

2010

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 Contents

Leaders in My Life	1
Leaders in the Scriptures	2
Leaders Losing Their Way	3
Me as a Leader	4
Greatest Crucible	5
Values	6
Mentors	7
Success	8
Leadership Relationships	9
Integrating My Life	10

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?

There are a number of leaders that have really influenced me throughout my life. Three people come to mind, that I would classify as good leaders whom I admire. President Gordon B. Hinckley of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints; my old youth leader, Velene Burke; and a good friend of mine, Mathew Krugman; all possess amazing leadership skills. I would not classify any of them as bold or overpowering leaders, in fact, most people upon meeting them would probably think of them as quite, laidback, behind the scenes kind of people. Having seen these individuals in action however, I know the leadership skills they have are incredible.

I think the qualities I admire most in these people are their unconditional compassion, love, and understanding for those they serve. All three are such strong examples to me of serving those around them and being tools in the Lord's hands. I believe the most powerful leading is done not by force, but through inspiration and encouraging others to be and strive to become better.

Mat taught me many lessons in leading through example. You can't expect people to follow you if you aren't walking the walk you talk. People do not like being told what to do or bossed around. To get the best response and participation from resistant team members or coworkers you need to gently encourage and serve them until they decide for themselves to change or become better. Many times in my life I have had the opportunity to lead different kinds and sizes of groups. And this principle of leading by and through soft, caring, and compassionate service is one I know to be very true.

Of these and many other leaders I have come across in my life, I think I would without a doubt classify President Hinckley as one of the most authentic leaders. President Hinckley has always been such a strong role model to me throughout my life. He lived his life in accordance with the things he taught and talked about. He led softly and encouragingly so that no one was offended or pushed away by brusqueness, while at the same time exercising a firm hand. I think he achieved this by showing he genuinely cared about the well being of those he led. Just listening to him speak allowed you to feel the unconditional love he had for all of us. What an amazing man and leader he was.

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?

The scriptures are filled with both good and bad examples of leaders. A few of the best leaders I can name right off the top of my head are Abraham, Noah, and Moses from the Old Testament; David and Daniel from the New Testament; Captain Moroni, Nephi, Lehi, Mormon, and Helaman from the Book of Mormon; and of course our greatest example of a leader, Jesus Christ. All of these men had exemplary traits and values that made them good leaders.

All of these men were strong, noble, and of good character. They inspired and influenced the people they served in a positive manner always bringing them through and out of whatever adversity they were facing. These leaders took the challenges confronting them and their people and faced them head on. They relied greatly on the power and strength of the Lord for guidance and help. These men managed to stay humble and always showed their gratitude to the Lord.

I would consider Helaman and Moses to be some of the most authentic leaders that have ever existed. Helaman proved himself to be an incredible leader as he led the 2,000 Stripling Warriors into battle. Because of the faith Helaman and his soldiers had they all came out of that battle alive. Moses is equally as impressive to me as he led the Lord's people out of Egypt and into the wilderness where they wandered around for years and years. Neither of these men were afraid of facing challenges or adversity that put their odds at survival near zero. Instead of being discouraged they led their troops and people with gusto and surety.

President Kimball said in his talk, "Jesus knew who he was and why he was here on this planet. That meant he could lead from strength rather than from uncertainty or weakness. Jesus operated from a base of fixed principles or truths rather than making up the rules as he went along. Thus, his leadership style was not only correct, but also constant." I think there is so much to be learned from Christ's example and leadership. We too can lead in strength if we know who we are and what we are trying to accomplish. We need to be consistent leaders that teach from fixed principles of truth rather than making things up as we go.

President Kimball goes on to suggest that we lead as Christ did in living a lifestyle so that our followers can "do what we do," rather than "do what we say." Kimball explains that we need to lead "Not a long distance leadership" but an intimate close leadership style.

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 behaviors and warning signals you have seen in others at risk of losing their way?

I think the greatest down fall of any person as a leader, friend, teacher, or business owner results back to pride. When a person starts to believe that they as a leader are indispensable, we start to have serious problems. Spencer J. Condie tells us in his talk, "Here is another important lesson of leadership: *Leaders are duty-bound and obligated to prepare others to take their place* at some future time." A sign of a good leader is someone who tries to raise the company as a whole and train new replacements never thinking of themselves as a one man show. Condie goes on to point out the important attributes of leaders. He suggests that they are: obedience, humbleness, a wise and understanding heart; someone with high expectations, tempered with patience.

