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LDR 300: Advanced Leadership Theory and Practice

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### Cumulative Leadership Project

#### **1. Contextual leadership requirements:**

Leadership is not only what an individual is able to do with groups of other individuals, but it is much more introspective into who a person actually is intrinsically. What drives them, what their passions are, and what they're looking to change and improve upon. Leadership is a continuous series of contexts and situations in which individuals are able to act and pursue what they find to be valuable. Now this is of course vastly different to every individual, and in any given context or situation. What is the most rewarding about leadership is that in trying to help or assist others, a leader is constantly learning, growing, and developing their own skillsets. There are numerous methodologies to leadership practices and styles, and this is largely in part that there is never any true right answer or approach to leadership, and that's the beauty of it. There is no clear-cut direction that an individual must work towards, but more so that as a leader one must forge their own path in the best direction that they can to help the greatest number of individuals around them to achieve the greatest common good. This is where things get tricky, because in some, if not most situations where there are some benefitting, there are perhaps equally some being impeded or hindered by this decision-making process. It is up to the leader to use their own intrinsic moral compass to make the right decisions, especially in difficult times and this is what can be so difficult about being a leader.

In life, you can truly only plan so much in advance in regard to certain situations and contexts. I pride myself in trying to be exceptionally organized, but some situations, particularly crisis situations can't always be planned for. That is why certain situations are regarded as being a crisis, because they are unexpected and require immediate action. Crisis's happen all around us in varying degrees in varying contexts, but the commonality is the requirement for hasteful decision making and actions to resolve the situation. Particularly in today's current climate with the COVID-19 pandemic still ongoing, the biggest challenge is in adapting to these changes in a positive manner. There is no entirely avoiding crisis situations; there can be admirable means of prevention, but some situations are out of our control as human beings and that's life. We must do our best in the face of adversity to perform the appropriate actions for ourselves and those around us.

Most often, in crisis situations, emotions are running high, and with other people involved, and whether it be their overall health or well-being on the line it is a particularly stressful time for all associated. As a leader, it is of the utmost importance to try and keep a level head and use rationality above all else. Especially in certain life-or-death situations, time is of the essence, and there comes the difficult balance of acting quickly and thinking through the after-effects of one's actions. One must effectively use logic and precise decision-making skills to act accordingly.

Crisis situations are often catastrophic to any number of individuals involved but are the most difficult when large groups of people are involved. As an example, the catastrophe that occurred on September 11, 2001, had effects on the entire country, but most specifically on every citizen in the city of New York. It was so unexpectedly despicable, and mayor Rudy Giuliani and the other professionals of New York had to act immediately. What was most remarkable and impressive about Rudy Giuliani was that he was described as being, "the calmest one in the

bunch. He was thinking practically, methodologically” (Smith and Bowles, 14). In this situation, the entire city of New York, and inevitably the United States and the world would be looking to him for guidance in this moment. As a leader, you have the respect and trust of so many, and this can be extremely daunting but something that Giuliani handled exceptionally well. People would be looking to him for guidance as a leader, and with him acting so courageously he served to intrinsically help individuals by keeping them calm and focused on the task at hand and mitigating some of the massive hysteria and fear that ensued.

Leaders can truly shine in situations such as crisis’ that require immediate and thorough action, but many times leaders can be best exemplified in their daily lives. Another situation in the future where I will inevitably be a leader is in my career aspirations of starting up my own business. In this context, I will be undoubtedly working with many different individuals with all varying skillsets. A quote that I love is, “In my walks, every man I meet is my superior in some way and in that I learn from him” (Ralph Waldo Emerson). This exemplifies how an effective leader should be inclusive to all of their followers or those around them, in that every individual has some kind of value and that you just have to find and harness it. Everybody has strengths and weaknesses, and you can’t count people out and underestimate them. This calls to truly be empathetic in this regard and personify an individualistic style of leadership. According to Abraham Zaleznik in *Managers and Leaders: Are They Different*, “Empathy is not simply a matter of paying attention to people. It is also the capacity to take in emotional signals and make them meaningful in a relationship” (Zaleznik, 7). Especially in such an individually focused career such as Chiropractic, you are constantly working with patients 1-1, and also with any other staff in the business. This calls for a high level of specificity in the attention and care needed to truly help people recover from injuries and illnesses.

