

2011

Journal Entry

AUTHENTIC LEADERSHIP RESPONSES

For my Business Research and Publishing course we were assigned to read two leadership articles a week and write a weekly journal response. In our journal entries we were supposed to respond to a prompt and reflect upon the principles and concepts gained from the articles assigned and past personal experiences. The following is a compilation of my journal entries.



TABLE OF CONTENT

Leaders in My Life 2

Leaders in the Scriptures 3

Leaders Losing Their Way 4

Me as a leader 5

Greatest Crucible 6

Values 7

Mentors 8

Success 9

Leadership Relationships 10

Integrating My Life 11

WEEK 1

What leaders, past or present, do you admire most? What is it about them that you admire? Which of these leaders do you consider to be authentic leaders? What can you learn from their leadership?

I have had many opportunities to study about powerful leaders in the world. I also count myself privileged to have grown up and served with powerful leaders who have been role models and instruments in shaping my life.

A few of the leaders that I have come to admire have included; Moses in the Bible, Captain Moroni in the Book of Mormon, Nelson Mandela of South Africa, Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Gandhi of India, my mission president, President Bowden and my Dad, Atobora Peter Brown. These great leaders have always given me something to look to, to improve my own leadership skills and qualities.

I understand the argument that we need to be ourselves and find our own niche in the world of leadership. That way we are able to lead according to the values and core principles we may have acquired as we gain more experiences.

The qualities that I admire most in these leaders include the fact that they are selfless, not easily provoke, they seek out the best in other. They have a way of chastising an individual when he or she makes a mistake.

The leader I will like to highlight for now will be my dad. He is very humble and ever willing to serve and help others. He has as one of his slogan “Do the Lord’s work and you will get the Lord’s pay”. This has shown me over the years that he is willing to put God first and do all he can to serve God’s children the best way he can. Although he has a busy schedule, I know that he finds time for people around him and helps them feel comfortable. There is yet another thing that I respect and admire most about my Dad. It is that his leadership style is such that he does not want to become famous with his callings and assignments. With this in mind he tells me that when you are given an assignment, you have to act so well your part so that when you are not around they will not miss you and the work could still go on. For that matter he uses tools like delegation and making sure that there are a handful of people that he will train who can take over his place when he is not around and continue with the vision of that assignment.

WEEK 2

What leaders in the scriptures do you admire most? What is it about them that you admire? Which of these leaders do you consider to be authentic leaders? What can you learn from their leadership?

There are many leaders in the scriptures that I admire. There is not one in particular that stands out to me above all of them. They exhibit lots of different qualities and gifts and powers. One thing that they do share in common and that makes them unique from worldly leaders is the fact that they all have a strong faith in the Savior Jesus Christ and have a testimony in following His teachings and they do promise blessings for doing that.

Some of the leaders that I love to read about and imitate their leadership style include prophets from the Old Testament, New Testament, Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants. These leaders' devotion to the course of truth and righteousness are inspiring. The first one I will talk about is Joseph son of Jacob in the Old Testament. Although one of the youngest sons he put his faith in the saviour and depended on Him for his survival. When his brothers came to him after several years to beg his forgiveness he was willing to give them a second chance. I will also want to be like him and allow people the opportunity to grow, make mistakes and correct them so that they may learn and improve.

Secondly, I will like to talk about Moses. Moses was a very powerful and strong leader. He had been raised by a king and had authority to do many things, yet when called of the Lord to lead the children of Israel, he told the lord of his inadequacies and the lord provided him with a spokes man who will speak before Pharaoh. Also as a leader he listened to his father in law when he gave him a suggestion and counsel to not do all the work by himself but that he should learn to delegate his responsibilities to others so that he does not get burned out. As a leader I will want to be able to recognize the good in others and put them in positions and places that their talents and skills will be most needed.

Another great leader that I will like to talk about is the Prophet Joseph Smith. He is a great role model. He was very kind, humble, loved others and served them. He taught truths that will save them and bring them Joy and happiness. He stood by his believes to the end that gave his follows a legacy to rely on to press forward in life. When asked how he governs such a large group of people, he said "I teach them correct principles and allow them to govern themselves". We need to allow others to grow though their own experiences so that they may learn.

These are some of the leaders that I admire in the scriptures and that have influenced my leadership skills and style.