How many people start off as showing promise of being good leaders and then ultimately never reach that status? Condie says in his talk, "From Solomon we can learn that ***knowledge and wisdom alone do not qualify people to lead***. Perhaps Jacob said it best: "To be learned is good if they hearken unto the counsels of God." (2 Ne. 9:29.)" I believe that in every aspect of our lives we have the power to consult God, even if it is at work, our outside of the normal religious boundaries. Condie says, "Within the kingdom of God, *to lead is to serve*. Leaders *can* make a difference! *Faith in the Lord and high expectations can bring about a mighty change of heart* among an entire people."

I strongly believe that we can make great strides and changes of heart inside our businesses if we serve each other and are trying to help everyone get to the higher point. When we focus too much on making sure that only we climb the ladder of success we leave everyone behind. Leaders cannot do this! Leaders have to always be striving to get the whole company or organization up the ladder of success. I think most leaders initially have that goal in mind but struggle to remember it when trials and challenges face their teams.

Condie suggests in his closing remarks, "May each of us engaged in the work of the Lord perform *His* work in *His* way, "by persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned; "By kindness, and pure knowledge ... Reproving betimes with sharpness, when moved upon by the Holy Ghost; and then showing forth afterwards an increase of love." (D&C 121:41-43.)" I believe that if we can keep this attitude and adjust it as needed in the business world we can avoid the downfall of so many other great leaders before us.

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?

I have had many leadership opportunities throughout my life. I have learned unique and beneficial lessons from every experience. The one experience I am proudest of was an opportunity I had last semester. Last semester I was called to be the visiting teaching supervisor in my relief society. I cannot say I was extremely excited about the calling, but I accepted the call and began looking for opportunities.

Through my calling I was able to lead the sisters in my relief society to not only get their visiting teaching done, so that the numbers were there, but to also genuinely serve and love one another. At the beginning of the semester I stood up and told the sisters I didn't really care about the numbers, I was more interested in the sisters themselves. As the semester went on I think as a relief society we were able to grow closer together through acts of love, kindness, and service. It was such a neat experience to watch those sisters learn the true meaning and purpose of visiting teaching.

From the material we were assigned to read this week I came to realize there are a few qualities I need to work on developing further. In President Eyring's talk he tells us that each of us with the help and guidance of the Lord are shepherds. And when speaking of Christ he says, "He knows what the sheep need at every moment. By the power of the Holy Ghost, He can tell us and send us to them." When it comes to being a good leader or shepherd I know I need to work more on accepting the help and guidance of our Savior. He knows exactly what the people I am serving need; why not go directly to the source for enlightenment on what I can do to help my sheep?

Another quality I need to develop is learning from my mistakes and "failures". Sometimes I can be a very harsh judge on myself; failure is not something I accept easily. When I read Friedman's philosophy of taking our experiences and learning from them I was really touched, we are only failures if we don't learn from our experiences. Friedman tells us, "The only way to fail with an experiment is to fail to learn from it, and this makes useful metrics essential.... Failed experiments give you, and those around you, information that helps create better ones in the future."

I know there are many qualities I need to develop but the last one I will mention is having faith in my decisions and putting forth the effort and hard work required to make things happen. Eyring said, "The difficulty of what he faced drove him to his knees in prayer. Then he stood up and went to work." I know the challenges I face in leadership, cannot only be dealt with in prayer. I need to do the do-diligence and get to work. Friedman also touches on this by saying, "No matter what your career stage or current position, you can be a better leader and have a richer life— if you are ready and willing to rise to the challenge." Becoming a good leader his hard work. Maintaining that balance in our lives is not easily achieved ... but it is so worth it.

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?

In the Harvard Case it describes a crucible as such, "A crucible is, by definition, a transformative experience through which an individual comes to a new or an altered sense of identity." I was in my fifth semester of schooling here at BYU-Idaho when my greatest crucible occurred. It was the beginning of March and I was about half way into my semester. That semester I had a lot going on. I was taking 17 credits, trying to juggle church callings, a social life, and get adequate amounts of sleep and exercise in. It also happened to be the semester that I was in IBC and dealing with a great amount of stress there.

So my younger brother was up here at school that semester as well. He was doing okay until the beginning of March and being the only family out here I felt a large amount of responsibility for him. He started really having some issues with the medications that he takes and not being able to sleep. He has been diagnosed as being bipolar and suffers from insomnia, severe chronic depression, and when things get really bad suicidal thoughts. So naturally I became concerned. After some very long nights of no sleep and monitoring him we decided it would be best to take him to the hospital and have him admitted into the Behavioral Health Center in Idaho Falls.