## **2. Individualized self-assessment:**

As a leader dealing with people's interests, advantages, and overall well-being at hand in one's decision making, it is important for that leader to be able to identify and work with their own strengths and weaknesses. It is extremely important for a leader to truly know themselves and their advantages and pitfalls as an individual, and so through taking personality assessments and self-insight questionnaires one is really able to look introspectively at themselves, and work towards improving themselves and their skill sets. Throughout the LDR 300: Advanced Leadership Theory and Practice course, we have been able to take numerous self-assessments which have been truly insightful in helping me hone in and strengthen my leadership traits and characteristics.

The most significant and introspective assessment I took was the Myers Briggs 16 Personality Assessment. After answering a series of questions, this assessment explores my reported personality type of an Assertive Logistician. Upon reading the analysis, this hit very close to home in my methodologies, thought processes, decision making skills, and general approach to solving problems. Logisticians are described as, "their defining characteristics of integrity, practical logic, and tireless dedication to duty make Logisticians a vital core to many families, as well as organizations that uphold traditions, rules and standards... People with the Logistician personality type enjoy taking responsibility for their actions and take pride in the work they do" (Myers, Briggs). Much of this I think really applies to my character in terms of my practicality when approaching problems, enjoying responsibility and taking pride when working towards the common good, and having patience when working on tasks with a certain precision and attention to detail as long as it gets done right. Another aspect of this personality

trait that hit very close to home with me is when Logisticians were described as, “when they’ve made a decision, they will relay facts necessary to achieve their goal, expecting others to grasp the situation immediately and take action. Logisticians have little tolerance for indecisiveness but lose patience even more quickly if their chosen course is challenged with impractical theories, especially if they ignore key details – if challenges becomes time-consuming debates, Logisticians can become noticeably angry as deadlines tick nearer” (Myers, Briggs). This assessment, particularly when it stated that once their decision has been made they expect others to keep up, and the little tolerance for indecisiveness, holds very true for me and is something that I struggle with. Often times, when I’ve come to a logical conclusion, I have a hard time best conveying this, and have an even harder time when others don’t understand my reasoning. I can sometimes be very absolute in my thought process once I’ve reached a conclusion and is something that through this assessment I’ve realized and am striving to improve and be more considerate of others at times.

What I’ve noticed through this and other self-assessments though, is that a lot of the ways to get these answers on who I am and how I rate in different categories is coming from my own personal opinion. In a way, these results may not be totally accurate in the fact that I could have a different interpretation or perspective of myself with my actions and viewpoints on things. I chose to interview three different close and trusted individuals to give me their frank and detailed assessment of my strengths and weaknesses as a developing leader. All three individuals have been alongside me in my leadership journey and have three different viewpoints on my position as a leader over the past two semesters as being the President of my fraternity, Beta Theta Pi.

The first individual I have chosen to interview is Sean Richard, who served as my Risk Manager, and whom I particularly worked very closely with in maintaining everybody’s health

and safety. He detailed that I was always very good in trying to make the right decisions and for sticking to my guns when making some difficult decisions. When it came down to how we had to function as a chapter amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, we had to completely revolutionize our operations to be as safe as possible, amidst strife and opposition from some other members. He noted that I was still a careful listener and tried to take heed of both sides of the argument and how I tried to maintain a good relationship with my followers when making my decisions. He gave me a lot of credit in having my own system, and not comparing myself to my predecessors, and how I was able to adapt to whatever situation we were in. However, he did note how I was not always so good at holding people accountable for their actions, which I found myself very difficult to do. I also struggled with being able to motivate everyone in certain situations with how different things were.

The second person I chose to interview was Logan Rollins, who served as our Alumni House Advisor and whom I frequently went to for advice on big-picture objectives. He started off by stating how extremely well organized he noticed I had become when I stepped into my role, and how I really rose to the occasion under a lot of adversity. He noted that I had a very personable and individualistic approach, in that people thought of me as their President but also as a friend who had their best interests in mind. This also was a weakness in that I really wanted to make everyone happy even if it could've been detrimental to the chapter, and how I learned to be able to make difficult decisions by using my moral compass to do what was right. He also noted that I was very reflective in that if something went wrong I really worked on initiating conversations to analyze how things could be improved in the future. This also can be a weakness in that I could be very talkative and over explain things to where I would almost talk in circles, and how I could work on brevity and conciseness.