WEEK 3

Think through the underlying reasons why so many leaders in the recent past or in the scriptures have lost their way and wound up failing as leaders. Have you seen leaders lose their way or worked with someone who fits any archetypes of being an imposter, rationalizer, glory seeker, loner, or shooting star? What are the behaviours and warning signals you have seen in others at risk of losing their way?

This prompt has caused me to ponder over a few key things that have come my way. It is very easy to see and seek after a good leader. We sometimes tend to just focus on those individuals who become our mentors and forget to analyze what other leaders are doing or failing to do that makes them not qualified to be our mentors, thus assuming that we want to apply good principles and qualities instead of vice.

There have been a few examples of leaders that I can classify as losing their way. Most of the examples that I can come up with at the moment are ones that saw the light and came back to their senses.

One of such stories, that I like to read, is found in the Old Testament. It is the story of the prophet Jonah. As a prophet you will think that he would have learnt the lesson that you cannot hide from the Lord and that when the Lord commands you just have to do it. Some in his defence have said that there was a purpose for Jonah doing what he did. They say that as a prophet he had read and understood the prophecies of former prophets which said something to the effect that the Assyrians would scatter or put the Israelites in bondage. If the people of Nineveh are wicked it is right to assume that the lord would wipe them off the face of the earth. The lord asking Jonah to go call them to repentance was a very big task and as the story goes, you see that after preaching to them and calling doom upon their heads, if they don't repent, he still went ahead to sit up on a hill to watch for their destruction. I argue the fact that no matter how true this might be we should know that the Lord commands and He expects His servants to follow. Jonah lost his way by trying to ignore the voice of God and the Lord had to take some measure to bring him back to repentance. But did he truly repent or just did the work given him without his heart in the process.

Another leader that comes to my mind is the great king David. He was respected and honored by the Israelites yet he fell off the path and lost favor with the Lord and his leadership style started going down from there. His son the wise King Solomon come in doing great things but then he married so many women out of his faith and that leads him on forbidden paths that sets the stage for the downfall of His kingdom.

Next, I will cite some leaders like Adolph Hitler who took over a government and changed lots of things that sends everyone else very unhappy.

These leaders start out with plans to build and grown and somewhere along the way their own agenda creep in and if not controlled they end up destroying trust and lives and families and the peace of a country.

WEEK 4

Thinking back over all your leadership experiences in your lifetime, which ones are you proudest of? Think about the basis for your leadership and the kind of leader you would like to be as you answer these questions: What qualities do you bring to leadership? What leadership qualities would you like to develop further?

“Asked what motivates them to lead, authentic leaders consistently say they find their motivation through understanding their own stories. Their stories enable them to know who they are and to stay focused on their values.”

I have lots of ‘stories’ or experiences that have shaped my leadership values over the years. These indeed give me that self worth and confidence to tackle any challenge or opportunities that may come to me. My mother tells me that, if there is anything like “born leaders” I am one of them. That has inspired me and given me the courage to accept challenges and leadership opportunities that come to me. That psychological turning point can make one confident and bold, allows the individual to have a very high self esteem and ability to maintain and develop great skills.

As much as that helped me, I still believe that we each can write our own stories to form a set of leadership values that we treasure. One of the leadership experiences that I am very proud of is the one that has led me up to this point of being a Student Body vice president. It so happened that when I came up to the BYU-Idaho campus in the winter of 2008. The then Student Body President saw me on campus one day and asked me if I will be interested in being involved on campus. After joining the SRC for just a few days, the then international student representative stepped down and to my surprise the SRC president came to me and asked if I will fill that position. I was surprise because one of the qualifications at that time was that you needed to have been an SRC committee member for at least one semester. That lead to a greater interest with the SRC and developed some connections with the administration and students. Now with that initial invitation and my willingness to accept challenges, I am now very confident in my role as student body vice president.

Some of the leadership skills I know of, and that I have been told by friends that I usually demonstrate naturally as a leader will include; love for team work, ability to delegate and trust others to grow through responsibility, I have a listening ear and welcome suggestions and counsel from others and I give it some consideration to see if that is the direction that I will like to take.

If there are any qualities that I will like to develop or improve it will include, allowing those who work under me enough room to be creative and aspire to other levels of leadership. I will also want to improve my memorization skills so that I will truly be able to remember facts about them especially their names. That will make them feel more appreciated.

