storyteller and as someone who truly seems to be trying to make a difference in the world.

Burton shared leadership advice on the Leadercast Podcast in 2023 (Leadercast, 2023). His philosophy on leadership is that your actions need to be aligned with your own personal values of right and wrong, and you need to be upfront about when you make mistakes and be willing to learn from them. He also talks about how it is important to recognize what other people in the group need to feel comfortable, and give them what they need, or you will miss out on their ideas and contributions. He also talks about working with people who have different opinions than you and points out that we need to relax and not stress out so much. He asks, "Do you want to be right or do you want to be free of conflict?"

I think his advice would work really well in a situation where one is leading people of different cultures. If you are clear and honest about what your values are, then people tend to respect that, even if they don't share all your values. Also, being humble and willing to learn and recognize the different things that other people need to be creative and innovate is a huge part of cultural intelligence.

### References

Leadercast. (2023, August 1). *Authentic Wisdom With LeVar Burton* [video].  
YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u90pyZV0mfg>Links to an external site.



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- Reply to post from Mary Koeven**Reply**
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[Mason Neil \(They/Them\)](#)

Nov 14 12:44pm

Manage Discussion by Mason Neil

**Reply from Mason Neil**

I'm so glad to see LeVar Burton shared here—I'm reading this while drinking tea out of my Reading Rainbow mug! I agree that Burton is a leader whose ethic has a lot to teach us about authenticity and creating a world where everyone can flourish. I particularly like the advice of his that you shared, stating that it's important to make people comfortable if we want to be able to learn from them—I think this emphasizes the point that we need to seek out understanding and knowledge to help us find and identify the ways that we are creating environments where others do not feel free to be themselves or get involved. How can we be sure we are upholding a welcoming environment unless we are seeking diverse viewpoints beyond our own, and doing the work of eliminating our own blindspots? Burton would probably be one of the first to say we can't have all the answers: "But don't take my word for it."



Thank you for sharing!

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[Rio Nicholson \(They/Them\)](#)

Nov 19 11:27am

Manage Discussion by Rio Nicholson

### Reply from Rio Nicholson

Hello Mary,

I agree completely with this advice. As leaders, I believe it is important for our teams to understand what our personal values are, as it helps create the foundation for the group's work culture. However, I think it's also important that while we stand by what we believe in, we are willing to be humble, and to have our concepts of right and wrong challenged. I do not believe it is always necessary to change our mind in order to be culturally competent, but I do think we need to be willing to listen to the other side, and be willing to shift our view on a matter if we gain a greater understanding or a different viewpoint. While I like the underlying concept of "Do you want to be right or do you want to be free of conflict?" I think conflict can be where the greatest growth happens, as long as everyone is acting with respect if we are willing to push ourselves.

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