The third and final person I chose to interview was Marie Beckshaw, whom as being my girlfriend over the past year has had a more personal insight to me being in a leadership position. She provided some great insight, especially in how some of my strengths could be contrasted as weaknesses and things to work on. One of them being my hardworking attitude and determination in achieving my goals in not letting anything get in my way, to the point of being so headstrong that it can almost lead to arrogance and being absolute in my decision making. Another one of those being that I care so much about trying to help other people, that it can almost get in the way of my own self-care and personal needs. The final point that she made was that I'm so focused on constantly looking for ways to improve that I should more often "stop and smell the roses" and could benefit from practicing mindfulness. It is important to be able to see how certain characteristics can be both positive and negative, and to have some key takeaways from these outside perspectives to improve upon.

### **3. Definition of my career and life aspirations:**

My biggest career aspiration is to be a successful practicing Doctor of Chiropractic Medicine. I've chosen this as my career aspiration, because I love helping people and working with others, but I've noticed that I also do very well in being able to work independently. This line of work would enable me to work with people every day, be able to form meaningful connections and relationships with my patients, and be able to collaborate with other practicing doctors in the business. This will also facilitate my own individuality as a professional doctor in which I will be able to stand out on my own and also perform a lot of my primary work with my own methodologies and practices. The ultimate goal is to eventually be able to open my own practice, and effectively be my own boss and business. I know I will love the responsibility and

individuality of this and will hopefully be able to manage and care of myself, my team, and my patients proficiently.

The underlying values that drive this vision of success for me is compassion, the ability to help others, intellectual problem-solving abilities, and through vitality living a healthy and sustainable lifestyle whilst trying to promote that in others. I have always been engaged in living a healthy lifestyle through engaging in physical fitness, but I eventually came to this career path through the ideals of vitality, wellness, sustainability, and structural function and alignment of the body to better strengthen the Central Nervous System. From my childhood background of having a mother with Crohns disease, I know firsthand what debilitating diseases and injuries can do to an individual's daily lifestyle. Through this I have always sought to help improve others health and well-being around me, and this helped construct my philosophy: if I can help someone with their structural function and alignment to reduce pain and strengthen their Central Nervous System to help them in their daily lifestyle, then I can effectively help them in all other aspects of their life.

This is a very sustainable career, and what I like so much about it is that with having my own practice I would be my own boss and independent in my actions and responsibilities. It is a profession where one can do as much or as little with it as they choose to. I could establish a 40-hour work week, or a 60-hour work week, but it is all of my own choosing for my needs and the lifestyle I want to live. There are of course many challenges in owning your own business that include many personal, ethical, and moral challenges. Many personal challenges in that with myself and my hands being my primary source of income, if I were to get hurt and become unable to work it would drastically impact my business. As well as when I decide to take vacations, I am leaving people without an essential service that they need. So, in that regard, my



entire personal and professional life will be tied to my business; it provides a lot of freedoms but also a lot of responsibilities. This will hopefully be an extremely enjoyable and profound profession in that I will constantly be on the pursuit of more knowledge and techniques to better be able to help others. As well as with all of the knowledge and tools that I develop, it will help me in my own personal health and wellness, and I can use the same principles in my own daily life. It will be something that will keep me grounded in life to be able to live a healthy, practical, and functional lifestyle with financial and personal freedom.

Some criteria that I will use to measure and determine success is first and foremost if I am able to stand on my own and establish my own practice. Another measurement of that is how well established, practical, and accommodating of a building or area to use as my office, and how I am able to continuously expand and develop my practice. Of course, success can be measured in salary and how much I will be able to make within a given calendar year, and essentially my baseline is to be able to make over \$100,000 a year. This will hopefully be achievable and be able to give me the financial freedom that I want to live comfortably, but of course I am striving to be able to make more than that, but I know that that is a good baseline to shoot for. Another measurement of success is how I'm able to expand my practice to offer various services and modalities other than the basic chiropractic adjustment. For instance, acupuncture, massage therapy, spinal decompression, electrotherapy, hot and cold therapy, selling vitamins and supplements, herbal medicine, or perhaps even STEM cell therapy could be implemented. For some of these modalities, perhaps I would be able to hire other professionals to be able to apply these treatments, which only further help to expand my business.