Journal Entry

WEEK 5

Write freely about your greatest crucible or challenge and describe it in the following ways: How did you feel at the time? What resources did you call upon? How did you resolve the issues, if you have? How did it shape you and your views about the world?

It is interesting what most crucibles in our lives do to us – if we allow them. Crucibles refer to the challenges in our lives. Leadership crucibles will therefore refer to those challenges and hard times we faced during a leadership role. These I believe prepare us for the future so that we are able to bypass similar experiences or better still be able to enter a similar situation with some confidence already knowing what best options we may have.

Mallory, one of my schoolmates, was been interviewed by her bishop to be the relief society president in the ward. She felt inadequate to the great task ahead of her so decided to recommend other sisters in the ward whom she thought would be a great fit. When she was done the bishop looked her in the eye and said that he has prayed about it and it was her that the lord wanted to have in that position at that time. He continued to say that although she may feel inadequate, the lord was going to use her to bring about his righteous purposes. He also explained that sometimes when we receive callings it is not that we qualify for it at that time but that the lord was going to use that experience to lift us up or prepare us for something else in the future that will require more preparation at that time. Also the fact that the Lord calls us because we do have certain talents that he needs at specific times to help prepare the next leaders or to inspire someone to rise to their potential so that they may be ready for when the Lord need them for the things ahead of them. This is especially true in the sense that if you look through the lens of the past, there would be great and wonderful people who although not ordained to be prophets and apostles or kings and presidents became instruments in the hands of the Lord in training and preparing others to become what they are foreordained to be.

One such time when I have felt the tugs of challenges in my leadership role was when I served as the district leader on my mission in Johannesburg, South Africa. I was only 6 months on mission and had only been in one (1) area by then. I felt I had not experienced mission much. In this area I was transferred to another country within the mission – Botswana. I was away from the mission home and many of the missionaries. I only had the zone leader to look up to. I had missionaries in my area that had been there longer than I and some who felt like they should have been district leaders. That was a challenge. At first I set off to proof to them why I was to be the leader by doing the best things I knew how. Then I was thought a lesson that the Lord did not call me for that, He had called me to use the little experiences that I had to train and motivate the older elders to keep the work moving in that area. I was a young missionary and I just had to do my best through example to help the others remember why they were there and it worked great. The work moved forward and became a great district. Most of the elders later became zone leaders and a few assistant to the president. That was my challenge to prepare others for the work ahead of them and it was a sweet feeling to know how I had grown after that area.

WEEK 6

List the values that are important to your life and your leadership. After you have done so, go back and rank them in order of their importance to you. Which of your values are inviolate? Which ones are desirable but not mandatory? Do some of your values depend upon the situation that you are facing?

“When asked the difference between a sheepherder and a shepherd, a man explained that a sheepherder drives his sheep and a shepherd leads them. Someone said, “Men are like spaghetti: If you get in front and pull, they will follow along behind; but if you get in back and push, they will all wad up...A leader in the Church is also a teacher, and one of the greatest tools in teaching is example, the tool Christ always used. A wise man once observed, “Your actions speak so loudly I cannot hear what you say”. Though we may not be conscious of it, what we teach by example becomes more persuasive than what we teach intentionally by precept, and it will leave a much more lasting impression on the observer.”(N. Eldon Tanner, "Leading As the Savior Led", *New Era*, June 1977, 4)

My core values on leadership stems from my leadership philosophy, which is that ‘a leaders role is to develop other leaders so that when he is done there could be another to take his place, when he is not around his absence will not be felt because he has competent people to do the work’.

These values include; Honesty in my dealings with both employers and other employees. Service to my fellow workers, Sacrifice, Hardworking, Humility in all things so that I am teachable and easy to understand, Accountability for the things I have responsibility or stewardship over.

I have been faced with several challenges as a leader that has tested my core values of leadership. For some experiences I have been strong because I have master the act and as often as that particular situation occurs I am ever ready to handle it. At other times most of the new challenges that come my way to test me are sometimes difficult to handle.

Sometimes you just want to shy away and do something else saying to yourself that this is a unique situation and that it is different. The fact is when you make the wrong choice the first time it is easy to make another wrong choice the next time.

