

Many people want to be leaders, but much difficulty comes with the position. A leader has to be bold and willing to push for what they believe is right. Leaders have to be original and do things outside of their comfort zone to benefit their peers. I have been fortunate enough to have gained a lot of leadership experience through playing soccer. I have been the captain of every team I have been a part of, and my experience has taught me many successful leadership qualities. Some important qualities of a leader are originality, confidence, communication skills, sympathy, responsibility, and composure. There are many more that could be included in that list, but those are the values that I found to be most important.

One of the most important values I implemented was responsibility. I had to make sure that I held everyone accountable. Confronting my team was difficult, but it was something that I had to overcome. Another factor that helped me to lead my team was being a resource to my teammates. William Deresiewicz stresses having close friendships in solitude in his speech to the graduating class of West Point. He says being able to have long private conversations is a critical value of a leader that strengthens the bond of a team. An example of a time I had to be a resource is when I got a new teammate from Brazil who didn't know any English. He wanted to learn the language, but he didn't want to embarrass himself. I told him that whenever he wanted to know how to say something to come ask me for help. He began speaking fluently in only three months, and the more he learned to speak the better he played with our team. Lastly, I had to lead by example at all times with my team. This applies to the way I trained, how I treated people, and more. I knew that in order to lead them I couldn't hold people accountable for their actions if mine weren't any better. By training as hard as I could everyday it forced my teammates to do the same. This not only made us a stronger team, but it also made us all better individually.

I also had to do things in solitude in order to strengthen the team. Like William Deresiewicz said in his speech, "solitude is the very essence of leadership." A major adjustment I had to make was learning to handle things alone. Since I was the resource for the team I also had to be my own resource. Although sometimes this was difficult, being in solitude helped me to be a better leader. I tried to get creative and come up with activities to help us bond, and tactics that could help us in games. Whenever I thought of something that could help our team we would have team meetings so that everyone could give their input. Although being in solitude is difficult, it made me a much better leader, and I learned a lot from it.

In conclusion, all of these lessons learned from being the captain of my soccer teams taught me all of the leadership skills I have today and made me a better person. Additionally, after reading William Deresiewicz's speech and using it to reflect on my own experience I realized that solitude and leadership do go hand in hand. I wouldn't be the leader I am today without the importance of solitude, but my ability to be creative and have confidence in myself was also a key factor in leading my team to success.