A general mission statement to guide my life is as follows: Live with passion and purpose by doing well by others to help them reach true vitality and enlightenment. Health is about

perceiving, accepting, and dealing with reality on realities terms, and arises from a continuous cycle of negative feedback loops to achieve metabolic equilibrium and personal balance. Change is inevitable, but progress is achievable, in that true success comes from being proactive and not simply reactive. Prior Planning Prevents Poor Performance and is essential in accomplishing tasks effectively and efficiently. Make your unfamiliar ideas familiar, and always strive towards improving oneself to be better than you were the day before.

#### **4. Ten-year program for developing yourself as a leader capable of realizing your career and life aspirations:**

Currently I am a senior at the University of Maine. I have my next semester in the spring as my final semester before graduating if all goes well. A short-term goal that I have for this upcoming semester will be finding, and then participating in an internship over the summer as part of my final graduating requirements. This will serve as a great point of experience to immerse myself in the field of chiropractic that I am seeking to work in. I have done internships in chiropractic offices over the past two summers, but this will be a more legitimate and immersive experience than those prior. I am hoping to be able to get more insight into the overarching values of chiropractic care, specific modalities used to treat conditions, the logistics of the business, and the day-to-day lifestyle that this profession enables.

During the spring semester is when I will be applying to chiropractic schools, and really seeking to further my education towards achieving my doctorate degree. I have currently looked through all the accredited schools in the country but will have to do more extensive research into my selected 6 to rank them in a definitive order of favoritism. I will be striving to start taking classes at my chosen institution starting in the fall of 2021. This education is a major long-term

goal that I have for myself to be able to attain the knowledge necessary to be an effective functioning doctor in the future. This will help me gain the knowledge necessary to be able to assess and diagnose injuries and conditions, how to effectively perform joint and spinal adjustments for better skeletal alignment, how to develop proficient recovery and treatment plans, and to gain the skills necessary to know how to run my own practice. This program is a 3 ½ - 4 year education, all dependent on which school I end up attending and how the courses are structured.

Once I get accepted though is when the real work starts. I will suddenly become immersed in my classes and new campus culture and will have to do a lot to be able to effectively adapt to my new responsibilities. The first year will be very demanding in terms of a heavy content-based curriculum. I have heard that this is often the hardest year in that a huge adjustment is needed, and that this is when a lot of the initial general education classes will be taken. Whereas later on in the following years are more practice-based classes with a more hands on approach. After my first year is when it is essential to start attaining legitimate paid internships in which I can start actually dealing with and interacting with patients to start getting real experience.

Upon graduation, I will most likely be starting to work with my degree as an Associate Doctor and working under an already recognized doctor to start getting true and legitimate experience in dealing with patients. This will be a huge stepping stone and will truly start to determine the path and direction in which I will continue. I will most likely work under someone else for about 5 years to be able to achieve a few things. First and foremost, to continue to learn and develop my repertoire of knowledge, skills, and techniques to be able to effectively diagnose patients, and to know how to give them the best treatments for a suitable recovery. This will also

help me to be able to start saving and building capital to be able to stand out on my own. When starting up a business, it normally takes about 2 years to start making any profits, and this is something that I will have to take into account. I will need to be able to have saved up enough to be able to put large down payments on an office space.

The name for my business I have come up with is “Back on Track Chiropractic Care”. I am envisioning my office space to be very tranquil and peaceful in nature to ease myself and patients of any stress and to have bonsai trees, bamboo, waterfalls, and infographics on televisions with explanations of the care and services provided. This space would serve as somewhere my patients would look forward to going to, and having the space set up like this from a business perspective would serve to sell the services provided, but also the whole experience of getting treated in this space. Ideally, the absolute dream will be to have a separate office building on the same property as my residential home. Doing this would be great for a few different reasons. This is the perfect balance between having a separate commercial office building and having an at-home office building. Having an at-home office building has many perks, but I think in the long run it would be very difficult to balance my personal and work life if they were in the same building. Having this distinct separation, I think is key to achieving the same ease of access and professionalism required to be successful.

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