One experience that I remember is, as a counselor in the Sunday School Presidency in my ward during my freshman year, we had teachers assigned to teach the classes every Sunday. As counselor I decided one Sunday not to go over the lesson for that day because I was sure that the president and at least one of the teachers will be at church. That was not a good idea. This is because I had forgotten that for that Sunday many of the students were going to be out of town. When I got to church I was asked by the bishop if I will take care of the combined Sunday school class. That was very interesting. I learnt my lesson that as a leader I should always be prepared and that is part of my responsibility.

WEEK 7

Who are the people who have mentored you in your leadership development? Which mentors have been most important in your development as a leader? In what ways have they helped you develop? How have you helped your mentor and built a two-way relationship? What more can you bring to your mentoring relationships?

If you forge ties with your boss based on mutual respect and understanding, both of you will be more effective. (BEST OFHBR 1980 Managing Your Boss by John J. Gabarro and John P. Kotter)

A mentor is also someone who is a great example of what or who you want to be in the future. I have been privileged to grow up amongst wonderful leaders whose counsels and example and guidance have seen me through tough times in leadership. I would like to introduce a few of them.

The first on my mind has been my dad, Atobora Peter Brown. Many times I have said I want to grow up to be like him, if possible in every way. He is honest, kind, respectful of others, treats all equally and wants the best for everyone. He loves to serve and counsel. He seeks to excel in all that he does and puts in his best efforts. These things are very attractive to me and are the things that I want to develop so that I may be a blessing and a mentor to someone else who may come my way.

Another Mentor that I will like to highlight is my trainer on the mission field when I served as a volunteer missionary for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. His name is Aaron Peterson. When he was assigned to train me, he had not had any leadership opportunities in the mission field till that time. He was left with just 3 months to go home. He was very hard working and very spiritual minded. He was obedient to all the mission rules both letter of the law and spirit as well. He thought me diligence and enduring to the end. He worked so well that he did not even take a break to pack his luggage till after work the last day on his mission when he was about to leave. This stuck with me my entire mission and I remember that joy on his face and in his eyes. I wanted that light and spirit when I was ready to go home. It had so much an impact on me so that I worked till the last minute before I left the mission field. He was a great example.

I most of the time feel that I have learnt more from my mentors than they have learnt from me. It is such a happy feeling to know that the people who teach you also are learning things that helps them feel and know that they are fulfilling their purpose as leaders or at least touching a life. I know there is more that I could do to strengthen the relationship I have with my mentors. Some of the things that I plan to do include that I will love to write to them or meet them face to face all who have had an impact in my life that I consider as mentors, which is many, and let them know what they mean to me. That way I may be a more grateful student of these great leaders.

WEEK 8

How do you measure success in your life right now? What is your personal scorecard? What are the long-term achievements you would like to realize in your life? What will bring you the greatest amount of happiness in your life? What is the positive impact on other that you would like to have?

“New research suggests that the most effective executives use a collection of distinct leadership styles—each in the right measure, at just the right time. Such flexibility is tough to put into action, but it pays off in performance. And better yet, it can be learned.” (Leadership That Gets Results by Daniel Goleman)

In my life, I have personally measured and justified success in many ways. I have had the opportunity to learn and grow from many leadership roles and that has brought varying degrees of success my way. After careful consideration, I will personally define success in about two ways and when I am done I will give a few example of why I defined it that way. First of all, to me, success is when after all is said and done in a day, week, year, semester or whatever the occasion or season, you will be able to sleep peacefully and know that you were able to do all that you wanted to do. Another way to put this is a feeling of Accomplishment.

Close to my first definition, is a sense of joy or happiness in knowing that you have blessed the life of another, or made something better, this usually stays in their memory for a long time. In this case I hope that I help others in pointing their thoughts to the saviour, the true source of hope and lasting Joy.

I am currently the student body vice president here at Brigham young University Idaho. It is certainly a sacred trust that is how I look at it. It has been an awesome two semester service with its lessons. I have enjoyed every bit of it even all the busy work and projects. Looking back I feel it was one of the best decisions that I made in my career here at Brigham Young University Idaho. I have just three weeks left till I hand over to the next presidency. As of now I feel a sense of gratitude for the opportunity to serve and know that I feel no guilt in the manner in which I have used my time in this service.