Doing this had to be one of the hardest things I have ever done in my life. Leaving him there and not knowing what was going to happen or how he was going to be treated was so hard for me. The typical stay is 3-7 days while they regulate and get medication levels back on track. My brother was there for 28 days. On top of all of this I had a pretty intense schedule. I woke up at 6:30 every morning was into work by 7:15 worked till noon, went to class till 5, and then did prep work till 6 or 7. Then I would go home and do homework, workout and go to bed and start all over again the next day. I would spend my Saturdays and Sundays in Idaho Falls visiting my brother and doing as much homework as possible. Needless to say it was a very intense 2 months.

And then at the end of March my grandfather, who I was extremely close to and was only 67 years old, passed away unexpectedly. Just when I didn't think things could get any more intense they did. Physically, mentally, and emotionally I was drained. As a class assignment that semester I had to read the book, Seven Habits of Highly Effective People. Through my trials and reading this book I learned that I had to rely on the Lord. I turned to the scriptures and prayer; I received a priesthood blessing; I read my patriarchal blessing and tried my hardest to apply the principles of that book to my life.

Having the experiences I had greatly changed my perspective on my life. I realized there are things in our lives we do not and cannot have control over. The only things we can control are the responses and reactions we will have to those events. We can literally choose if we will be stronger persons because of them or if we will allow them to defeat us. In the case reading it says, "Everyone is tested by life, but only a few extract strength and wisdom from their most trying experiences. They're the ones we call leaders." I like to think that I have become closer to my Heavenly Father through this whole process and that I have gained some life changing insights from these experiences. I would like to think that I have become a better person, friend, daughter, sister, employee, student, and leader as a result of the things I have learned.

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?

1. Honesty
2. Humility
3. Obedience
4. Example
5. Patience
6. Love
7. Delegation
8. Christ-like

Something that is absolutely necessary in my life is complete and upmost honesty. It is something that I hold others to and expect from myself at all times. I also think that humility and obedience are essential to becoming a good leader. Often times I think that people think humility is centered around thinking less of yourself, but humility isn't thinking less of yourself; its thinking less about yourself and more about others you are serving.

I loved the quote from Eldon Tanner's talk, "The Message: Leading as the Savior Led", he said "It is so important that we learn to obey and keep the commandments of God. It has been said that obedience is not the mark of a slave; it is one of the prime qualities of leadership. Some people fail to become great leaders because they have not learned to follow instructions—even the teachings of Jesus Christ." I think obedience to the rules and commandments only makes our lives easier as Elder Tanner suggests.

And I think that all the other values I listed are desirable but not mandatory. I think they are all values that I need to work at striving to develop. And I don't think you can classify something as a value or standard if you are willing to give them up because of the situation you are facing. True values are important to the person and cannot just be cast off depending on the activities you are participating in.

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?

There are a number of people who have coached me along and mentored me in my leadership development. I can think of two very specific leaders in my life that have helped me to become a better leader myself. The first would be my mother. My mom is an incredible woman that has gone through so much in her life. She gives absolutely everything to those around her, always sacrificing everything she has. My mom has always strived to implement good leadership skills in her children. She has always led us by example and taught us how to make decisions and get things done instead of just telling us or doing it for us. I appreciate her patience and determination to help us grow and become good leaders and members of a community.

Another leader I can think of was a Young Women's President I had when I was Laurel President. Once again, she taught me and helped me to lead my girls effectively by coaching instead of running the show and just telling me what to do. In turn I was excited about my call and strived to actively fulfill it. I worked hard and tried to always be on top of my game. She didn't have to ask me to get things done, I tried to take the initiative and do it on my own. She encouraged me to do the same with the other Laurels, and as a group we were very effective and efficient.

Upon writing this journal entry it's amazing to look back at different leadership roles I have had in my life and see just how effective and ineffective some of those instances were. Reflecting back on the ineffective times, when I felt like no one was helping me and I was doing all the work, I noticed a trend in most situations. I realize now that I was not being a good leader. I was micromanaging, and not having faith that they would complete their assignments. No wonder no one was willing to help, I wasn't letting them. I know now that I need to take this principle and apply it to my life. Building two-way relationships is so essential for good leading.

Looking at the Savior's life and the way he taught and led others, I can see that he lived by this same principle. Leading is so much more effective if it isn't done through manipulation, guilt trips, out of obligation or demands. People always respond better to kind and gentle coaching. Two-way relationships are essential in creating well rounded relationships where everyone is happy and content.

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?

I have a very different opinion on this kind of thing than most people. For most of my life I have always found fixed points to look forward to. I am a planner by nature, and plan for future events. I anxiously await their arrival and then it never fails ... I am always a little disappointed. The planning and waiting stages always seem more exciting. I never find the happiness I am waiting for, and if it is there, it is brief and over quickly. A few years ago I read President Monson's, "Finding Joy in the Journey" conference talk. His message truly changed my perspective on life and the way that I want to live day to day.

One of my favorite quotes is "Happiness is not a destination, it is a journey. Enjoy the journey." Keeping this in mind, I live my life everyday to the fullest striving to implement it into my life. We have to live in the here and now. We need to learn how to be happy now. I am a bit of a perfectionist as well, so measuring my success can sometimes be a dangerous pitfall. I have to be very careful and make sure when I measure my success it isn't based on the small details, but on the overall success and outcome of the project. I try to take people's compliments to heart and reassure myself that no one noticed the mistakes or how things didn't turn out the way I imagined them to.

I try to base my personal scorecard on the big picture ... sometimes even the eternal picture. Long-term my desires are to raise my family in righteousness. I want to create a home where my family can feel safe and loved. I want my children and husband to know my love for them. I want my house to always be the place that my children and their friends want to play at. I want to be capable of being independent and be able to support my family if need be. I want to be debt free and be able to enjoy life with my husband once my kids are all out on their own. I want to be able to travel and see the world with my husband. I want to be able to enjoy the small things and the precious moments most people don't take the time to enjoy. And I want to instill that same happiness and gratitude in my family.

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 have had the opportunity to hold many different kinds of leadership positions throughout my life. I have had roles in leadership inside my family, the church, school, and other organizations I have been involved in. I absolutely loved the talk given by, M. Russell Ballard, "Strength in Counsel". He spoke of such powerful principles. He suggested that some of the best decisions and power come from collaborating as a group and seeking the ideas and thoughts of every member of the council.

Ballard reiterates President Stephen L Richards' message: "The genius of our Church government is government through councils. I have had enough experience to know the value of councils. Hardly a day passes but that I see ... God's wisdom, in creating councils ... to govern his Kingdom." The Church organization is ran by councils for a very distinct purpose. I believe that modeling our own personal and business lives after the organization of the Church will not hurt us. I have participated in family councils, councils in the workplace, and tried to implement councils into peer projects. It is amazing what can be accomplished if every member feels comfortable suggesting ideas to improve productivity, or whatever our focus may be at the time. Every person offers a new perspective that assists to coming up with ideal solutions.

I believe having strong leadership relationships with those that we work with is crucial. Without that strong relationship there is a lack of trust, understanding, and unity among groups working for the same outcome. Having trust, understanding and unity allows for individuals to feel comfortable to express their concerns, ideas, or suggestions. Sometimes I can be a little bold and kind of take over a situation. I know that I need to work on step back and allowing the council to counsel. I know that if I allow others to express their thoughts in a sage environment our relationships as a council can be greatly strengthened.

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?

I've found myself pondering this question many times this semester. All semester we have been learning about what it takes to be a good leader, the qualities and characteristics involved, the importance of good leading, and living our lives so we only have to wear one suit. I've wondered many times ... am I the same person in all situations? Do I have to pretend to be a different person in each room? And after much reflection and thought I don't think I do. I think that if we knocked down all the wall between the rooms I would be the same person in each of them.

I mean there are a few differences between the ways I act when at home versus work versus church. At home I can be comfortable and a little more fun and relaxed then at work. But essentially, I think I can honestly say I am the same person in every environment. When thinking about even trying to put on different acts for each situation I get tired. You would have to remember what's acceptable in which environments. I can't imagine trying to put on multiple shows of character. I almost see it as telling a lie. And I guess that is kind of what it is; you are lying about who you really are. It would get complicated so fast. For example, it's like you tell a lie and then you have to tell another one to cover up the last lie, and on and on it goes until you are in a hole so deep you can't keep all the lies straight. And then you are only destined to mess up.

I imagine it would be so much easier to just have one suit to wear all of the time. Can we not always have and demonstrate the same standards and values? Can we not always be loving, caring, and act in a Christ like manner? Can't we always be good examples and be noble leaders? I want to strive to always wear only one suit in every aspect of my life. There is no need for multiple personalities or characteristics. I know that if I live my standards I will be able to exemplify my authentic personality in all areas of my life.