Another experience that I will like to cite here is about when I served a mission for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I learnt more fully the principle that ‘when you do the Lord’s work you get the Lord’s pay’. This is something that my dad says to us his 4 sons very often. I remember those days that when I go home from a long days work I get that satisfaction that comes from knowing that I touched some lives that day.

The one goal and the thing that will bring me the greatest Joy is if I should follow the doctrine thought by president Ezra Taft Benson when he said “True greatness is touching the lives of others for the greatest amount of time”. This kind of satisfaction is what I call success.

WEEK 9

Describe the kinds of leadership relationships you have in your family, church, school, or workplace? What kind of leadership relationship do you and your spouse share? What kind of leadership relationship do you have in church? What kind of leadership relationship do you have in school? What kind of relationship do you have with your boss, peers, or subordinates at work? How could you strengthen any of those relationships?

I personally believe that there is a difference between a 'Group' and a 'Team'. When it comes to groups the participants are not fully committed, most of the time they are seeking their own personal interests and will seek authority or status. In the case if a team those involved has a sense of belonging. They rely on each other's strengths to accomplish their set goals. Members of a team listen to their team leader and although will counsel with each other it is up to the leader to point them in the right direction, therefore bringing about a greater bonding between them and also some mutual respect.

I will like to talk about the kind of leadership I have at school. I am currently the student body vice president. It is fairly easy to be prideful and do things your own way with that kind of title on your head. To avoid this I have sought to empower those who work under me. These representatives have been given assignments to attend councils and hold committee meetings as well as organize focus groups and conduct surveys so far as they let me know what their plans are. This empowerment has made them proactive in their desires to serve and it has also encouraged them to be innovative. This is a great thing. It allows them to have confidence in their judgment and measure their ideas with the policies and other guidelines of the organization. This allows them to share great insights when it comes to council meetings and when I hold my one-on-one interview with them every week. It is this empowering principle and the opportunities to counsel with each other that make me consider my organization as a team and not just another group I have to be with for just one semester. To improve one's outlook or switch from just groups to a real team it is necessary for individuals to realize that the associations they form with the people they meet will enable them form bonds that will allow them depend on each other and get a greater position of work done. When we are caught in that kind of situation we should take a step to the side and analyze ourselves and see what we may do to make all around us satisfied and content and welcomed. This is because the same people we meet when we are climbing the ladder of leadership to the top will be the same people we will meet when we are released and we have to come down that ladder. We should ask ourselves "how will I want to be treated or feel in my associations with others" and do the same to others.

WEEK 10

Think of your life as a house with a bedroom for your personal life, a library for your school life, a den for your church life, an office for your professional life, a family room for your family, and a living room to share with your friends. Can you knock down the walls between these rooms and be the same person in each of them? Are you able to be the same authentic person in each environment, or do you behave differently at work than you do at home, church, with your friends or in the community?

Authentic leadership and for that matter authentic person is what story we are able to see or what story we are able to tell. If this statement is right it truly means that everyone could write their own stories. They could do this from past experiences. They could use this to prepare for roles in the future.

Life has a way of getting to us. It has a way of making us realize the truth and at the same time making us pay for the things that we rejected or ignored to take notice of and correct in our life's. It is said that when the wars of life ranges upon us the time for preparation has just ended. I believe in this statement and at the same time believe that what we make of our stories and experiences in life is who we become or what we are.

Having said this I wish say that, as creative as we may be in telling our stories or learning from them we will have to be careful not to offend nature. Nature gives and takes away at its own pleasure. One day we may be famous for one thing and be praised by the whole world and the next day we may be the laughing stock of the world because of a mistake, because we did not learn from experience what we were to learn and tried to cheat nature by going around the block instead of through the door. This also means that we cannot lie to ourselves that we are authentic and display those kinds of authentic leadership behaviours and expect to fake that stance forever. Time will surely catch up to us and the true test of who we are and what we have learnt will come.

Now if we consider the question above carefully and the things I have written thus far it comes down to one characteristics or one attribute that matters most and this is Integrity. Integrity is being the same person or being yourself wherever you are. It is also doing the same things no matter what the circumstances may be. It is making your Yes - Yes and No - No.

I feel that with all the stories and experiences that can be told, it will always come down to one thing, and the question will be asked "are you a man or woman of integrity".